



GLOBAL REALITY: THE WEEK IN REVIEW

You may not be interested in reality, but reality is interested in you.

Threat Summary

	<p>Inter-State Conflict this week shows 7 ICG Alerts, 14 Deteriorated world crises. Central Africa is on the brink of regional war with attendant genocides and transnational crime; regional conflict in the Middle East is possible.</p> <p>Proliferation controls are asinine to non-existent. From theft to accidents, it is on the open market. One wonders how long we can pretend to control this in detail while avoiding more strategic remediation at cultural level.</p> <p>Terrorism threatens tunnels from Europe to the US. Physics has its own asymmetric logic—a small breach in a tunnel brings to bear gravity and the weight of tons of water. As with proliferation, US rushes to treat symptoms, with a planned investment in bio-terror vaccines that will enrich a few and not work for the many. <i>In a major positive development, one major terrorist group now eschews violence—this must be the focus of our efforts.</i></p>
	<p>Poverty in the era of globalization is characterized by exploding inequalities. The tiny number of extremely wealthy individual seem oblivious to the fact that concentrated wealth is the single most frequent stimulus to violent revolution and populist redistribution of wealth. Southern Thai poverty stimulating Islamic insurgency.</p> <p>Environment this week finds thirteen US states suing the federal government for failing to address soot emissions (27 states have active secessionist movements). A new study focuses on 7,000 US sites with 1.7 trillion gallons of contaminated water, 1.4 billion cubic feet of contaminated soil. Bears can no longer sleep through the warming winters.</p> <p>Civil War finds Sri Lanka on the verge of civil war with genocidal overtones, but it is not on the ICG list. India has stated it has no plans to intervene. This conflict reminds us that religious hatreds leading to violence are not confined to Islamics against Christians.</p> <p>Genocide this week includes two Red (Iraq, Sudan), three Orange (Chad, Ethiopian Anuak, Zimbabwe) and two Yellow (Burma or Myanmar, Uzbekistan) at GenocideWatch with a total of 18 countries in the mass killing stage and 45 countries (including the 18) sanctioning specified politicides or genocides.</p> <p>Transnational Crime finds women in leadership positions—last week we found women in leadership positions within terrorist groups—this causes us to reiterate our warning: when women give up on the government and choose to engage actively in terrorism and transnational crime, a complete loss of legitimacy is occurring. From Afghanistan to Bolivia drug crops are expanding, while China is losing tax revenue to a flood of underground banks engaged in money laundering. Within a decade, we may see drug crops and off the book money surpass legal trade and central banks. The stability of legal commerce is being threatened as never before, and in our view, this is in part because legal commerce and central banks are abusive of the working class in all countries.</p>
	<p>Infectious Disease verges on Orange to Red. A shopping mall Santa touching numerous children was found to be an asymptomatic carrier of meningitis. A modern influenza pandemic could take 51 to 81 million lives—the key question is where, we speculate that with jet travel, it will hit the industrial west hardest. <i>In a major positive development, an experimental vaccine that might eliminate malaria all together is being tested in Africa.</i></p>
	<p>Other Atrocities finds Human Trafficking out of Bangladesh to be of severe concern. <i>In three positive developments, amnesty is being overturned in Chile—this should give Henry Kissinger nightmares; a treaty for the “Disappeared” has been approved by the General Assembly of the United Nation; and negligible punishments for officers who tortured a 15-year-old girl in Nepal have been openly criticized by the UN.</i></p>

NOTE: For each Threat, Policy, and Challenger we also provide a Forecast that is followed by the individual weekly summaries in reverse chronological order.

This allows a rapid sense of both prognosis and week-by-week recent history.

Click [here](#) for all Forecast and Histories —each has a persistent URL for bookmarking if desired.

The intent of this endeavor is to gradually migrate to a study of the US budget and other budgets, in order to show the disconnect between corruption-based budgets and the needed reality-based budgets.



