



Public Daily Brief



Week: 30 October – 05 November 2006

Focus article coming soon

World Crises [based on monthly assessments by *International Crisis Group*]

!!!	Alert	Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of Congo, Fiji, Somalia
↓	Deteriorated	Bangladesh, Central African Republic, Chad, Ethiopia, Ethiopia/Eritrea, Fiji, Iraq, Israel/Occupied Territories, North Korea, Philippines, Serbia, Somalia, Sri Lanka
↑	Improved	Haiti, Northern Ireland (UK)

<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=4476&l=1>

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

Threats

see daily items on the web at

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

Summary

Poverty	•	[nothing significant to report]
Infectious Disease	↓	<p>Once common <i>food-borne bacteria</i> in the US are evolving into more dangerous strains, prompting a rethink of how fresh produce is tested and handled.</p> <p>A new vaccine offers hope against “<i>superbugs</i>” found in hospitals.</p> <p>On 15 Nov 2006, WHO will launch the International Medical Products Anti-counterfeiting Taskforce (IMPACT) and unveil the global plan to combat <i>counterfeit medications</i>, a growing problem in developing countries.</p> <p>A <i>new strain</i> of <i>H5N1</i> which has jumped current disease control measures and spread rapidly is resistant to existing vaccines -- "However, we don't have any evidence to show whether this virus is more dangerous or less dangerous than any other H5N1 viruses,"</p> <p><i>Tuberculosis</i>, the world's deadliest curable infectious disease, has appeared in a new strain XDR (<i>extremely drug resistant</i>) that is virtually incurable with existing antibiotics.</p>



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Environment

↓ A NZ Air Force Orion crew has reported *ice-bergs* further north than usual -- "We were surprised by the number of them and by how far north they were."

The atmospheric concentration of *carbon dioxide* rose by another 0.5% in 2005. "we will need more drastic measures than are in the *Kyoto Protocol* today." UK Prime Minister **Blair** fully supports the report on *Climate Change* by Sir Nicholas Stern - We must pay now to avoid climate disaster; "Put it another way, for every £1 spent now, we save £5 in the future." Former V-P, Al Gore, will advise the UK government on Climate Change issues. But a **Cato Institute** senior fellow says the *Stern Report* "flies in the face of most studies on the subject."

The UK Foreign Secretary visiting **India** says India must embrace a **low-carbon economy**: "The very process which is making people's lives better across the world today is, at the same time, destroying their future." The **WWF** says **India** ranks third, next only to the **US** and **China**, in the rate it is turning its natural *resources* into *wastes*.

A new study published in *Science* says common *ocean species* will be drastically depleted by 2048 at current catch (and waste) rates -- "Our children will see *a world without seafood* if we don't change things."

Inter-State Conflict

!!! One **Pentagon** scenario on **Iraq** in 1999 saw the need for 400,000 troops for a take and hold operation. Signaling the emergence of a new degree of authority, **Iraqi** Prime Minister al-Maliki ordered the US to lift a siege on *Sadr City*. *Baghdad* is under siege - "*Shias* may be in a strong position within *Baghdad* but they risk their lives when they take to the roads." Many celebrated the *death sentence* on *Saddam Hussein*, but not *Sunnis* in his home town.

UNHCR [Refugee Agency] reminds the world there is grave humanitarian crisis underlying the war in **Iraq**. The **UK** has evacuated some consulate staff from *Basra*; the move reportedly infuriated the military who says it sends wrong message to **Iraqi insurgents**.

UN observers report **Israel's** unique understanding of *cease-fire* as Israeli warplanes stage simulated attacks over *Beirut*.

Civil War

- The **Islamists**, who now control much of the south and central **Somalia**, demand **Ethiopia** remove its troops from Somalia. About 34,000 Somali *refugees* have arrived in **Kenya** since the beginning of 2006.

Genocide

↓ **France** declassifies secret intelligence papers on the **Rwandan** genocide as a French investigation continues in parallel to one by the Rwandan government examining the French role in the genocide.

The **Chinese** premier has met the **Sudanese** president in atmosphere of "non-interference" which may (or may not) have greater influence on Sudan [scene of *Darfur* genocide] than threats.

President Bush has reportedly received a "grim" report on Darfur; the response is vapid: "The United States is going to work with the international community to come up with a single plan on how to address this issue and save lives."

Other Atrocities

- [nothing significant to report]



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Proliferation

- A web-site reluctantly set up by **DNI** contained **Iraqi** information *on nuclear firing circuits and triggering* that was not already publicly available. [The information has now been removed from the site.]
- A report claims "**China** has contributed at least indirectly to **North Korea's** nuclear program."
- The *Nuclear Five* plus **Italy, Japan, Canada, China, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Australia, Morocco** have had the first meeting of a new anti-proliferation initiative.

