



Public Daily Brief



Week: 20 – 26 November 2006

GLOBAL REALITY: THE WEEK IN REVIEW

by Robert David Steele (Vivas), CEO, OSS.Net, Inc.

Threat Summary

Inter-State Conflict and Terrorism remain in the RED. The U.S. has failed in both Iraq and Afghanistan due to inept policies and marginal investments in post-hostilities stabilization and reconstruction. The only winners have been the US war-profiteering companies, among whom Halliburton and Bechtel stand out. The Baker Report, like the Pentagon Report, is delusional and unimaginative—neither understands that only a Berlin Airlift of peace goods combined with an immediate withdrawal of US forces and the substitution of Indonesian and other Muslim forces, will do the job. France has very properly committed to shooting down Israeli aircraft violating Lebanese airspace, while Israel continues to use cluster munitions prohibited by its own policies. Terrorism continues to be treated with lip service by most, and is in any event a tactic, not a threat.

Proliferation drops from Red to join Poverty, Environment, Civil War and Transnational Crime in ORANGE. Proliferation is evolving in a most useful manner, as infectious disease and biological threats are integrated into the proliferation monitoring and control regimes. In the Environment, E-Waste is now a new accepted term, covering both the hard waste of discarded electronics including magnets, and the soft waste of spectrum pollution. Chemical and energy plant explosions and incidents remind us of Charles Perrow's caution in *NORMAL ACCIDENTS: Living with High Risk Technologies*, to wit, we are our own worst enemies for lack of respect of the complexity and volatility of what we create. In Civil War the Eastern Congo has erupted again despite the presence of a major United Nations force, with Chad, Somalia, and Lebanon continue a descent. On a positive note, Nepal may finally have found peace, and Jordan is hosting a summit seeking to address civil wars of concern to the region, but properly contingent on the US pulling out. Transnational crime continues to be ignored as it spreads to control natural resources such as the Russian energy industry. Given the documentation in Moises Naim's book, *ILLICIT: How Smugglers, Traffickers, and Copycats are Hijacking the Global Economy*, to wit, that the illicit economy is \$2 trillion a year (without paying taxes toward the common good) in the context of a roughly \$7 trillion legal economy (which also has its own tax avoidance schemes), this must be considered a fundamental threat to any sustainable prosperous society or commonwealth, a greater threat than war or terror. Legalization of prostitution and drugs is one avenue that demonstrably reduces costs and incentives.

Infectious Disease and Genocide remain in the YELLOW, but Infectious Disease may break upwards soon. A new infectious disease, and a continuing reluctance by China as well as Eastern Europe and other locales to provide honest early warning of detected illnesses in animals and humans, suggest that a global pandemic such as Dr. Larry Brilliant has often warned, may soon be upon us. A pandemic is now a matter of when, not if. Apart from failing to deal with the information challenges associated with detecting and containing virulent infectious diseases, there is little movement on fielding generic drugs and nurse-practitioners focused on localized needs (i.e. most do not need a "full spectrum" doctor but rather a narrowly but deeply informed local practitioner at the nurse level). While Genocide is in the yellow in general terms, the continued focus on Darfur to the exclusion of the other 17 or so genocides now on-going continues to cause us concern. Visit [Genocide Watch](#) for complete details on these current genocides as well as the eight stages of anticipable genocide.

Other Atrocities are in the BLUE, in part for lack of adequate reporting everywhere. Israel continues to use cluster bombs in Lebanon despite its own policies. Kidnapping and murders for body parts, and kidnappings for sex trade and trade in children, continue apace with little notice.

Policy Summary

If there were a category for coherent global strategy and reality-based budgeting, it would be in the RED. The challenge for publics the world over is now how the gain control of the information needed to first understand reality, and to then impose on their local, state or provincial, and national governments a form of reality-based budgeting. At this time the United States of America, and most other countries, are devoid of a



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coherent understanding of the ten threats, twelve policies, and eight challengers. Their budgets are driven by corruption and corporations rather than intelligence and the public interest. Apart from electoral reform to restore the power of all people everywhere, this is the Holy Grail, the Mecca, for policy professionals—to achieve reality-based budgeting.