Policy Summary

Diplomacy jumps into the Red this week, with the warning that US policy in the Horn of Africa may help rather than hinder Al Qaeda (the same is of course true in Iraq, which our novice Secretary of State continues to shun Iran and Syria and the larger global realities of the region). US “diplomacy is cursed by unilateralism, scorned by allies, and characterized by flawed intelligence, dogmatic rhetoric, inadequate attention, and domestic distraction. **Security** is in complete disarray. Men are sneaking in using Muslim veils and their sister’s passports. Sky marshals are in the cheap seats at the back while subway, train, and auto tunnels are completely vulnerable to relatively small explosive charges. Meanwhile, the US Air Force continues to undermine the US Army by seeking funding for global strike weapons it does not understand nor need, at the same time that air in the US contains over 1,800 types of bacteria including some close to bio-terror bacteria. Pentagon computers continue to be penetrated (in our judgment, the US is imminently vulnerable to a complete anonymous shut-down of its command & control, computing, communications, and pseudo-intelligence networks).

Social Security remains tenuous within the US and elsewhere. Hospitals are failing, food security is going downward, and violent crime is on the rise. All indicators are that the federal government is failing across the board; localized resilience must be the emergency focus on all communities desiring to sustain themselves.

Immigration on the Mexican border could become more lethal as tempers fray and existing policies fail. **Water** did not make this week’s report, so let us simply recommend an Amazon search of books for this topic. Be very afraid of the imminent collapse of clean water; the loss of water in the mid-West and West.

Debt has fallen off the news pages, crushed between the coverage of Hillary and Obama, and the need for a new direction in Iraq. Visit the [National Debt Clock](#). **Economy** sees a mainstream paper, the Washington Post, finally recognizing what many of us have been saying for years: capitalism as practiced by Wall Street is divorced from the concepts of justice and social equity. US society is being undermined at precisely the time that economic populism is sweeping anti-US corporation leaders into power across the southern hemisphere. If we do not clean house ourselves, it will be done by others.

Energy finds the United Kingdom turning to a massive wind farm as Argentina faces a major energy shortfall. Ethanol is clearly understood to be a partial answer, but all nations lack a strategy for mixing renewable, portable, and nuclear energies with conservation and re-direction. Not in today’s weekly, but just out, Iran is now known to be facing a horrific shortfall in oil revenue and oil energy by 2015, a logical justification for its interest in the nuclear alternative. One could reasonably ask why the US is not focused on solutions instead of confrontation.

Justice this week features the ten most wanted corrupt politicians in the US—Hillary Clinton is among them.

Agriculture finds marijuana to be the single most valuable crop grown in the US, with a wholesale value of \$35.8 billion that dwarfs corn at \$23 billion. This is the same crop that puts the majority of the US prison population in jail to serve as corporate slaves. In a very positive development, farm state governors are beginning to feel the power of the people and beginning to state the obvious: farming subsidies are abusive and helping to destroy the family farm while also failing to fund research, education, and other life-sustaining initiatives.

Education must be a life-long endeavor. A new study shows that a mere 5% increase in cognitive reserve would prevent one third of Alzheimer’s cases. (Elsewhere Alzheimer’s is considered by some to be partly comprised of mis-diagnosed Mad Cow disease cases. The medical industry is in its infancy, and losing ground.

Family is being undermined by Christian Zionists who value Israel and its destabilizing role in the Middle East more than the more rational American Jews. Extremist religions and gang socialization are breaking down the family, along with poverty and the other related threats. This is the cornerstone of stability, and easily lost.



Challenger Summary

Iran is an extraordinarily sophisticated challengers constantly under-estimated by poorly educated Washington policy makers who have never learned just what it means to be Persian. While beset by opposition and its looming energy shortfalls, Iran has many things going for it including strong ties with India and Pakistan centered around energy and religion. A serving British Army officer of Iranian descent has been found to be an Iranian agent; the US forgets the number of Persians now US citizens, at its peril. They can help, or hinder.

Venezuela is making some important and sound moves—retiring debt, creating new anti-corruption measures with help from Cuba, focusing on poverty eradication with help from Malaysia, attacking drugs and oil smuggling with help from everyone except the US, the Drug Enforcement Administration officers having been declared *persona non grata*.

Brazil is finding journalists on crime family payrolls—one can assume that indigenous criminal organizations are vastly superior to the CIA in penetrating their own governments, and wonder why we do not stress anti-crime collaboration with Brazil, instead of spending so much time focused on its emergent nuclear/missile programs.

