

**Week: 12 – 18 February 2007**

## GLOBAL REALITY: THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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

### Threat Summary

	<b>Inter-State Conflict.</b> Iraq downed helicopters, bigger bombs. Afghans may prefer Taliban to NATO.
	<b>Proliferation.</b> North Korea agrees to two-stage disarmament. Road ahead is long and uncertain.
	<b>Terrorism.</b> France, Egypt arresting many. Tunisia plot on US Embassy. FBI fears “kitchen” bombs.
	<b>Poverty.</b> Hunger kills 18K children each day. US asks India to lead Doha. China muddling Africa.
	<b>Infectious Disease.</b> Cholera from Angola to Namibia. One billion suffer from neglected diseases.
	<b>Environment.</b> Mega cities at risk, glacier meltdown accelerating. Bees dying. Basel needed teeth.
	<b>Civil War.</b> Nigeria explosive. Martial law in Guinea. Somalia, Zimbabwe worsening. Albanians.
	<b>Genocide.</b> Genocide spreading from Darfur in Sudan to Chad. Sudan denies visas to UN officials.
	<b>Transnational Crime.</b> Severely neglected topic within the media—20% of global economy, untaxed.
	<b>Other Atrocities.</b> 200K Colombian children in mines. 28 African countries still do female excision.

### Policy Summary

	<b>Diplomacy.</b> Russian rising in Latin America. EU condemns CIA renditions. China-India-Russia up.
	<b>Security.</b> Agro-terrorism feared in US. Disaster planning in disarray. FBI loses 40 laptops a year.
	<b>Society.</b> US budget 60% unaffordable entitlements. US poor at child care. Liberation theology rising.
	<b>Immigration.</b> DHS Chertoff in Mexico City, says amnesty planned for undocumented residents.
	<b>Water.</b> Peru in crisis—largest tropical icecap receding at 200 ft/yr vice 20 ft/yr in 1960’s.
	<b>Debt.</b> Former IMF Chief Economist sounds alarm: US creditors may not accept dollars in future.
	<b>Economy.</b> US warned off intervention in economy, but EIN worries that corruption too entrenched.
	<b>Education.</b> No progress in defining good teaching, or reconstruction the “rote” educational system.
	<b>Energy.</b> Portugal proposing wind-power for eastern Indonesia. Global Warming is ENERGY issue.
	<b>Justice.</b> UK Attorney General to American Bar Association: Guantanamo fixes “too little too late.”
	<b>Agriculture.</b> Little concern over oil-corn implosion. Iowa must import human-edible corn now.
	<b>Family.</b> Ralph Nader publishes little book, <i>Seventeen Traditions</i> , very highly recommended for all.

### Major Player Summary

	<b>Iran.</b> General Pace showing high integrity on Iran threat. Two internal dissident bombings.
	<b>Venezuela.</b> Chavez being aggressive about food price controls. Still exporting drugs.
	<b>Brazil.</b> Brazil championing Paraguay & Uruguay needs within MERCOSUR. Private militias rising.
	<b>China.</b> China now recognizes income equality and environment costs of industrialization need fixing.
	<b>India.</b> Indian satellites to launch in 2008. India building Russian engines for MIG-29 jets.
	<b>Indonesia.</b> Military slowly leaving business sector; clashing with police. HIV could take off.
	<b>Wild Cards.</b> Pakistan expelling 2.4M Afghans. Muslim peacekeeping force under consideration.
	<b>Russia.</b> Putin making sense in condemning US missile shield for Eastern Europe, fear-mongering.

#### World Crises (extracted from **monthly** assessments by *International Crisis Group*)

↗ Alert	[none]
↘ Deteriorated	<b>Guinea, India (non-Kashmir), Israel/Occupied Territories, Lebanon, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Uganda</b>
↗ Improved	<b>North Korea, Northern Ireland (UK)</b>

[International Crisis Group](http://www.icsg.org)

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**Threats**

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

**Poverty**

[news list](#)[forecast](#)