Diplomacy, Immigration, Security, Social Security, and Water are in the ORANGE verging toward Red (Water especially). China is pioneering a new form of “group diplomacy” and making major inroads in Africa and Latin America. Between their free language classes and their studies emigration initiatives, fully 20% of these two regions can be expected to be of Chinese ethnicity within a quarter century. In the US, long-irrational dependence of cheap illegal labor now threatens crops of those who have refused to provide productivity gains or proper social security for labor. Security is Orange in part because NATO is beginning to realize that all natural resources cannot be protected by force; because the U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps are bordering on hollow; and because the White House is refusing to recognize Central Intelligence Agency reporting that reduces Iran’s threat. On a positive note, Australia is leading the creation of a virtual “1000-ship Navy” by constituting a multinational sea watch in its area of interest, and US Departments of Defense and State have formed a “Joint Hub” (which is, however, funded at laughable levels, on the order of \$2 million a year). Social Security may rise to Yellow in the future, as savings are achieved in health care, and universal health care in the USA becomes a public imperative. Water is verging on Red. Peru has made it national security issue, while China has recently announced that it has 400 water-stressed cities, up from 300 a decade ago.

Debt, Economy, Energy, and Justice are in the YELLOW, with Debt verging on Orange and Energy verging on Blue. The U.S. debt verges on Orange, as it is highly unlikely the Democratic Congress will be effective in reigning in the spend-thrift neo-conservative Executive. The Economy (initially this weekly report is centered on the USA) is in grave trouble as the Executive continues to sponsor tax cuts for the wealthy while running up a war bill than will soon exceed the cost of the Vietnam War while lasting longer than World War II. Energy on the other hand is showing signs of a renaissance, with localized policies and alternatives beginning to emerge, safe nuclear power becoming more attractive, and bio-fuels making more gains. Justice in the USA is still uneven, but Amicus Curiae challenges to indefinite retention, rendition, and other excesses are emerging.

Agriculture, Education and Family are in the BLUE but always verging on Yellow. Negotiations among the European Union, the US, and Japan may re-emerge. U.S. education is not working. 40% of US children now born out of wedlock, many evidently from planned wedlock. The financial implications of agriculture dependent on cheap oil, education dependent on rote learning, and family life dependent on two income families, are simply not being honestly and publicly calculated. All three of these factors should be Yellow verging on Orange, for all three are fundamental to the totality of community security and prosperity.

Challengers Summary

NOTE: *Challengers* are not competitors as much as they are major players destined to make all the mistakes made by the USA. US strategy must be one of educational engagement—but first US has to re-educate itself.

Iran and Venezuela are in the ORANGE. Iran continues to arm itself, buying air defense missiles from Russia. However, our judgment is that Iran is not a threat—the greatest threat is a mis-guided US attack on Iran that will trigger a cataclysmic counter-attack on both major US ships in the area (with Sunburn super-sonic missiles) and on Israel. Venezuela is somewhat destabilized by US Information Operations campaigns that continue to demonize President Chavez, and his logical decision to remove Venezuela from the Group of Three, the other two being Colombia and Mexico, both too dependent on the US to be reliable allies to Venezuela.

All other challengers are in the YELLOW. High points include Brazil’s increased concern on trans-border drug crime, China’s improved ties with India and Pakistan along with its recognition of nuclear energy as vital to its future, and China’s focus on crime fighting. **Indonesia could be a major positive** if it were to prevail on Malaysia and other balanced Muslim nations to field a Muslim peacekeeping force. South Africa’s launch of low earth-orbiting communications satellite could usher in a new era for African communications. Still lacking is a \$1 billion fiber cable for the entire Eastern side of Africa. Abandoned US DoD satellites with 10-20% residual capability could also be mobilized, but no one in the US Government is thinking about



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connectivity as a form of diplomacy.