China remains the 900-ton gorilla, the absolute centerpiece to the eight challengers. South Africa’s Mbeki now sees Chinese imperialism as a threat, no doubt influences by the rapid emigration of Chinese to neighboring Argentina (*en passant*, we are beginning to appreciate the Expulsion Edicts of Spain, and anticipate the day coming when such Edicts will be issued and accompanying by internal genocide against foreigners). China is now focusing on the degree to which foreign companies can be blamed for creating pollution which, combined with its severe water scarcity (400 water-stressed cities, up from 300), could make life very difficult for masses.

India remains one of the most complicated nations on the planet, with severe ethnic and religious and class divisions that would long ago have torn any other nation asunder. The lower castes are making progress and India is actively seeking to peacefully negotiate key conflicts, mindful of the severe cost to its economy if US companies pulled their call centers out (the call centers are the US Achilles heel overseas, and we anticipate more bombings against them). Russia continues to expand its weapons servicing centers, and between them, Russia and China appear to be displacing the US in many countries by focusing on a presence that is useful instead of dogmatic and intrusive.

Indonesia assigned 18,000 policemen to guard Christian churches during the Christmas week. It has expressed public concern over “markets boiling with dirty money” and is extending anti-corruption law from the government to the financial markets. A People’s Conscience Party has been founded by Gen Wiranto, former head of the Armed Forces. Indonesia remains a bulwark of stability that Australia, Asia in general, and the USA in particular continue to ignore at their peril. This is a key nation; it is one of the eight challengers for good reason. Malaysia has our complete respect, and is not a challenger because of its inherent good sense and stability. Indonesia is the nation in Asia that must receive the lion’s share of the best diplomacy we can muster.

Russia continues to expand, filling a vacuum left by the US (“tontos utiles” or useful idiots) in Latin America. They are making gains in Brazil and Argentina that compound their new-found presence in Venezuela, and it is Russians rather than Americans that are now welcomed into anti-crime joint task forces. Russia sees the danger and opportunity of weaponizing outer space, which we oppose for sensible reasons: it is one more way for the US taxpayer to be looted in favor of corporations and their banking owners. President Putin is now publicly acknowledging what may be inevitable, the loss of Soviet Central Asia and especially the far east, to China. China is doing to Russia what Mexico is doing to the US, and both great nations need to deeply examine their national population policies inclusive of family, immigration, health, and justice. Population defines the future.



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World Crises [based on monthly assessments by <i>International Crisis Group</i>]	
↗ Alert	Bangladesh, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Fiji, Lebanon, Somalia
↓ Deteriorated	Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Fiji, India (non-Kashmir), Iraq, Lebanon, Somalia, Sudan, Tonga
↑ Improved	Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Senegal

[International Crisis Group](#)

