



Public Daily Brief



Week: 17 July – 23 July 2006

Forecast

this week: **Indonesia**

He who is not with me is against me. (Luke 11:23)

Indonesia is poorly understood in the US. As the largest population of Muslims in the world, a venue for Islamists bombings, and a country bitterly opposed to US foreign policy on the Middle East, Indonesia is seen as an “enemy” in the often two-dimensional US view of the world.

Independence from Dutch colonialism in 1945 brought fierce debate among the nationalists on whether Indonesia would be an Islamic State. Secularists under **Sukarno** won; highly-inclusive secularism was seen as the only way the Republic of some 17,000 islands and a multitude of languages and ethnicities could survive. To this day, any factor – religion, ethnicity, race, class, regionalism – that threatens Indonesian unity is seen as a risk of the far-flung archipelago spinning apart from the Javanese core. But Sukarno had stiff opposition in 1945 from Islamists who declared **Negara Islam Indonesia** (NII - Islamic State of Indonesia) in East Java. Decades of fighting were won by the Jakarta secularists, but NII survived as the underground **Darul Islam** (DI; Dar al Islam -abode of Islam). All Islamic dissidents to this day – such as the **Islamic Defenders Front** (FPI) – owe allegiance in some form to NII and DI.

As a key member of the **Non-Aligned Movement** (like **India**) and the **Organization of the Islamic Conference** (like **Malaysia**), Indonesia is a diplomatic gift. It offers an intelligent, influential bridge into the Islamic world. It could be a key ally in balancing the **Arab** face of Islam, an Asian balance to **China**, and the best chance of a partner in Islam-West dialogue.

For a detailed survey of Indonesia's complexity, see these OSS Special Reports:

- **The Diversity of Islamic Militancy in Southeast Asia**, OSS.NET, February 2006 (52 pp.)
- **Islamic Schools in South East Asia**, OSS.NET, December 2003 (33 pp.)

Near-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term
<p>Respect for Sovereignty</p> <p>When the US in 2005 announced it would send gunboats to fix the problem of piracy in the Malacca Strait, Indonesia went diplomatically ballistic. The issue was not whether this was a good idea, but rather that neither Indonesia nor Malaysia, who own the Strait, had been consulted. Quickly upon this came the offer to fix terrorism by sending books and curriculum to Indonesia's Islamic schools. Javanese diplomacy is older than most Western nations so insults such as these are probably not new, but they are not easily forgotten.</p>	<p>A Best Path to Conciliation</p> <p>Some US Christians devoutly hope for the clash of arms on the plains of Megiddo, rebuilding The Temple, tribulation and unspeakable horror – “dogs living with cats” to use <i>Ghostbusters</i> exegesis. This powerful electorate injects into US policy a sense that wars and horror can not be prevented, and are verily part of God’s Plan. On this path, the US will continue to be suspicious of Indonesia and others who oppose its God-given foreign policy. But if the US wishes to forestall the Apocalypse a few years it would work to erase insults of the past and form strong ties with Indonesia.</p>	<p>The Asian Power-house</p> <p>If the “Islamic Question” can be put to one side, the US will find Indonesia well poised to be one of the power-houses of modern Asia. With a middle-class already larger than the total population of Australia, Indonesia offers trade and joint-venture prospects smaller yet perhaps ultimately more stable than China, and a strategic ally potentially as stable as Japan. Arms acquisition aside, Indonesia is able to face the world without the US, but the US may not be able to face the world much longer without Indonesia.</p>