- The UN reminds the world that 18,000 children die of **hunger** each day -- "*it's the most important, significant, humanitarian, political, or economic investment the world can make in its future.*"  
 Critics say **China's cheque-book diplomacy** in **Africa** is undermining long-developed complex **aid programs**; it's "**rogue development aid**". [giving away a fish, not teaching how to fish ....]  
 A report by the **Forum for Food Security in Southern Africa** of the **UK-based Overseas Development Institute** concludes a balance is needed between free market and state-run food security measures -- "*some form of government intervention is still required to prevent hunger in the region.*" [Free markets are a fine religious fantasy for Wall Street but not in the real world.]  
 The former head of the **UK National Health Service** says health-care needs around the world should be seen as a single **integrated global health system** [not just continual sporadic emergencies].  
 The **US** says it is open to more flexibility in **WTO Doha Round** negotiations but wants **India** to take lead -- "*We are willing to make difficult choices .... Simply stated: India's leadership is required to achieve an agreement.*" [Presumably the US prefers an Indian lead rather than, say, Venezuela.]  
**Thailand** [like several **African** countries] says it will issue **more patent-override licences** for local drug production unless big-pharma cut prices on badly needed but expensive drugs.

**Infectious Disease**

[news list](#)[forecast](#)

- **WHO** says one billion are suffering from "**neglected diseases**" - despite the existence of inexpensive and safe treatment, official incompetence and inaction are the greatest impediment.  
 Research shows worker **migration** played a key role in **HIV** spread in **South Africa** - - "*migration of South African workers played a major role in the spread of HIV.... roughly 1,000 AIDS deaths occur in South Africa every day.*" A **cholera** outbreak has spread from **Angola** to **Namibia** -- "*I cannot recall a case of cholera that was ever recorded in Namibia before.*"

**Environment**

[news list](#)[forecast](#)

- ↓ Climate scientists say that only a better understanding of **clouds** will give better models of **climate change** -- "*... it is becoming increasingly important to include the effects of aerosols on clouds ...*" [Aerosols are small, often nano-sized, particulates suspended in the atmosphere.] One of the other major **unknowns** is the **over-turning of vast ocean water masses**. China says that **rising sea levels** induced by global warming present "**unimaginable challenges**"-- "*The speed is astonishing,*" said Lu Xuedu, the deputy director of the environmental division of the **Ministry of Science and Technology**. The **glacier meltdown** is accelerating -- "the disappearance of glaciers will not only contribute to **rising sea levels**, but will also dramatically affect the millions of people who depend on them for **water**." Concentrations of **carbon dioxide**, the main greenhouse gas, has risen to 390 ppm from 388 a year ago.  
 Proving **wind energy** has come of age ... a cut-throat business battle between a **French** energy giant and **India's** largest wind power firm for a **German** wind energy company. A very green, perhaps prophetic, view of the future with considerations such as "Our small towns are waiting to be reinhabited" -- *Ten Ways to Prepare for*