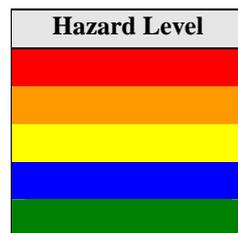
Highly negative are China's lack of reliable water for 320 million, and the increase of its water stressed cities in number from 300 a decade ago to 400 today. Russia verges on Orange from a combination of massive crime across its energy sector, a planned increase of 30% in its heavy-metal military, and general instability.

The United Nations (UN) is YELLOW. Its identification of the ten high-level threats and the eight Millennium Goals is a very good starting point. Its focus on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) also.

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>



Change Codes
↓ Deteriorated
• Steady
↑ Improved
↗ Alert

Threats

see daily items on the web at

Summary

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

Poverty	↑	From Nepal senior vice president of the World Bank admits that <i>economic inequality</i> is responsible for political <i>instability</i> and <i>conflict</i> in the world. In Bangladesh, millions of people without <i>electricity</i> and running <i>water</i> are getting access to the <i>internet</i> over <i>cellular</i> phones. USAID announces an MoU with the World Bank's <i>International Finance Corporation</i> on support for grass-roots business development projects in the developing world. <i>GM cotton</i> with the gene "turned off" that produces <i>gossypol</i> which is toxic to human would make significant quantities of <i>protein</i> available for human consumption -- "It tasted better than soybean."
Infectious Disease	↓	<i>Chikungunya</i> [spread by <i>Aedes aegypti</i> , the malaria mosquito] has arrived in the US – it could end up being "more dangerous to public health than <i>West Nile</i> virus." The WHO <i>African Regional Health Report</i> says <i>local solutions</i> fit best -- "there are public health solutions that work in the African setting".
Environment	↓	Vast quantities of <i>discarded computer equipment</i> is ending up in <i>Africa</i> and developing nations elsewhere creating a dangerous mountain of <i>toxic "e-waste"</i> -- "the reporting we have at the moment is really just the tip of an iceberg." In a qualitative shift, the EPA will now regulate <i>nanotech</i> substances that enter the environment, such as silver-based household germicidal materials. A <i>chemical plant explosion</i> in <i>Massachusetts</i> is a reminder that cause (accident or terrorist) can be irrelevant to the hazard -- "It looks like a war zone ... It's devastating."