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

Threats	<i>see daily items with links to full stories on the web at PDB-THREATS</i>	
Poverty	↓	The Administrator of UNDP is seeking a more equitable face to <i>globalization</i> - "we can characterize our age as one of exploding inequalities". In Thailand , the rate of women dying in childbirth in the southern <i>Islamic</i> provinces is worse than that of <i>Ethiopia</i> , objective proof of social disparities that underpin the ongoing insurgency.
Infectious Disease	•	A Mall Santa in the US was found to be an asymptomatic carrier of <i>meningitis</i> after he had contact with numbers of children. Researchers applied historical death rates to modern population data and found a modern <i>influenzapandemic</i> could take <u>51 million to 81 million</u> lives. Fresh outbreaks of <i>H5N1</i> are reported in Vietnam and Nigeria ; in Egypt , H5N1 was diagnosed too late to save a victim. An experimental <i>vaccine</i> "that theoretically could eliminate <i>malaria</i> from entire regions by killing the malaria parasite in an area's mosquitoes..." is under review in <i>Africa</i> .
Environment	↓	<i>Bears</i> in Europe have been discovered not sleeping through the Winter ... probably due to <i>global warming</i> . The ' <i>Happy Feet</i> ' <i>Rockhopper penguins</i> have little to sing about ... "Their number in the <i>Falkland Islands</i> has tumbled 30 percent in just five years." Thirteen US states are suing the EPA over its neglect of <i>soot emissions</i> -- "... one more example of the federal government ignoring sound science in establishing environmental policy and watering down safeguards...." Separately, a US Appeals Court says the EPA must include a general responsibility for <i>clean air</i> in its functions. The US government has commenced a study of <i>contaminated</i> sites seeking effective methods -- subsurface contamination exists at 7,000 US sites involving 1.7Trillion gallons of contaminated <i>water</i> , 1.4B ft3 of contaminated <i>soil</i> .
Inter-State Conflict	↗	In Somalia , <i>Islamists</i> and troops defending the Government's only stronghold exchanged rockets and heavy weapons fire at two front-line areas; Ethiopian tanks started rolling forward. The UN warns that a swath of <i>Central Africa</i> -- from Somalia to Cameroon -- is on the brink of war. "This must end before it's like Iraq" -- the <i>Fatah-Hamas</i> conflict in <i>Gaza</i> goes from hopeless to worse. A US-NATO air-strike has killed Akhtar Mohammad Osmani , head of <i>Taliban</i> in south Afghanistan -- "for a while there is going to be a loss of capability." <i>Iraqi</i> insurgents are starving Baghdad of <i>electricity</i> -- "... insurgents have effectively won their battle to bring down critical high-voltage lines and cut off the capital from the major power plants to the north, south and west." On 20061220, 76 bodies turned up in Baghdad, the <u>highest yet</u> for a 24-hour period. <i>Shi'ites</i> are effectively performing " <i>ethnic cleansing</i> " in Baghdad by ejecting Sunni residents. The Chair in Strategy at the <i>Center for Strategic and International Studies</i> [US] says the US has "less than 50-50 chance" of "winning" in Iraq . US General David Petraeus says in an interview with <i>Der Spiegel</i> "We



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		have to raise our sights beyond the range of an M-16".
Civil War	↙	In Sri Lanka , the <i>Tamil Tigers</i> warn of full-scale war; Norwegian truce monitors see little hope of peace and are alarmed at the impact the military's plan to flush the Tigers out of the area will have on civilians. India , responding to a Tamil delegation, confirms it has no intention to intervene in the conflict but suggests a suitable solution can be found.
Genocide	•	Sudan has finally agreed to UN <i>peacekeepers</i> in Darfur but UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said he is taking "nothing for granted" after many false starts.
Other Atrocities	↑	The UN has criticized Nepal for the negligible punishment of three officers who were convicted of <i>torturing</i> to death a 15-year-old girl suspected of being a <i>Maoist</i> rebel. The EU will grant around \$260M to UNDP to fight <i>human trafficking</i> in Bangladesh . Following Pinochet's death, Chile's government is moving to reverse <i>amnesty</i> granted by a previous government to the perpetrators of atrocities in Pinochet's regime -- "This government ... maintains that the amnesty was an illegitimate decision in its origins and content, form and foundation". Chilean lawmaker supporters of Pinochet seek to build <i>monument</i> to the dead criminal. ↑ A treaty for "The <i>Disappeared</i> " -- the <i>International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance</i> -- has been approved by the General Assembly and will be open to signing soon.
Proliferation	↓	A small but dangerous quantity of highly <i>radioactive</i> material has been stolen in India in a state infamous for an <i>insurgency</i> -- "It carries <i>uranium</i> and radiation could have an adverse effect in an area of 1.5 kilometers". Iran has formally asked the UN to make Israel give up its unlawful <i>nuclear arms</i> -- "Israel is assumed to have about 200 nuclear weapons..." Some Israel-loyalists see recent comments in the Middle East as the " <i>Arab Race for the Bomb</i> " -- "We must also formally recognize that Iran has already declared war on us." In a UN operation 270 kilos of highly enriched [<i>weapon-grade</i>] <i>uranium</i> fuel has been successfully removed from Germany and transported to a processing centre near Podolsk in Russia . Unrelated ... <i>radioactive waste</i> being transported has falling out of a van in Germany and been strewn about when the drum broke open. <i>World Politics Watch</i> published a definitive article on Russia's Angarsk International Uranium Enrichment Center ; see <i>Nuclear Fuel Supply Proposals Aimed at Weakness in Nonproliferation Regime</i> . The continuing <i>WhoDunIt</i> on the poisoned Russian ex-spy focuses on the high cost of the likely quantity of <i>polium-210</i> used; probably \$10M -- "You can't buy this much off the Internet or steal it from a laboratory without raising an alarm." Others said that was nonsense.
Terrorism	•	French and other sources have said the <i>channel tunnel</i> is currently a terror target--a plan was put together in Pakistan and is being directed from there. The terrorism rumor-mill said 12 "English brothers" -- <i>al Qaeda</i> western recruits -- are trained and ready to go operational in home countries. ["English" likely just has the sense of European.] The <i>al Qaeda</i> deputy says the US is talking to wrong people in Iraq -- "Any road other than <i> Jihad </i> will lead us nowhere but to failure and loss." The US administration has signed into law an incentives scheme for <i>bio-terror vaccines</i> -- "\$1.07 billion over two years would be used to help biotechnology companies make the leap from initial research to ready-to-buy procurement" ↑ An influential Egyptian Islamist group -- <i>al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya</i> --has made an avowal to cease violence, a conscious ideological reversal -- "... an outstanding example of a collective shift away from violence by leaders of a prominent radical Islamist organization."
Transnational Crime	•	An Italian anti- <i>Mafia</i> operation has netted <i>women</i> bosses among those arrested -- "The arrested include eight women believed to have taken up leading posts within the local <i>Valentini</i> clan." Bolivia is to expand the area permitted to grow <i>coca</i> -- Bolivia is the world's third-largest <i>coca</i> producer after Colombia and Peru -- the US is the biggest market for illicit derivatives. Colombia holds the first major hearing in its version of a <i>Truth and Reconciliation Commission</i> with paramilitary leader Salvatore Mancuso , a top Colombian warlord who must tell the truth about his past deeds in return for almost complete immunity. Mexican troops and police have destroyed 1,795 <i>marijuana</i> fields in Michoacán state, making an impact of about \$8.2M (wholesale) or \$600M (retail) on <i>drug cartels</i> . China has