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LEGEND

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

Threats

Summary

See daily items on the web at

<http://meta2.com/PDB/pdbDetail.asp?THREATS>

Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G8 conspicuously failed to add anything constructive to global poverty issues – since the promises of <i>Gleneagles</i> remain unfulfilled, that was little point. But observers started to remind The Powers that this is as much a strategic issue as a moral issue – in Africa, for instance, the gaps of neglect are being rapidly filled by Islamist movements, and China.
Infectious Disease	<p>↑ The Gates Foundation provided funds for an AIDS vaccine research network, the largest ad hoc scientific network yet created.</p>
Environment	<p>↓ The catastrophic ceaseless clearing of the Amazon has been identified as a direct factor in global <i>Climate Change</i>. Worryingly, NASA took planet Earth off its mission statement.</p>
Inter-State Conflict	<p>↓ Afghanistan and Iraq continued to look far from resolved – descending into anarchy some said; Israel's attack on Hezbollah infrastructure (and any Lebanese infrastructure nearby) added a further war front involving Islamists.</p>
Civil War	<p>↓ June was reported with the highest death-toll in Iraq since the fall of Baghdad. Alliances between largely Christian Ethiopia and the precarious Somali government further complicated the civil war in Somali and raised the chances of another civil war in Ethiopia.</p>
Genocide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [nothing significant to report]
Other Atrocities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With increased awareness, enforcement agencies are finding <i>human trafficking</i> throughout the world – this week Uzbeks in Kazakhstan, and Polish “slaves” in Italy.
Proliferation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A truck carrying caesium and other radioactive materials was stopped in Bulgaria on its way to Iran.
Terrorism	<p>↓ One analyst said ... the US thought it was a good idea to directly fight Islamic militancy in a place such as Iraq; the problem is that al-Qaeda thought it was a good idea too. The Taliban seem to have hired a media consultant; a Wahhabi sheik issued a <i>fatwa</i> against Hezbollah, the FBI realised ... <i>al-Qaeda, Hezbollah - what's in a name?</i> The Sufi Muslim Council was launched in Britain and, encouragingly, was attacked by the Muslim Council of Britain – the only hopeful sign in an unhopeful week. [Sufism is a highly intellectual moderate form of Islam.]</p>
Transnational Crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The UK proposed legislation to tackle organised crime that would wield powers similar to the <i>Anti-Social Behaviour Orders</i> (ASBOs) already used against young trouble-makers.

↓ deteriorated

• steady

↑ improved

!!! ALERT



Public Daily Brief



Policy

Summary

*see daily items on the web at
<http://meta2.com/PDB/pdbDetail.asp?POLICY>*

Debt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Army says it needs to watch its pennies at home because of the ongoing extraordinary costs overseas.
Diplomacy	<p>↓ While the Senate thought it now had the numbers to confirm UN Ambassador Bolton, few disputed that relations between the US and the Islamic world now reached an all-time low and that the US is “clearly losing the war of ideas”. Some administration allies thought that, independent of what policies were in play, they were being badly administered. The UK Foreign Minister - in a significant break with the US position on Lebanon-- criticized Israel’s tactics.</p>
Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It’s official: in important ways China and India combined outweigh the US economy – the “global economic landscape has undergone a ‘seismic shift’ in the last decade...”
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [nothing significant to report]
Energy	<p>↓ Most wars in history were about resources – now they will be about <i>energy</i>. With infrastructure damage caused by the demand for cooling, parts of New York City continued into its sixth day without <i>electricity</i>.</p>
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The House failed to vote the two-thirds required for a constitutional amendment defining <i>marriage</i>.
Immigration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [nothing significant to report]
Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [nothing significant to report]
Revenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [nothing significant to report]
Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The FBI reported that intelligence sharing between countries has improved; DHS reported that US ports will have <i>radiation</i> detection by 2011; someone revealed that some <i>data mining</i> programmes similar to <i>Able Danger</i> are still in progress; the DHS list of last week that showed Idaho as the most target-rich state has been modified to about 600 undisclosed important places.
Social Security	<p>↓ Some say nothing short of a "pension catastrophe" is coming; <i>methamphetamine</i> - the new heroin – has already arrived, in the eastern cities from the west and mid-west.</p>
Water	<p>↓ New York’s water is getting worse because of changing weather patterns and increasing runoff from land clearance and development upstate.</p>

↓ deteriorated

• steady

↑ improved

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Challengers

Summary

see daily items on the web at

<http://meta2.com/PDB/pdbDetail.asp?CHALLENGERS>

Brazil	•	[nothing significant to report]
China	•	Stage I of the China's Gwadar Port in Pakistan – a bead in the “string of pearls” -- is almost ready.
India	•	The Indian navy is significantly upgrading its projection capability; in the aftermath of the Mumbai bombings, India is banning internet sites prone to religious vilification; also in wake of Mumbai, India is asking what kind of internal threat the massive Indian Islamic population may pose.
Indonesia	•	[nothing significant to report]
Iran	•	[nothing significant to report] – Note that the Israel-Hezbollah situation has kept Iran off the front-page – perhaps a not unintended circumstance.
Russia	•	Russia emerged from the peace-and-love of the G8 and announced, for an inobvious reason, that it was ready to conduct a nuclear test if it wished to and then staged a massive counter-terrorism exercise in the Caucasus . But a week of highs ended lower when the ASEAN -led East Asia Summit said that some member had black-balled Russia's membership at this time.
Venezuela	•	Venezuela agreed a joint oil venture with Brazil , was admitted to the Caribbean-based Mercosur trade bloc, and announced state visits to Belarus , Russia , and Iran .
[wild-card]	➔	Turkey said it reserved the right to attack Kurdish separatists in northern Iraq – the US warned the Turks not to. The Communist Parties of China and South Africa exchanged fraternal greetings.

↓ deteriorated

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↑ improved

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