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	<p>For yet unclear reasons, the EPA has closed libraries, and <i>trashed unique research documents without notice to either the public or affected scientists</i>. [<u>Opinion</u>: If true, nothing short of criminal prosecution seems indicated.]</p> <p>Reducing Methane, is one of several greenhouse gases but reducing methane will see a quicker response – it has an atmospheric lifetime of about eight years, whereas carbon dioxide can last 100 years.</p> <p>"<i>The Earth is shrinking</i>" -- "although population growth has been curbed in many regions, the area of habitable land is decreasing at an increasing rate.</p>
<p>Inter-State Conflict</p>	<p>✓ Bombs kill 115 in Baghdad -- "... one of most devastating such attacks since the U.S. invasion nearly four years ago." Iraqi civilian deaths reach new high of 3,709 in October 2006 -- also more than 2 million people have fled their homes since the US-led invasion of 2003. Unattributed, the US military says: "Up to 100 foreign fighters cross into Iraq from Syria every month." A report on financing of the Iraqi insurgency "offers little hope that much can be done, at least soon, to choke off insurgent revenues." Shi'ites stone the Iraqi Prime Minister; Jordan hosts a summit fearing three civil wars; Iran will help if the US withdraws. Training camps east of Baghdad are said to be turning out well-disciplined units willing to fight US forces in set-piece battles. Iraq and Syria will restore diplomatic ties, ending a 25 year break. Before the Baker report hits the streets, a Pentagon panels sees three options in Iraq - <i>Go Home, Go Big, "Go Longer"</i></p> <p>South Korea will send 400 troops to Lebanon for UN peacekeeping, 270 Special Forces as well as 130 medics, transportation, and administrative soldiers. French peace-keepers now have formal permission to shoot down Israeli aircraft operating unlawfully over Lebanon -- "UNIFIL has the right to take all necessary action to protect UN personnel in self-defense."</p> <p>The EU counsels against the US imposing a "peace support" operation on Somalia as it would seem to be a cover for broader military operation against the Islamic Courts.</p> <p>Formation of the Afghanistan National Auxiliary Police is a well grounded idea but dangerous -- "We know that we are probably training some of the bad guys."</p>
<p>Civil War</p>	<p>✓ Full-scale violence re-erupts in the East if the Congo in the wake of disputed elections. [Shades of Rwanda ...] Warlord Laurent Nkunda, a former general whose militia are battling government forces, claims Congo's tenuous democracy excludes the minority Tutsi community.</p> <p>The rebel Forces for Development and Democracy (UFDD) have entered Abeche in eastern Chad. [A to and fro tussle continued for days.] Chad extends an initial 12-day State of Emergency for six months.</p> <p>Ethiopia's pressure on Somalia may lead to its own crisis -- ethnic Somalis from Ethiopia's Ogaden region are joining the Islamic Courts. Thousands of Ethiopian troops seem to be preparing for an engagement.</p> <p>Perhaps a 10-year civil war in Nepal that killed thousands has ended with Maoist rebels and the government signing a peace deal. Anti-Maoist militias begin destroying weapons - "This is not a big number, but symbolically it is a very important step towards peace in villages."</p> <p>With the assassination of a leading Christian politician, Lebanon may descend into a pro-Syrian (Muslim) and anti-Syrian (Christian) polarity.</p> <p>In Sri Lanka, the separatist Tamils kill another of their own perceived to have betrayed the cause.</p>