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reported finding more *undergroundbanks* -- *moneylaundering* is said by some to be now rampant. A well-documented tale of false flags and satanic alliances confirming that reality is far more interesting than fiction ... *Litvinenko's Death: Where the Far Right Meets International Crime*

↓ deteriorated • steady ↑ improved ↗ ALERT

Policy see daily items with links to full stories on the web at [PDB-POLICY](#)

Agriculture • Federal *farm subsidies* are again criticized as cynically misspent public money -- "The very policies touted by Congress as a way to save *small family farms* are instead helping to accelerate their demise ..." It's official: *Cannabis sativa* (*marijuana*) is the most valuable crop grown in the US -- the 10,000 tonne of marijuana worth \$35.8B grown each year (with much higher street value) dwarfs the \$23B of *corn*, \$17.6B of *soybeans*, and all without benefit of *farm subsidies*.

Debt • [nothing significant to summarize but see links to stories in this topical area]

Diplomacy ↓ Peru's president has rejected US military support for the war on *coca* -- Peru will accept support on its own terms, particularly schemes that offer alternatives to coca farmers. **Britain** is looking to creating a coordinating body similar to a 'security council' -- "It is no longer possible to look at *domestic security policy* and *foreign policy* separately from each other." **Indonesia** and the **UK** have launched an advisory body to help counter 'extremism', but the *Indonesian UK Islamic Advisory Group* initiated by Prime Minister **Blair** is a good idea imperfectly executed as it excludes some key players. **US Secretary of State Rice** announced plans for regular regional briefings with the new **US Secretary of Defense** so the State Department and Pentagon can discover where their policy areas "overlap". Former **German** Foreign Minister, Joschka **Fischer**, writes about "the curse of *unilateralism*" -- "Will America hark back to the spirit of 1945 or, despite being sobered and disappointed, decide to stick to its lone and lonely path?" Commentators warn that US policy in the *Horn of Africa* may actually help rather than hinder *al Qaeda* -- "US handling of **Somalia** and **Ethiopia** is a tale of flawed intelligence, inadequate attention and overheated rhetoric, with a measure of domestic US politics thrown in." The US is said now to see **Algeria** as key partner in war on terror. With the **Iraq Study Group** report now in, some ask *Who's Making the Call?* -- "Bush often confuses *tactics*, *strategy* and *goals*." A peace researcher observed "It's only **dialogue** if we talk to those who disagree" -- "how do you meet the challenges of terrorism without engaging with terrorists?"