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	<p><i>the Post-Oil Society</i></p> <p>UNEP says the world needs tougher <i>toxic</i> trade rules -- the <i>Basel Convention</i> needs broadening and to get some teeth.</p> <p>A second US court finds the US Department of Agriculture acted <u>improperly</u> in advancing certain <b>Monsanto genetically altered crops</b>. A <i>mystery disease</i> has been reported among <i>bees</i>, killing entire hives and putting a range of <i>crops</i> at risk. [Perhaps bees are the "canary in the coalmine".]</p> <p>It's time to begin <i>adapting to climate change</i> -- <i>Christian Science Monitor</i> says "<i>We spend all this effort trying to understand climate dynamics, but <u>the major variables are the interactions within society and between society and climate.</u></i>"</p> <p>Will the <i>Mega-Cities</i> collapse? -- <b>Worldwatch Institute</b> report: <u>50% of the world's population will be living in urban areas this year</u> - cities like <i>Lagos, Nairobi, Dhaka</i> increasingly approach collapse.</p>
<p><b>Inter-State Conflict</b> <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<p>↓ In Baghdad [<b>Iraq</b>], just hours after many spoke of a "lull in violence" comes a psychologically impactful <b>bombing</b> bigger than most. The conspicuous increase in <b>downed US helicopters</b> seems to evidence a definite tactic, method in the madness of Iraq's insurgents and some order of command and control. Indicative of the shifting situations, <i>173rd Airborne Brigade</i> based in Vicenza (Italy) will now be redirected from deployment to <b>Iraq</b> to <b>Afghanistan</b>.</p> <p>Serious journalists in <b>Afghanistan</b> continue to report that Afghan people do not necessarily prefer NATO to the <i>Taliban</i> -- "<i>the Taliban rule by night, and the government rules by day.</i>"</p> <p>The <i>Jerusalem Post</i> suggests that a <b>Saudi protectorate</b> may be one solution for <b>Palestine</b> -- "<i>The time has perhaps come to consider that the Palestinians may need a guiding hand ...</i>" Another <b>Israeli</b> source also suggests a <b>Wahhabist Palestine</b> would be an acceptable outcome "<i>even the Bush administration would not be able to reject an intra-Palestinian compromise agreement led by the Saudi king.</i>"</p>
<p><b>Civil War</b> <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<p>↓ The US says it has learned that a militant <b>Nigerian</b> Delta group is reportedly planning to escalate its activities. In <b>Guinea</b> <i>martial law</i> is declared in response to continuing <i>strikes</i> in protest against perceived breach of a <i>power-sharing agreement</i>; over 100 have already been killed. In <b>Zimbabwe</b> the government has met a licensed protest march by <b>Movement for Democratic Change</b> with <i>teargas</i>, saying it is a <i>foreign-backed</i> challenge to its authority.</p> <p>In <b>Somalia</b>, Mogadishu residents are fleeing continuing <i>mortar</i> attacks -- "<i>Dozens of people have been killed in a series of attacks in Mogadishu since the <b>Union of Islamic Courts (UIC)</b> was ousted from the city... </i>". In another report -- "<i>I have experienced the worst insecurity now in Mogadishu since I began selling tea here eight years ago.</i>" <b>Uganda</b> has resolved to send <i>peacekeepers</i> to Mogadishu -- "<i>We can't deploy all over Somalia. We'll be in Mogadishu...</i>"</p> <p>In <b>Kosovo</b> a minister resigns to take responsibility over deaths -- "<i>UN and Kosovo police used <b>tear gas</b> and <b>rubber bullets</b> to disperse 3,000 ethnic Albanians ...</i>"</p>
<p><b>Genocide</b> <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<p>↗ UN Secretary General <b>Ban Ki-moon</b> says that President al-<b>Bashir</b> of <b>Sudan</b> broke a personal pledge to issue <i>visas</i> to UN personnel.</p> <p><b>Chad</b> is increasingly entwined in the <i>Darfur</i> conflicts by actions on both sides of the</p>

