



Public Daily Brief



Week: 24 July – 30 July 2006

Forecast

this week: **Poverty**

Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.
(attributed to. Lao Tzu)

Poverty in the developing world should not be confused with *emergencies*. Anyone can have a sudden need for food and shelter (New Orleans after *Katrina*). International programs against “poverty” go beyond this to building the capacity of a population to maintain and grow the means of self-sufficiency. If “real” aid is drilling wells, not bottled water, it is also about training locals to drill wells and maintain machinery. Action against poverty is now seen as a mix of **Aid, Trade, Investment, Migration, Environment, Security, Technology**. As well as shipping in bags of grain, it is more important to stop the war that will destroy the next crop, to invent appropriate technologies (the **cow-dung radio** in India), and to build local economies through investment and trade. *Migration* is contentious – accepting the unskilled and displaced counts as aid, but enticing every trained nurse in Ghana to London not only does not count as aid but is a negative step for Ghana.

The US is 20th in the world for aid as a portion of GDP (0.14%). 72% of this is **aid** (“with strings”) and much goes to less poor and totalitarian regimes.* US aid is perceived to be largely directed by national interest, whereas some nations, such as **Denmark** (first in world ranking), seem motivated otherwise – if Danish secret agendas exist they are well hidden. But in the broadest view aid *is* about self-interest. In **Somalia**, failure to understand root problems and obsession with forming a nation in a preconceived image led to a decade of bronze-age governance. **Islamists** now seem the only hope for stable government, and a shining hope in Africa for **Taliban**-style regimes. What started as an aid problem ended as a political problem because the earlier efforts were unbearably tainted with politics.

*Many facts quoted are from **Center for Global Development**. [USA], <http://www.cgdev.org>.

Near-Term

Mid-Term

Long-Term

For aid to be effective in the longer term – to be “real” – donors need to understand bottom-line causes. Some are geographical (systematic lack of water), many are social/political (enduring clan and tribal rivalries), many are simple perfidy (corrupt regimes and callous middle class elites).

In each case the solution is dictated by the cause and is often obvious. Educating policy-makers in the underlying causes of each aid case goes a long way to making aid effective.

Even blind incompetence is better than aid for doctrinaire or the wrong reasons. The *top-down* approach of the 1960’s – fortify the rulers and elites and they will fix their countries – is discredited for good reason. It resulted in a sudden demand for Rolls Royce cars, weapons, and deterioration in subsistence societies.

Recipients should not have to convert to Jesus – or the Danish way of life – to eat. A recent notion – fix poverty **one village at a time** (bottom-up) – is the most rational approach with the best chance of success thus far.

Many Asian nations jumped from primitive telephone networks to ubiquitous internet and cellular networks. This technological *leap-frog* awaits developing nations. The West will be burdened with 2nd or 3rd generation modalities when poorest nation will suddenly have 4th generation technologies. In 10 years the West will be weighed down by old costly infrastructure (the London tube) and many “developing” nations will be growing from strength to strength driven by clean, green high-tech practices.

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	↓	The WTO Doha Round , one hope for spreading growth to developing nations, after a long illness, died – with many, rightly or wrongly, blaming the US . But some, such as China , say it is just resting and can be resuscitated.
Infectious Disease	•	While the West notices a spectacular improvement in average health and life expectancy – due partly to childhood vaccination beginning in the 1950s – no such improvement is seen in the developing world, but programmes that work are being started almost daily as resources become available.
Environment	↓	Some will disagree but a consensus says the only global warming skeptics now are financially motivated to take that position; the pesticide and nutrient rich Mississippi is again killing a wide area of the Gulf of Mexico; on some days, China 's pollution is now reaching California.
Inter-State Conflict	!!!	Israel is surprised by Hezbollah 's tenacity after days of “surgical” strikes that have leveled whole neighborhoods; Israel and the US also seem surprised at how quickly support for Israel's retaliation has dropped away. With the killing of UN observers Israel stood accused of, at minimum callous incompetence; with the bombing of a civilian shelter in Qana it stood accused of war-crimes.
Civil War	↓	Somalia took on the dimensions of another proxy war as Eritrea sent arms to the Islamists, and Ethiopia threatened to invade in support of the notional Somali government. A new dimension appeared also in south and west Sudan as fighting intensified between rival tribes (the <i>Zaghawa</i> and the <i>Fur</i>) among the anti-government rebels.
Genocide	•	[nothing significant to report]
Other Atrocities	↓	Israel rejected calls by the ICRC and several nations for a three-day cease-fire to clear wounded and civilians from south Lebanon . On the same day, Israel bombed a civilian refuge.
Proliferation	•	China says it has taken measures to restrict export of biological agents , but made no comment on improving the poor practices which led to the 2004 SARS release.
Terrorism	•	The 39th Joint Regional Intelligence Center was established, in Los Angeles; the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence says progress on the systematic coordination for the 16 US intelligence agencies is "disappointing" and "heavy-handed" actions have produced only turf wars. Russia promulgated a list of 17 terrorist groups -- it is different in criteria and detail to that of the US ; Analysts warned that continued repression of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Central Asia may drive support to the more extreme Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan .
Transnational Crime	↓	The first report by the UK Serious Organised Crime Agency gave a sketch of the current state of transnational crime – drug supply is improving (street prices are dropping), it is diversifying into new areas such as child pornography , prisons continue to be one of its best training assets, and it is making skillful use of the internet . In short, it is “increasing in both scope and complexity”.