Economy ↓ The *Washington Post* observes that the US sense of *capitalism* is now quite disengaged from any idea of *justice* and systematic *inequity* and growing perception of this inequity will undermine US society. The *costs* for the **Iraq** war approach record levels just as public support for the conflict falls.

Education • Use it or Lose it; education (including lifelong education) may be the best prevention for *Alzheimer's* -- "a mere 5% increase in the *cognitive* reserve in the general population would prevent one third of Alzheimer's cases."

Energy • *Ethanol* will not be a long-term savior -- "even if 100% of the US *corn* supply was distilled into ethanol it would supply only a small fraction of the fuel consumed by the nation's vehicles." **Britain** has approved construction of the world's biggest *offshore wind farm* -- the 341-turbine *London Array* and 100-turbine *Thanet* wind farm will supply **1.3GW** of electricity, the first of a number of large-scale offshore wind farms in the UK. **Argentina** is facing a severe energy shortage that many experts blame on the lack of *investment* since the 2001-2002 economy crisis.

Family ↓ A writer in the *Jerusalem Post* observes that ("like it or not") *Christian Zionists* may be **Israel's** greatest asset in the US -- "the future of the relationship between Israel and the US might very well hinge far less on America's Jews than on its Christians."

Immigration • The US is said to be using some of its **Afghan** experience on the **Mexican** border -- "a mix of



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		age-old hunting techniques and high-tech spy-in-the-sky <i>surveillance</i> ."		
Justice	↓	<i>Judicial Watch</i> published a mixed-party list of " Ten Most Wanted Corrupt Politicians " for 2006 --"This list shows public <i>corruption</i> is endemic to our nation's capital..."		
Security		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK <i>border control</i> has plans to "lift <i>veils</i>" of Muslim women for identification purposes at British ports --"The order came after it was revealed that suspected killer Mustaf Jama flew from London's Heathrow airport to Somalia using his sister's passport." German sky marshals are angry at <i>Lufthansa</i> because they are now being seated at the rear of the aircraft to save money on high-price seats -- "if the price of a seat is more important than a key security task, then the scale has tipped in the wrong direction." The US government has released draft rules for securing <i>chemical plants</i> --"Companies would be required to assess their own <i>vulnerabilities</i> and provide the government with plans for fixing them..." The <i>New York Times</i> said a <i>bomb</i> could flood the <i>New York subway</i> "within hours" -- "the report was leaked by an official who was anxious that not enough was being done to respond to its findings." Under the new Congress, the GAO will soon "test" US <i>airport perimeter security</i> - Congress wants to know what the TSA has done since 9/11. The UN issued <i>radiation emergency guidelines</i> -- "<i>responders</i> generally have no experience with radiation emergencies, as they are very rare." A panel examining US <i>port security</i> has called for the <i>impossible</i> - 100% inspection. A first-of-its-kind comprehensive census in the US found <i>air</i> teeming with over 1,800 types of <i>bacteria</i> including relatives of those that could be used in <i>bioterrorist</i> attacks. The US Air Force indicated it was up to speed on options for "<i>prompt global strike</i>" in the modern world -- "...an array of prompt global strike weapons are needed to address urgent targets, such as terrorist hideouts or rogue nuclear capabilities..." Another Pentagon computer network has been penetrated -- nobody said "China". The <i>Situation Room</i> under the White House has the decorators in. Stories emerged of <i>military</i> and <i>CIA</i> teams "tripping over" each other in foreign places -- some asked why military special teams are being deployed in <i>friendly nations</i> -including <i>Europe</i> - when combat units are in short supply in <i>war zones</i>. 		
Social Security	↓	The <i>National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza</i> of November 2005 has been updated -- it envisages many agencies will contribute to <i>pandemic</i> preparedness. <i>Bacteria</i> has killed a second baby in an LA <i>hospital</i> ; profit-based <i>outsourcing</i> does it again -- medical instruments improperly sterilized by a "central supplier" was the probable source of the outbreak. Recent illness outbreaks from fresh food arises from too little regulation but opposition to <i>food irradiation</i> is a contributor. FBI data indicates that the lull in crime between 2001 and 2004 appears to be over and <i>violent crime</i> is on the rise.		
Water		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [nothing significant to summarize but see links to stories in this topical area] 		
	↓ deteriorated	• steady	↑ improved	↗ ALERT
Challengers		see <i>daily items with links to full stories on the web at</i> PDB-CHALLENGERS		
Brazil		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brazil will be the first Latin American country to reopen its embassy in Iraq since the 1991 <i>Gulf War</i>. A <i>journalist</i> has been accused of being on the payroll of a <i>crime gang</i> --"Jose Messias Xavier lost his job at TV Globo after public prosecutors said he took bribes of about \$465 a month from ... the <i>Fernando Iggnacio</i> crime family" 		
China		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> China held its third state-level <i>anti-terrorist exercise</i> involving both military and civil agencies. A top Chinese policy advisor stresses importance of research into <i>political consultation</i> theory -- after 4,000 years of doing without, China investigates a dangerous new idea. A leading human rights lawyer has been convicted of <i>subversion</i> but effectively released on probation, signaling some change in policy on critics. China has instructed its prosecuting organs to supervise use of <i>death penalty</i> more closely -- China is responding to foreign opinion, but is unfortunate to use "organs" in this context. China is shifting the blame for some of its outrageous <i>pollution</i> -- Is China really to blame, or the carpet-bagger <i>foreign</i> companies? South Africa's Mbeki has warned against a new wave of <i>imperialism</i> by China. 		
India		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pakistan and India held <i>maritime border</i> talks on the <i>Sir Creek estuary</i> on the Sindh- 		