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	<p>border – the Sudanese <i>Redemption Front</i> is said to be receiving assistance from Chadian Intelligence. The UN and Oxfam warn that "the killing tactics from neighbouring Darfur in Sudan have been transported to eastern Chad in full".</p>
<p><b>Other Atrocities</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>Philippines Arroyo</b> administration [again] vows to work with the UN and EU to stop <i>extra-judicial killings</i>, "resolving and stopping the incidents of ideologically-motivated killings."</li> <li>A <b>Colombian</b> government ministry says that over <u>200,000 children</u> are working in <i>mines</i> in Colombia.</li> <li>In <b>Nepal</b>, the Red Cross [ICRC] says it has the names of more than 800 people who remain unaccounted for in the wake of armed conflict.</li> <li>Female <i>excision</i> is practiced in about <u>28 African countries</u> as a traditional way of "keeping women chaste and eligible for marriage" but gradual headway in eradicating the practice is being made through education.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Proliferation</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<p>↑ <b>North Korea</b> has ostensibly agreed to a two-stage plan of <i>disarmament</i>, "but the diplomatic road ahead appears long and uncertain."</p>
<p><b>Terrorism</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At present the <b>FBI</b> considers <i>kitchen sink bombs</i> the most likely terrorist weapon to be used in the US -- <i>TATP</i> is still the concoction of choice for the risk-taker.</li> <li>Three members of the <i>Qari Zafar</i> group were arrested in <i>Karachi</i> [<b>Pakistan</b>] with <i>suicide vests</i>. <i>Islamists</i> -- or <i>Balochi</i> separatists -- devastate a court-room in <i>Quetta</i> [<b>Pakistan</b>] killing at least 15.</li> <li>It was announced that five <i>Salafists</i> were arrested during January [2007] in <b>Tunisia</b> hatching a plot to attack the <b>UK</b> embassy there. <b>French</b> police arrested eleven <i>al Qaeda</i> suspects, "thought to be part of networks recruiting fighters to be sent to <i>Iraq</i> ..." A <b>Saudi al Qaeda</b>-affiliated group called for attacks on <b>US oil sources</b> -- "It is necessary to hit oil interests in all regions which serve the United States, not just in the Middle East." [This made <b>Venezuela</b> nervous.]</li> <li><b>Egypt</b> continues to purge the influential <i>Muslim Brotherhood</i> by arresting 73 more members -- <b>Human Rights Watch</b> says the government is intolerant of <i>opposition</i>.</li> <li>Remarks by <b>National Security Advisor India</b> on <i>terrorism</i>, particularly <i>funding</i> -- <i>International Terrorism and Asymmetric Warfare</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Transnational Crime</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>[nothing significant to summarize but see links to stories in this topical area]</li> </ul>
<p><b>Policy</b> see daily items with links to full stories on the web at <a href="#">PDB-Policy</a></p>	
<p><b>Agriculture</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>[nothing significant to summarize but see links to stories in this topical area]</li> </ul>
<p><b>Debt</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Former <b>IMF</b> Chief Economist says of the <b>US debt</b> "Americans had better pray that their creditors will be as happy to accept dollars as they are now."</li> </ul>
<p><b>Diplomacy</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<p>↓ The EU parliament officially condemns the CIA <i>rendition</i> adventure. Over 50,000 have <i>marched</i> in <b>Italy</b> against the proposed expansion of the <b>US</b> base at <i>Vicenza</i>. An Italian judge <i>indicted</i> 26 Americans and five Italians in the first criminal trial case over the CIA's <i>rendition</i> program. <b>Germany</b> is unhappy with <b>US</b> moves on the <i>anti-missile shield</i> in <i>Europe</i> -- "Because the sites for the stationing are quite near <i>Russia</i>, one should have talked about it with <i>Russia</i> beforehand."</p>