<p>Genocide</p>	<p>↓ A World Court official reports there is <i>prime facie</i> evidence of war-crimes and/or genocide in Darfur -- "The hope for justice is one of the few things that the victims of Darfur still have." A closed-door Egypt-Libya-Sudan summit in Tripoli has tried to tackle the Darfur issue.</p> <p>Rwanda has broken ties after a French judge issued warrants for nine Rwandans for plotting the downing of then-President Juvenal Habyarimana's airplane in April 1994. Rwanda responded: "The French are trying to appease their conscience for their role in the genocide</p>



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		and are now trying to find someone else to hold responsible for their acts here".
Other Atrocities		• Head of the Israeli armed forces says he is "disappointed but not surprised" that instructions restricting use of <i>cluster bombs</i> had been ignored, breaching Israel's own rules on their use.
Proliferation	↓	Polonium-210 became the best-known element of the year as the mystery deepened this week over its use by persons unknown to kill an FSB defector in London. <i>Bio-terrorism, bio-security</i> and <i>disease surveillance</i> were on the agenda of the sixth review conference of the <i>Convention on Biological Weapons</i> in Geneva. One US contribution was that Iran might have <i>CBM</i> weapons.
Terrorism		• British army experts defused at least six <i>explosive devices</i> delivered by a <i>Protestant extremist</i> to the Northern Ireland Assembly. The EU 's data protection panel has said SWIFT must stop transfer of transaction data to US anti-terrorism authorities. The web gives now has a rich knowledge base on waging a <i>jihad of electronic warfare</i> -- "In the radical Islamist forums, you find sections that are the electronic jihad equivalent of how to make bombs." More information emerged on Europe -based <i>terrorism cells</i> - "Investigators say the evidence reveals the workings of the kind of cell most feared by officials in Europe." The Hudson Institute has released its latest volume on the <i>ideological dynamics</i> of the worldwide <i>Islamist</i> movement. Speakers at the <i>International Sufi Conference</i> in Lahore [Pakistan] expressed hope that <i>Sufism</i> can start to play a positive role in resolving <i>Islamist</i> conflicts. In Thailand, the leader of Bersatu [Unity] tells <i>Al-Jazeera</i> that his umbrella group is willing to negotiate, but younger insurgents are not; they want independence and may now have association with Ji . In a particularly brutal act in almost daily shootings and bombings, <i>insurgents</i> in southern Thailand burn a government teacher alive. South-east Asian authorities will step up intelligence information on the <i>Sulu - Sabah - Sulawesi</i> well-trod <i>terrorist</i> route between the Philippines and the rest of South-east Asia.
Transnational Crime		• A senior UK police officer says it costs \$23K [or less] to give an addict <i>heroin</i> , but an addict must steal \$82k a year to buy heroin from criminals. [Do the math.] Experts say Organized Crime is 'everywhere' in the Russian energy sector -- "from oil rigs and gas stations to major oil companies."
↓ deteriorated		• steady
		↑ improved
		⚡ ALERT