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Gujarat border which has been one of the abiding disputes between the two countries. **Russia** has offered to set up in-country *service centers* for its frontline *weapon* systems in use with India's armed forces. Coinciding with divisive controversy over secular moves against *caste* discrimination, India appoints the first *low-caste Chief Justice*. President of the *Hindu* nationalist *Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)* says the *Congress*-led coalition has taken the wrong path on several crucial Indian issues which may lead to the further *partition* of India [politically and religiously rather than physically]. The **Dalai Lama** has called on low-caste Indians (*dalits*, "untouchables") to resist discrimination -- "*Religion cannot be allowed to be the source of further divisions.*" **Salahuddin**, head of *Mutahida Jihad Council* and *Hizb-Ul-Mujahideen*, is confident India will not render him to **Pakistan**, because he is an Indian (*Kashmiri*) citizen, "not some foreign element". Members of the *International Sikh Youth Federation* and significant munitions, including 11kg RDX, believed smuggled from Pakistan have been apprehended in north-west *Punjab*. Three *Lashkar* operatives were arrested near *Red Fort* [Agra, near New Delhi] with 2kg RDX -- "...the first instance of the **Pakistan**-based terror group recruiting cadres from a northeastern state." Maoist *Naxalites* in *Andhra Pradesh* [eastern Deccan] are forming smaller "action teams" of two or three due to the depredations of government action against them. India is still formulating its *Counter Terror Doctrine*. As a counter-terrorism measure, India will sharpen its *PSYOPS* programs -- "*The Psy Ops will be more focused in terms of de-glamourising terrorism and sensitising people about terror threats.*"

Indonesia

- Former leader of the *Aceh* autonomy movement (**GAM**) and now Aceh governor-elect, **Irwandi Yusuf**, has been asked by the **EU**-led monitoring mission to disband **GAM** within six months to conform with the *peace accord*. Indonesia's strict rules on *political parties*, which generally forbids *local* [rather than national] parties, have now been modified to accommodate local *Aceh* parties. Indonesian police are guarding *churches* throughout the Christmas period -- "*18,000 officers have been deployed at churches in Jakarta and tens of thousands more will be on duty elsewhere in the sprawling nation.*" Actions by groups such as *Forum Masyarakat Anti Komunis* against a store selling Marxist books are shades of the unfortunate 1960s 'reds under the beds' witch-hunts that saw pogroms of *Communist* sympathizers. Indonesia says the "markets are boiling with *dirty money*" -- "*We've seen many indications of money laundering recently through financial institutions and the capital market.*" Indonesia's *anti-corruption law*, which presently covers state employees, will be expanded to cover capital markets. Gen. **Wiranto**, former head of the armed forces, has formed **HANURA**, the *People's Conscience Party*. **Abu Bakar Ba'asyir** has been exonerated of a charge he already served 26 months for -- "conspiracy" in the 2002 Bali bombings. **Australia** grudgingly admits there was probably not enough evidence for the conviction.