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	<p>While the US is distracted by its wars, <b>Russia</b> is winning hearts and minds in <i>Latin America</i>. Also, the US has cut funding for <i>Central Asia</i> aid programs, partly due to a "more difficult <b>budget</b> environment". An analyst argues why the new US <b>AFRICOM</b> will hurt <i>Africa</i> -- "<u><i>Africom would destabilise an already fragile continent and region, which would be forced to engage with US interests on military terms.</i></u>"</p> <p>A meeting of the <b>Trilateral</b> grouping -- <b>India, China, Russia</b> -- criticized "<b>double standards</b>" in the fight against <b>terrorism</b>, assured everyone the pact is "<i>not against any country</i>", and expressed hopes for "<u><i>an increasingly multi-polar world order based on principles of equality of nations</i></u>".</p> <p>The <b>UK</b> ambassador to the US 1997-2003 says the UK has sacrificed its own <b>national interests</b> to that of the US.</p>
<p><b>Economy</b> <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>National Center for Policy Analysis</b> counsels against any <b>interventionist</b> measures - - "<i>the last two times government seriously tried to control the U.S. economy -- in the 1930s and in the 1970s -- they made a terrible mess of it</i>".</li> </ul>
<p><b>Education</b> <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers in Broward and their union condemn the proposed <i>Special Teachers Are Rewarded</i> program, known as STAR, leaving the question what is a "<b>good teacher</b>", and is it measurable?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Energy</b> <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Oil sands</b> are plentiful but refining them is a costly and dirty business -- "<i>influencing the price and cost of oils sands product is the price of <b>natural gas</b>, which is needed to provide the energy to extract the oil.</i>" <a href="#">Increasing oil sands production</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Portugal</b> is proposing to build a <b>wind-powered</b> electricity plant in <b>Maluku</b>, eastern <b>Indonesia</b> -- "... <i>the region possessed great wind-power potential which could be utilized to produce electricity.</i>"</p> <p>A developer proposes solid-state <b>methanol</b> for <b>fuel cells</b> -- "<i>In a clathrate compound technology, a guest compound is trapped in a solid state host compound. In this case, methanol is the guest compound.</i>" [This may be an important development.]</p> <p><a href="#">Global Warming: It's All About Energy</a> A nice thesis: <b>global warming</b> is <u>not</u> an "<b>environmental</b>" problem like <b>pesticides</b> ... it is an <b>ENERGY</b> problem.</p>
<p><b>Family</b> <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [nothing significant to summarize but see links to stories in this topical area]</li> </ul>
<p><b>Immigration</b> <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In <b>Mexico City</b>, Michael <b>Chertoff</b> says to expect <b>immigration</b> reforms which include an <b>amnesty</b> for <b>undocumented residents</b>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Justice</b> <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<p>↓ Lord Goldsmith, <b>UK</b> attorney general, spoke to an appreciative <i>American Bar Association</i> in Miami – any improvements in justice at <b>Guantanamo</b> are too little, too late</p>
<p><b>Security</b> <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<p>↓ The US security community is aware that <b>agro-terrorism</b> is one of the big vulnerabilities – from "farm to fork" the <b>food system</b> is a wide-open soft target.</p> <p>The <b>White House</b> is anxious to clear a backlog over 350,000 high-level <b>security clearances</b> but this may mean some dangerous compromises.</p> <p>A proposed US <b>bill</b> would require <b>Internet Service Providers</b> to keep data on users, but many questions arise -- "<i>Would the data be kept for one year, 20 years or indefinitely?</i>" Legislation was introduced that would require notification of <b>data breaches</b> involving <b>personal information</b>. <b>China</b> has detained six over the 'panda'</p>
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	<p><i>virus</i> – “the worm wreaked havoc among individual and corporate users in China in a late 2006 outbreak ...”</p> <p>A press release for compliance software offers a good tutorial on the issues in <i>international money laundering</i> -- <a href="#">Money Laundering Risks in International Wires</a></p> <p>The <b>GAO</b> has faulted the <b>US Small Business Administration</b> lack of disaster planning revealed by <i>Hurricane Katrina</i> -- "It found that federal officials discounted <i>centralized planning</i>, arguing their <u>local field offices could figure it out</u>."</p> <p>The <b>FBI</b> has had a run of bad luck with disappearing <i>laptops</i> -- "Of the 160 laptops lost or stolen over a 44-month period, 10 contained <i>sensitive or classified information</i>".</p> <p><b>Scotland Yard</b> [UK] is obliged to apologize for a mistaken anti-terrorism raid -- "they were <u>wrong not to have planned better for the intelligence being wrong</u> ..." says the <i>Independent Police Complaints Commission</i>. In the <b>US</b>, General <b>Peter Pace</b> is on a crusade for a new <i>precision in intelligence analysis</i> -- "we should be careful to point out where what we can prove ends, and what we believe begins ..."</p>
<p><b>Society</b> <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>60%</u> of the US budget is "<i>entitlements</i>" -- failure to address inadequacies in the system may be because politicians are afraid to embrace the politically distasteful term "<i>welfare state</i>" and make it work properly.</li> </ul> <p>A <b>UNICEF</b> survey ranks the <b>US</b> and <b>UK</b> at the <u>bottom</u> in <i>child welfare</i> -- "They don't invest as much in children as continental European countries do." [Netherlands ranks top]</p> <p>A <i>Time</i> writer says the time of <i>bigoted triumphalism</i> is over and the values of <i>liberation theology</i> are re-emerging. <b>God</b> and <b>Darwin</b> again fought it out in court again, in <b>Kansas</b> – and Darwin, for the moment, won. [No-one say <i>Lamarckism</i>.]</p> <p><b>Harvard</b> named its first <i>female</i> President.</p>