Policy		<i>see daily items on the web at</i>
Summary		http://meta2.com/PDB/pdbDetail.asp?POLICY
Agriculture	↑	The big players are talking again -- if the EU reciprocates to the US-Japan promise of " <i>deeper reductions in trade-distorting farm support</i> ", the Doha Round may get another chance.
Debt	•	[nothing significant to report]
Diplomacy	↓	[In the wake of " <i>group diplomacy</i> " recently done by China ...] Delegates arrived in Nigeria for first <i>Africa/South America summit</i> -- "Twelve South American countries will join 53 countries in Africa to discuss workable areas of mutual cooperation and understanding ." The head of Italy 's <i>military intelligence</i> agency, SISMI , has been relieved of his post for his involvement with US rendition operations. An Uzbek government website declares that US criticism of Uzbek internal affairs " <i>again shows the one-sided approach and double standards of U.S. foreign policy.</i> " International Crisis Group says it is imperative that any engagement with Syria is set up rationally, not set up to fail, or sabotaged by others. Syria may be able to help with Iraq , but the <i>Golan Heights</i> are likely to be the price.



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	<p>Vice President Dick Cheney visited oil-rich Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah for unspecified reasons.</p> <p>Analysts "vote" on the likelihood that the US could bomb Iran in 2007 -- "<i>It is not realistic but it does not mean we won't do it.</i>"</p>
Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Next year the war costs of Iraq and Afghanistan will almost certainly pass the Vietnam War's \$531B, making it the second most expensive US war ever, behind World War II. [adjusted costings used.]
Education	<p>↓ Despite all the schools policy, "The gaps between <i>African-Americans</i> and <i>whites</i> are showing very few signs of closing."</p>
Energy	<p>↑ Now 20 states and DC have some form of policy goal for <i>renewable energy</i>.</p> <p>Showing what <i>energy politics</i> of the future will look like, Russia has threatened to cut <i>electricity</i> to Azerbaijan.</p> <p>A government report has found that development of <i>nuclear power</i> in Australia is viable; Australia has 40% of the world's known <i>uranium reserves</i>.</p> <p>A <i>cellulosic ethanol</i> plant is planned in Iowa -- the process yields 27% more ethanol from an acre of <i>corn</i> because it uses the cellulosic corn stalks and leaves, the first such commercial plant in the US.</p>
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A wide-ranging statistical report reveals almost 4 in 10 US children were born <i>outside of marriage</i> in 2005; but the <i>teen birth rate</i> dropped to the lowest level on record; unwed births rose most dramatically among women in their 20s [seeming to indicate <u>planned</u> unwed births].
Immigration	<p>↓ "Pear Crop Rots as Field Hands Kept from Crossing Border" -- the other half of the immigration debate - "If the <i>migrants</i> don't show up for the next <i>harvest</i> ... [we'll] ... have to destroy entire orchards that were planted more than a century ago."</p>
Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Former U.S. Attorney General Reno and seven other senior Justice Department officials have filed an <i>Amicus Curiae</i> brief questioning <i>indefinite detention</i> policy.
Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NATO says "continuing transformation" over the next 10 to 15 years will include <i>counter-terrorism</i>, prevention of <i>cyber attacks</i> and security of <i>natural resources</i>. <p>The new commandant of the <i>Marine Corps</i> says there is a need to increase numbers to spread the load -- "<i>I would say there is stress on individual Marines that is increasing.</i>"</p> <p>Due to some kind of typing error, <i>air marshals</i> were kept off plane at <i>Reagan</i> -- "Even the intervention of higher-ups in the Homeland Security Department could not persuade the airline to allow the armed law-enforcement agents aboard."</p> <p>The White House has brushes aside a CIA draft assessment on Iran saying there is no evidence of real and present <i>nuclear</i> capability. [The White House either has an unknown better source of intelligence ... or should get one.]</p> <p>Australia has assisted in planning a "<i>maritime neighborhood watch</i>" scheme with Pacific nations, including Russia and China which would provide a regional security system of a "1000-ship Navy" .</p> <p>Guam is to host <i>UAVs</i> -- "A \$53 million hangar and operations complex for the <i>Global Hawk</i> is currently under construction."</p> <p>DOD and the State Department are discussing a "<i>Joint Hub</i>" for stability operations and irregular war in what may be a revolutionary move to accommodate the necessity for "integrated interagency operations" in the new normal of irregular warfare, support, and state-building operations. Another analyst agrees -- "In the bad old days, security was a military thing, full stop." But it now should be about "<i>human security</i>". [<i>infectious disease, global warming, and poverty</i>] Air Force Space Command and the National Reconnaissance Office have agreed to start talking to each other and have mutual <i>secondment</i> of officers.</p>
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Aggressive changes" by the States in how <i>Medicaid</i> is managed in has brought the first decline in Medicaid costs ever. The first meeting of the National Governors Association