Iran

- Results in *elections* showed a swing towards opponents of President **Ahmadinejad** -- "A big boost for moderates within the ruling Islamic establishment was visible in the big number of votes for former President Hashemi **Rafsanjani**." A *car-bomb* comprising 52kg TNT was disarmed in a south-eastern province -- the Sunni *Jundallah* group, or *Balochi* separatists, may be responsible. A **US** judge has concluded that the *Khobar Towers* attack was carried out by "people recruited by Gen. Ahmed Sharifi of the *Iranian Revolutionary Guards*" and ordered Iran to \$254M. **Malaysia** and Iran have agreed to scientific cooperation. Days after passage of the Security Council resolution against **Iran's nuclear** activities, President General Pervez **Musharraf** confirms that "No pressure will be tolerated on the *Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) gas pipeline* project" said. A well-placed **British** Army aide has been charged with *espionage* -- for the first time in over 20 years the *UK Official Secrets Act* has been invoked to lay charges against a soldier (of Iranian descent) who was an *interpreter* for the **NATO** commander in **Afghanistan**. A Scottish newspaper published a well-sourced article on Iran's *intelligence network* -- "*Iran has one of the most sophisticated intelligence networks on Earth ... They are resourceful, clever and never complacent.*" see [Iran's Spies](#). The *Washington Institute for Near East Policy* published (*qv*) [Iran's Doctrine of Asymmetric Naval Warfare](#).



Public Daily Brief



Week: 18 – 24 December 2006

Russia

- Russia continues to cement trade and strategic ties with **Brazil** and **Argentina** -- "*both South American giants are interested in Russian participation in great inter-regional plans.*" Russian and **Argentine** special services cooperated to dismantle a Latin American **cocaine** criminal gang. Following weeks of **US** allusions to the strategic use of **space**, Russia says military use of space is possible -- "*We categorically oppose the deployment of any weapons in space, but this does not mean that space cannot be used in military purposes.*" Russia test-fired an **ICBM** -- "*The RS-20V Voevoda, which NATO identifies as the SS-18 Satan, was fired from its silo in the **Orenburg** region of the southern Ural Mountains. President **Putin** sees a danger of its east (former **Soviet Central Asia**) fading away -- "*The Far East is poorly linked to the economic, information and transportation network of the rest of Russia.*" Russian experts warn that the country is now vulnerable to **terrorist cyber-attack** -- "*The country's infrastructure is becoming more networked and less isolated than before, which could make it more vulnerable to cyber-attacks.*"*

Venezuela

- Although not yet a member of **Mercosur**, **Bolivia** (aligning with Venezuela) wants reforms to it and to the **Community of Andean Nations** group. A visiting **Cuban** delegation will advise the Venezuelan government on putting together an **anti-corruption** commission. **Malaysia** and Venezuela have agreed to range of mutually beneficial projects and investigations in both countries -- Venezuela is particularly interested in Malaysia's very successful **poverty alleviation** programs. President Chavez has called for pro-government parties to unite into a single **United Socialist Party of Venezuela** -- other parties are free to stay in opposition. Venezuela has taken delivery of (an undisclosed number of) **Mi35** and **Mi26 Russian helicopters**. Venezuela will use record **oil revenue** to retire \$800M in **government bonds** -- "*the move is part of an effort by President Hugo Chavez's government to trim the nation's foreign debt to about \$21B by the end of 2007 from about \$26B now.*" Venezuela dismantled an **oil-smuggling gang** -- "*the action seriously affected the criminal organizations of the area.*" Venezuela said it will strengthen military protection of its **borders**. Venezuela says that although it has severed ties with the **US DEA** in 2005, the country had intensified **anti-narcotics** cooperation with its European and Latin American counterparts. Venezuela will issue new **biometric smart ID cards** -- "*the ID cards will have all the citizen's data: facial features, name and family name.*"

[Wild-Card]

- A **carbomb** 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.*"

↓ deteriorated

• steady

↑ improved

⚡ ALERT

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