<p><b>Water</b> <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Guyana's</b> 5-year contract with the <b>UK</b> company that has managed the <i>privatized water supply</i> will <u>not</u> be renewed because of failure to meet development targets.</li> </ul> <p>There is a <i>water crisis</i> in western <b>Peru</b> -- the world's largest <i>tropical ice cap</i> is retreating at about 60m (200ft) a year, up from 6m (20ft) a year in the 1960s.</p> <p>The binding <b>World Bank</b> decision on a disagreement between <b>India</b> and <b>Pakistan</b> over the <i>Baglihar</i> dam on river <i>Chenab</i> is in India's favor.</p>
<p><b>Challengers</b>      see <i>daily items with links to full stories on the web at</i> <a href="#">PDB-Challengers</a></p>	
<p><b>Brazil</b> <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Brazil</b> seeks to overcome the <i>asymmetries</i> in <b>Mercosur</b> that disadvantage smaller economies such as <b>Uruguay</b> and <b>Paraguay</b>.</li> </ul> <p>Nine are killed in a Rio <i>slum shoot-out</i> -- "Rio de Janeiro is well accustomed to gun crime but now there is a new pattern to the violence." [<i>Private militias</i> take on <i>crime gangs</i>.]</p>
<p><b>China</b> <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Deng's industrialization</b> has worked but has brought growing <i>inequity</i> and was with disregard for the environment – it is that that must now be addressed under the rubric of "<i>harmony</i>".</li> </ul> <p>China announced it has found 600 possible <i>mining sites</i> on the <b>Tibetan Plateau</b>. [Another reason to eradicate Tibetan culture?]</p>
<p><b>India</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• India will launch the indigenously built <i>INSAT-3D</i> and <i>Oceansat-2</i> satellites in</li> </ul>
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<a href="#">news list forecast</a>	<p>2008. India will start to produce <b>Russian engines</b> for <i>MiG-29</i> jets -- "<i>licensed production of these thrust vectoring engines will be done by state-owned Hindustan Aeronautics Limited ...</i>"</p>
<p><b>Indonesia</b> <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Indonesia <b>HIV</b> prevalence is still low, but has reached high levels among specific populations like injecting <b>drug users</b> and <b>sex workers</b>, and in <b>Papua</b>.</li> </ul> <p>The Indonesian <b>military</b> is already scheduled to remove itself from all <b>business</b> activity, which has been a major means of <b>funding</b> itself, but observers say this is not happening at the expected pace and it is now an urgent necessity. For the second time in 12 months <b>BRIMOB</b> (<i>Fast Reaction Police</i>) and <b>military</b> personnel have been involved in a fatal clash with each other, now in a town in <b>Papua</b>.</p> <p>General <b>Pace</b> confirms that the <b>US</b> regards Jakarta as a <b>key regional ally</b>.</p>
<p><b>Iran</b> <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High-tech <b>explosively-formed projectiles</b>, undoubtedly of <b>Iranian</b> origin, are an increasing hazard in <b>Iraq</b>. But <b>US</b> General Peter <b>Pace</b> says "<i>That does not translate to that the Iranian government per se, for sure, is directly involved in doing this.</i>"</li> </ul> <p>Iran's <b>Supreme Leader</b> says the country needs to produce <b>nuclear</b> fuel against the day <b>oil</b> and <b>gas</b> reserves will dry up. Head of the <b>International Crisis Group</b> says "<i>It's not too late to stop Iran's bomb</i>" -- "<i>the concept of 'delayed limited enrichment' has extremely wide appeal as a diplomatic fallback</i>". Others said "is the use of military force or sustained efforts to destabilize Iran the best way to achieve these goals? ... Clearly not." But the rumor mill said not-so-secret plans suggest Iran is toast -- <i>US preparations for invading Iran are complete</i></p> <p>Coinciding with the <b>execution</b> of dissidents, a <b>military bus</b> was <b>bombed</b> in <b>southeast</b> Iran killing 18. Two days later there was another bombing near the scene of the first., likely the work of <b>Jundallah</b> (God's soldiers).</p> <p>Commentators agreed they all knew very little about Iran's <b>al Quds</b> special forces except that they are special -- "<i>On occasion their plans have coincided with U.S. interests ...</i>"</p>
<p><b>Russia</b> <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<p>↓ Russian authorities report that 120 "<b>bandits</b>" and "<b>international terrorists</b>" were killed or arrested during 2006. A <b>bombing</b> at a <b>McDonald's</b> in <b>St. Petersburg</b> is a puzzle – because it's a <b>McDonald's</b> and because it's <b>St. Petersburg</b>.</p> <p>President <b>Putin</b> has appointed <b>Defense Minister</b> Sergei <b>Ivanov</b> as <b>Deputy Premier</b>, a move seen to position Ivanov well to succeed Putin whom can not stand for another term as President. [Like Putin, Ivanov has had a long career with the <b>KGB/FSB</b>.]</p> <p>Moscow again warns against <b>EU</b> and the <b>US</b> against promoting <b>Kosovo</b> independence -- Russia threatens to make <b>Serbia's</b> Kosovo a precedent for <b>Georgia's Abkhazia</b> and <b>South Ossetia</b>, and <b>Moldova's Transdnestr</b>.</p> <p>A Russian court ruled that pirating <b>Microsoft software</b> for a school's computers is an offence but not worth a penalty.</p> <p>Russia says it may scrap the <b>arms control treaty</b> because of plans by the <b>US</b> to build a <b>missile shield</b> in <b>Eastern Europe</b>. President <b>Putin</b> says several off-hand remarks of late about a Russian <b>threat</b> and Russian "<b>instability</b>" is simply playing the "<b>anti-Russian card</b>" to raise <b>defense spending</b>, "<i>using the non-existent Russian threat to get more money from the US Congress for military operations</i>"; "<i>As far as predictability is concerned, I believe that Russia is as predictable as the United</i></p>