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Security	after the mid-term elections has made clear its view of national priorities – <i>immigration</i> and <i>health-care</i> . “The return of Hillarycare?” said a headline -- vitriolic attacks on universal <i>health-care</i> as “ <i>government’s medical interference</i> ” betrays ignorance of experience in other countries.
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Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water is now a matter of national security for Peru -- “Working <i>toilets</i> and clean <i>drinking water</i> are unattainable luxuries for a third of Peru’s city dwellers and two-thirds of its rural population.”
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Challengers	<i>see daily items on the web at</i>
Summary	http://meta2.com/PDB/pdbDetail.asp?CHALLENGERS

Brazil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brazil has sent troops to the border to battle drug crime -- “Most of the <i>drugs</i> entering Brazil come through Paraguay and go to <i>Sao Paulo</i> and <i>Rio de Janeiro</i> states or the nearby port of <i>Santos</i> for shipment abroad.”
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China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zhang Li, deputy chief of general staff of the PLA spent four days in Yemen. India and China report a joint ventures to acquire <i>oil</i> assets -- [An arrangement probably more enduring than peace treaties, and a <u>formidable buying cartel</u>.] Fresh from reaching a new détente with India, Chinese President Hu Jintao reassures Pakistan that old ties will be only stronger. China and Pakistan recognize that the “three forces” [Chinese code for <i>Xijang separatism</i>] and <i>nuclear energy</i> are keys in their “all weather” relationship. It’s official: China has no sinister motives in <i>Africa</i>. [At least, no more “sinister” than any other geopolitical relationship.] China says reported <i>HIV/AIDS</i> cases up nearly 30%. [Most of the increase can be attributed to the very low base of reported cases -- it was policy for <i>HIV/AIDS</i> to <u>not exist</u> in China until recently.] An <i>activist</i> committed to raising <i>AIDS</i> awareness in China disappeared for several days following a lengthy interview by police. Taiwan is seeking to buy more US submarines. [Obviously the supplier will not tell them ‘For you the war is over.’] Chinese police claim to have broken more than 1,300 <i>organized crime gangs</i> -- organized crime gangs are often protected by public officials, state staff through bribery, threats or other means. China takes decisive steps to clean up the <i>internet</i>, by jailing the creator of China’s largest <i>pornographic</i> website jailed for life. China’s Deputy Procurator-General calls a new moderation in handling police suspects, such as reduction in “<i>illegal interrogation by atrocious torture</i>”. China’s experts say “The safety of <i>water</i> supplies for 320 million rural people can not be guaranteed and more than 400 cities suffered inadequate supplies.” Beijing’s <i>air pollution</i> was rated “hazardous” -- the highest pollution category – on 21 November 2006. The sick and dying <i>Yellow River</i> has received another insult from a <i>pollutant spill</i> that made it run red. China will build 10,000 <i>eco-villages</i> over next five years -- “... a national program to make people rich by constructing environmentally friendly homes.”
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India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India has closed down mobile signals along the Bangladesh border to deny cellular support to <i>trans-border criminals and militants</i>. Chief of Army Staff has announced the intention to <i>modernize</i> the Indian Army of 1.1 million “in all dimensions”. India acknowledges the dangerous nexus <i>terrorists</i> and <i>proliferation</i> -- “National capacities will have to be built up to better anticipate ‘the crises of tomorrow’.” The bombing of an Indian train that kills 8 and injures 60 is the work of <i>communist rebels</i> or <i>Assam separatists</i> [or someone else]. The first visit by a Chinese head of state in 10 years signifies China and India are trying hard to normalize relations.
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Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two more groups of Indonesian <i>peacekeepers</i> are to join an advance team already in Lebanon, bringing the total commitment to around 820. Indonesia says it is ready to use its good offices as a <i>Muslim</i> nation to assist with the Iraq issue and to provide troops under a UN flag if necessary. <p>Indonesia and Russia will sign a military cooperation accord to cover military cooperation for 2006-2010 and the war on <i>terrorism</i>.</p> <p>The President has again issued encouragement for a <i>local defense industry</i> -- the defense minister believes in future Indonesian companies will produce sophisticated arms and war machines like <i>submarines</i>.</p> <p>There have been peaceful but impolite <i>protests</i> against President Bush's visit to in Bogor in west Java.</p>
Iran	<p>↓ Despite US-led <i>embargoes</i>, Russia is delivering <i>Tor-MI air defense missile</i> systems to Iran.</p>
Russia	<p>↓ A meeting of the CIS council prepared for the <i>CIS Summit</i> in Minsk on November 28 2006. Georgia's Speaker says Georgia has no reason to stay in the CIS -- a final decision may be taken after the upcoming <i>Summit</i>.</p> <p>Numerous reports tracked the <i>death by poison</i> of former FSB officer Litvinenko.</p> <p>Russia will increase <i>military spending</i> by 30%, to \$27.5B. The Interior Minister says over 880 <i>terrorist</i> plots were foiled in Russia this year.</p>
Venezuela	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "An operational event that affected a furnace of the Hydrosulfurization Unit Number 4 of the <i>Amuay refinery</i>" was heard 10km away. <p>"<i>Coup d'État In Venezuela: Made In The USA</i> ... The second step has been to use the mass media to create the perception that the <i>elections</i> are fraudulent." Observers from the OAS, the EU and the Atlanta-based Carter Center will oversee the vote in Venezuela's presidential election.</p> <p>Venezuela is leaving the Group of Three it shares with Mexico and Colombia, "a <i>neo-liberal scheme</i> which had destroyed economies in the region", in favor of Mercosur.</p>
[wild-card]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thousands rally in Karachi against Pakistan's move to "secularize" the country's perfidious Islamic law on rape that requires four witnesses. Pakistan now admits it was the US 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 damage and we've requested the Americans not to do it again." Quetta police [Pakistan] have apprehended a huge cache of <i>explosives</i> in a wagon coming from Bagh to Quetta at the Balili check-point . <p>South Africa will have its first <i>low earth-orbiting communications satellite</i>, <i>SumbandilaSAT</i>, launched from a Russian submarine in April-May 2007.</p> <p>A scholarly article argues Lebanon 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 [Bangladesh] will remain paralyzed as the opposition led by the Awami League continues its argument with the government and the Election Commission.</p>

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