Terrorism

- ↓ An under-reported *Islamist* insurgency continues in **Algeria** with the killing of 8 Algerian soldiers.
- Indicative of transnational linkages -- **Australians** suspected of conspiracy to commit *JI*-related attacks in Australia have been arrested in **Yemen** on suspicion of links to *al Qaeda*.
- The **Cato Institute** recommends of process of *disengagement* from the *Middle East*.
- Militants blame the **US** for a **Pakistani** airstrike on an alleged *Islamists* training camp at a *madrasah* near the **Afghan** border that killed 80.

Transnational Crime

- **ASEAN** countries and **China** resolve to cooperate in tackling traditional transnational crime and new crime involving amphetamine throughout Asia.

↓ deteriorated

• steady

↑ improved

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Policy		see daily items on the web at http://meta2.com/PDB/pdbDetail.asp?POLICY	
Summary			
Agriculture	•	[nothing significant to report]	
Debt	•	[nothing significant to report]	
Diplomacy	↓	<p>They're just misguided <i>foreigners</i> but up to 69% of respondents in a poll across several countries believe the US has made the world less safe.</p> <p>Let's bomb Iran says Richard Perle.</p> <p>The US has "urged" Fiji's military to not attempt (another) <i>coup</i>.</p>	
Economy	↓	"The central bank caught between ... ' <i>recession</i> like' slow growth and 'sticky high' <i>inflation</i> ."	
Education	•	California schools will [electronically] <i>fingerprint</i> students for accounting in <i>the school lunch program</i> but "It just sounds kind of creepy."	
Energy	•	<p>Long-discussed, little-implemented, <i>tidal energy</i> companies are starting to move -- "Water's greater density means fewer and smaller turbines are needed to produce the same amount of electricity as wind turbines." DoE has announced grants to add 15 to the one 85% ethanol station in California where there are already 300,000 "<i>flex-fuel</i>" cars.</p> <p>Russia, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Belarus may become members of a <i>Gas Alliance</i> that would control 50% of the world's gas reserves.</p> <p>A <i>storm</i> took out <i>electricity</i> supply to 100,000 customers in Northeast and Mid-Atlantic States.</p>	
Family	•	Polling shows US evangelical Christians still prefer the Republican Party .	
Immigration	•	[nothing significant to report]	
Justice	•	Federal prosecutors rejected 87% of the international <i>terrorism</i> referred by the FBI so far during fiscal 2006 -- the Justice Department says that is not unusual.	
Security	•	<p>In Malaysia 1,500 foreigners on student visas have gone missing; "We have been informed that about 1,500 who came to study have not registered with any institution." - An immigration scam or something more sinister?</p> <p>FBI's NY field office now think the UK "<i>liquid bomb</i> plot" was aimed at maximizing the potential loss of life by detonating over US cities.</p> <p>The <i>Automated Targeting System (ATS)</i> used by US Customs for goods will be (in an undisclosed time-scale) extended to cover all <i>border movements</i> of persons.</p> <p>Medical countermeasures against <i>bioterrorism</i> -- private laboratories are being asked for capability statements regarding <i>Acute Radiation Syndrome (ARS)</i>, for which there are currently no approved therapeutic treatments.</p> <p>The US intelligence community has implemented an online knowledge-base similar to Wikipedia - "Some day it may also be the path intelligence officials take to produce the <i>president's daily intelligence briefing</i>."</p> <p>In the US, 55 <i>police</i> officers were killed last year - "Fifty were shot and 30 were wearing <i>body-armor</i>."</p>	
Social Security	↓	<i>Turnout</i> : Why do so few people vote in the US? "Americans are less apt to vote than are people in old democracies, new ones, dangerous places, dirt poor ones, freezing cold ones, stinking hot ones and highly dysfunctional ones."	
Water	•	[nothing significant to report]	
↓ deteriorated		• steady	↑ improved
		!!! ALERT	



Challengers

Summary

see daily items on the web at

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

Brazil

- President **Lula** has been re-elected for a second terms but his **Workers Party** has only 83 in the 513-seat *Chamber of Deputies*, and is only the fourth biggest party in the *Senate* - compromise and alliances are crucial.