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<p><b>Venezuela</b> news list forecast</p>	<p>States."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Chávez</b> remains committed to the dangerous policy of <i>food price controls</i> -- "Authorities have raided warehouses and confiscated tons of food - mostly beef and sugar - from vendors unwilling to sell inventories at the official price." Chávez threatens to jail violators of price controls but he is risking an all-out battle with powerful forces prepared to destroy him at any cost -- "If the government insists on sticking to policies that are clearly failing, we may be headed down the road of Zimbabwe".</li> </ul> <p>President <b>Chávez</b> continues to dispense largesse to poorer neighbors by opening a <i>fuel</i> depot in <b>Dominica</b> -- "We are one nation -- the <i>Caribbean nation</i>".</p> <p>After the dismissal of Luis <b>Correa</b> as head of the <b>National Antidrug Office</b> there is still evidence of high-level involvement in <i>drug</i> exports. Venezuela claims success with its campaign against <i>drug crime</i> in the regions bordering <b>Colombia</b> and will extend the program -- "Although Venezuela is not a large drug consumer, its territory is used as <i>corridor</i> in the drug route from Colombia ... "</p> <p><b>US</b> undersecretary of state for political affairs says the US is turning to <i>biofuels</i> because it does not want to depend on Venezuelan oil – the oil minister says the US should feel free not to buy Venezuelan oil.</p>
<p><b>Wild Cards</b> news list forecast</p>	<p>↓ <b>Pakistan</b> is proceeding with plans to <i>fence</i> vulnerable stretches of the <i>border</i> with <b>Afghanistan</b> -- "There could be areas where they go through unobserved, but we have made it very, very difficult for them." Also with the aim of enhancing security, Pakistan will expel 2.4 million Afghan <i>refugees</i> – stung by continual criticism, Pakistan can't be both compassionate and secure.</p> <p><b>Israel's</b> chief of <b>police</b> has been forced to resign -- "He is also said to have ignored links between senior officers and leading figures within criminal circles."</p> <p>In <b>Turkey</b>, the <b>army</b> goads the government to act against the <b>Kurds</b>; the Foreign Minister <b>Abdullah</b> says soldiers should focus on their duties.</p> <p>The <i>kidnap gangs</i> of <b>Nigeria's</b> Delta are becoming increasingly institutionalized -- "Many are now wondering what will happen when the armed class of 2007 finally graduates".</p> <p>It's salad days in Ashgabat (<b>Turkmenistan</b>) with the election of the new <b>president</b> - full <i>internet</i> access, longer compulsory <i>education</i>, and complaints -- "connection speed is fantastic, but the price stinks".</p> <p>The <i>Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)</i> is considering standing arrangements for a <i>Muslim peacekeeping force</i> -- "I think it is in the interest of the Muslim community to have a peacekeeping force under the OIC banner."</p> <p>Although the <i>Near-Earth-Object (NEO)</i> of 2036 has only a small chance of striking Earth, astronomers and others say a formal international watch should be established for yet unknown NEOs. [<i>Global Warming</i> once seemed a fringe issue too...].</p> <p>Former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard <b>Armitage</b> articulates what is increasingly obvious: "In every measure the <i>strategic center of gravity</i> is shifting to <i>Asia</i>".</p>

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