↓ deteriorated

• steady

↑ improved

!!! ALERT



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Policy Summary

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

Debt	• Auditors say the US Agency for International Development (USAID) "used an accounting shell game to hide ballooning cost overruns" in Iraq .
Diplomacy	!!! Although the US and Israel are confident of Israel's position on the Lebanon situation, it has brought a litany of criticism from across the globe. 'Moderate' Arab governments who were at first neutral or annoyed with Hezbollah are now incensed against Israel , as are the ASEAN countries, France and the citizenry of many other nations. Critics say the US position has done irreparable damage to its relations with the world.
Economy	↓ The US economy was reported to be slowing, and with the US (rightly or wrongly) blamed for the Doha collapse, some said there may be boycotts of US goods..
Education	• [nothing significant to report]
Energy	↓ China advanced experiments into nuclear fusion , a blue-sky hope for the world's future energy needs [this is separate to the international ITER project]. <i>\$3 a gallon and we're still standing</i> – some say the shocks are yet to strike. If Cuba proves oil deposits that are probably there, what then of the US embargo?
Family	• Prime Minister Blair has a position on stem-cell research theologically different to that of President Bush.
Immigration	• A further 4,500 Hmong refugees in Thailand are demanding immigration to the US in recognition of services rendered during the Indo-China war.
Justice	↓ A state Supreme Court gave local governments' use of eminent domain its first setback. The UN Human Rights Committee has said the US should cease any "secret" detention and obey international conventions on prisoners.
Revenue	• [nothing significant to report]
Security	• The FBI announced a restructuring meeting the "increased the need for special focus on longer-term, strategic efforts." Russia's Chief of Staff said the US NMD ('Star Wars') initiative is a waste of money when international resources could be better pooled against the more likely 9/11 style attacks. DHS announced funding research into the critical areas of knowledge representation, natural language processing, information extraction, and uncertainty quantification .
Social Security	• 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 health-care are problems just as difficult and expensive.
Water	• A growing problem in rich and poor world alike -- even the war of ethnic and tribal rivalry in Darfur are only symptoms of a deeper cause – competition for WATER .

↓ deteriorated

• steady

↑ improved

!!! ALERT



Public Daily Brief



Challengers

Summary

see daily items on the web at

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

Brazil	• [nothing significant to report]		
China	• A majority of Chinese economists believe the economy is overheating. The government has uncovered around US\$3B in misuse, waste and embezzlement as part of its anti-corruption audits; the "other China" [Taiwan] is seeking US weapons to defend itself (against China). In the critical area of environmental degradation, China is sensibly taking a bottom-up approach to avert environmental catastrophe by rallying local government to control degradation at the factory and drain-by-drain level. In what continues to be a continent per week round of diplomacy, China has made bilateral agreements with 10 Caribbean nations.		
India	• [nothing significant to report – investigations into the Mumbai bombing continue with no definite results yet]		
Indonesia	↓ Indonesia is likely to retire the remainder of its IMF debt this year; it continued to forge solid ties with neighbors in measures against <i>money laundering</i> and other <i>trans-border crime</i> . [Comments hostile to Israel in Lebanon continued.]		
Iran	• The proposed Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline is in trouble -- not from US opposition but because Iran wants a higher price for its gas in parity with the rising oil price. Although the Iran nuclear issue seems forgotten because of the Israel-Lebanon situation, Iran has been hinting in places such as Greece that a win-win compromise may be possible.		
Russia	• Although Russian- ASEAN trade is a mere \$6B it is growing at up to 40% and, significantly, relations with strategically-vital ASEAN seem to be genuinely strong.		
Venezuela	• The US has asked Russia to reconsider plans to sell military aircraft to Venezuela, but Russia did not listen – Venezuela says it needs to arm against US intervention. President Chavez is mobilizing his campaign team for the <i>election</i> in December – the target is 10 million of an estimated 11 million votes so that even the US can not dispute the mandate. US pressure on Venezuela's neighbors not to support the bid for a Security Council seat has infuriated Chile .		
[wild-card]	↓ Turkey wants to attack Kurdish separatists across the Iraq border – an analogy of Israel's attack on Lebanon – but the US has cautioned against this. The US has made it clear that it does not like emergence of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization but little can be done about it (or other multilateral groupings). The powerful Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) condemned the US position on Israel-Lebanon .		
↓ deteriorated	• steady	↑ improved	!!! ALERT

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