China

- It was **Africa** week. China summoned Africa (pretty much all of it) to Beijing for days of ceaseless fraternal understanding, agreement-making, and announcements. China will build conference center for the **African Union**; China will double **aid**, will train African **professionals**, make fresh loans and development projects. Africa's resources and China's appetite are a sound basis for strong fraternal ties. --"Africa needs China and China needs Africa". China offers an alluring model to developing countries in Africa – three decades ago, China was as poor as **Malawi**; since then China's economy has expanded nine-fold and Malawi's has not. The diplomatic blitzkrieg on Africa complemented China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) interest in Sudan's oil. China has been the first to see Africa as a coherent bloc, and is confident enough to apply very efficient "bloc diplomacy" as it has with **Latin America**. It has stolen a far-reaching diplomatic coup in building relations with almost all of **Africa**.

However, China, US money-lender and **superpower** in waiting, demurs an international role for now and concentrates on "harmony" [stability] at home says a *Novosti* observer.

China unveils its first **stealth warship** - over 30% of the equipment on the destroyer is newly developed in China.

An **ammonia gas leak** in Hubei province joins the litany of **environmental disasters** in China's breathless pace of development. "Water supplies to 28,000 people in northern China have been cut after an overturned truck spilled 33 tons of **toxic oil** into a river."

Observers say there is increasingly an overlap between **Party Oligarchy** and **Capitalist Plutocracy** – success in business now may also mean success in the Party.

The Chernobyl syndrome : "China's reticence" to alert the world to **disease** outbreaks confounds the need for **international cooperation**. **U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission** says "China may not be willing or ready to play a responsible role in an international system aimed at encouraging peace and stability".

India

- The **United Liberation Front of Assam** has been linked to two deadly **bombings** in India's isolated far north-east; 15 were killed.

The Government has specific intelligence on Bali-style **bombing** in **Goa** and has "rushed" paramilitary personnel to the state, but the local government is trying not to scare away tourists.

India's new **naval** chief wants improved surveillance capability and the ability to operate in waters far away from home.



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Indonesia

- **Islamists** protested against the upcoming visit by President **Bush** - "He has ordered US troops to colonize **Iraq** and **Afghanistan**." Charges have been brought a year after the *beheading* of three school-girls in *Sulawesi*. Police revealed previous arrests of 15 members of *Tanah Runtuh* and *Kompak Kamaya* groups, and are now seeking 29 others for involvement in *Poso* terrorism. Three *Malaysians* suspected of being couriers for fugitive Noordin **Top** have been arrested in *East Java*. A diplomatic announcement claimed the "*China-Indonesia strategic partnership*" is the best it has been since Indonesia's *communist* fears of the 1960s.

Iran

- ↓ While the proposed Iran to **Pakistan gas pipeline** project is yet to be finalized, Iran proposes a project that would bring Iranian *electricity* to Pakistan (and India). Iran test-fired missiles "that could reach **Israel**" - "We want to show our deterrent and defensive power to *trans-regional enemies*, and we hope they will understand the message of the manoeuvres." The **White House** says it has "mounting evidence" of an undisclosed nature that Iran and **Syria** plan to overthrow the **Lebanese** government. Coinciding with **US**-led exercises in *Gulf*, Iran will hold exercise *The Great Prophet-2* during 02-11 Nov 2006.

Russia

- As a taste of the *energy diplomacy* to come throughout the world, following a diplomatic fight, Russia has doubled the price of *gas* it sells to **Georgia**. Russia's core sectors are showing record *growth* at 5.7% , and *debt* is down to \$50B. Three disparate parties have formed a coalition as a nominal *opposition*, but a real merger of three very different political forces in the regions will be a challenge.

Venezuela

- After over 40 ballots, the **Guatemala-Venezuela** vote for the **rotating UN Security Council** seat ended in stalemate – **Panama** was elected as a compromise. The **US** says Chavez lost; Chavez says the US didn't get their choice (Guatemala).

[wild-card]

- Demonstrators have massed at the mausoleum of **Mustafa Kemal Atatürk**, founder of *secular Turkey*, warning against any concessions to *Islamists*. **Pakistani** police have blamed nationalist *Balochi* rebels for a *suicide car bomb* that killed three in *Quetta* [but it may be *Taliban*-related]. A Kurdish commander said he wants a *permanent US base* in northern Iraq. [Analysis: The **Kurds** may see a **US** presence in the province as insurance against **Turkey** (or **Iran**) attempting to crush the *de facto Kurdistan*.] The face veil issue is becoming a hot issue in **Egypt**, the largest Arab nation -- the President's wife and TV presenters don't wear it but "the streets are full of veiled women". **Prince Charles**, currently in **Pakistan**, cancelled a planned visit to *Peshawar* -- Pakistani security officials can not guarantee his safety in the wake of the military attack on a *madrasah*.

↓ deteriorated

• steady

↑ improved

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