



Week: 05 - 11 March 2007

GLOBAL REALITY: THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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

Threat Summary

	Inter-State Conflict. Iraq showing world how irregulars can grind US Army to a stand-still. Proliferation. Uranium ring closed in DR Congo. Israel admits nuclear arms, ignores IAEA.
	Poverty. UN prefers cash over food for fear of destroying local markets, but both welcome. Infectious Disease. Dengue outbreak in Paraguay—expired chemicals used. China’s animal markets! Environment. Electronic waste getting serious attention. EU challenges world to follow its lead. Civil War. Deadlock in Kosovo. Sri Lanka, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Yemen, Somalia, all in disarray. Genocide. Darfur remains the only genocide noticed by the media—there are seventeen others. Transnational Crime. North Korea being consumed by crime syndicates it created in first place..
	Other Atrocities. Japan continues to deny it “comfort women” crimes against humanity. Terrorism. US and UK flailing and failing. India gets it—ethnic beat policing, constant presence.

Policy Summary

	Diplomacy. Bush scorned throughout Latin America. US scorns UN Human Rights in favor of Israel. Security. Brookings and Defense Science Board agree: we are not ready to address global insecurity. Society. Walter Reed scandal another failure of US planning for post-combat operations in Iraq.
	Education. America has dumbed down, dropped out—lowest scores and graduation rates in 40 years. Health. Transparency in health care as important as equality of access. One size fits all too expensive. Immigration. Quiet on the Southern Front. Water. Third largest freshwater lake, Lake Balkhash, in dispute between China and Kazakhstan.
	Economy. Quiet prevails in aftermath of the Chinese correction and the Wall Street dip. Energy. Nonoscale breakthrough in hydrogen power options for vehicles. Ethanol questioned. Justice. World Court on the ropes, FBI gives us yet another scandal and demonstration of ineptitude.
	Agriculture. US rice seed stocks contaminated—vulnerability of this sector shocking many. Family. Generally quiet as all candidates in the US downplay their multiple infidelities and marriages.

Major Player Summary

	Iran. US bordering on lunatic—confiscating F14s from US museums while planning major attacks.
	Venezuela. Coup plot uncovered, aid to Haiti, worried about threats to oil infrastructure, US left out.
	Brazil. Brazil migrating agricultural technology to Africa, produced national H5N1 vaccine quickly. China. Going green. Increases military 18% and education 42%, cracking down on Internet addiction. India. Navy could become the primary peacekeeper and pirate chaser in Southeast Asia. Indonesia. Indonesia emerging as success story in counter-terrorism, desperate for larger Navy. Wild Cards. Kurdish violence, Waziristan talks, North Korean criminal cancer, US aid to Pakistan?
	Russia. Nothing substantive to report...poisoning tourists does not count.

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

↗ Alert	Nigeria, Timor-Leste
↘ Deteriorated	Pakistan, Somalia, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Uganda, Yemen
↗ Improved	Burundi, North Korea

[International Crisis Group](#)

↘ deteriorated	• steady	↗ improved	↗ ALERT
----------------	----------	------------	---------



Week: 05 - 11 March 2007

Threats	see <i>daily items with links to full stories on the web at</i> PDB-Threats
Poverty news list forecast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UN World Food Programme has published a paper in the ongoing '<i>food vs cash transfers</i>' debate on the best method of delivering aid – food rather than cash can destroy local markets but both forms are welcome.
Infectious Disease news list forecast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paraguay has sacked its chief Health Officer following a <i>dengue</i> outbreak amid allegations that health officials ordered the use of <i>expired chemicals</i> for the fumigation effort against dengue <i>mosquitoes</i>. <i>DNA</i> evidence has proven that China is the source is of <i>H5NI</i>. [Most likely China's disgusting <i>live animal markets</i> is the source, as it was with <i>SARS</i>.]
Environment news list forecast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scientists in China say <i>air pollution</i> is inhibiting <i>rainfall</i> -- "<i>on the haziest days, rainfall can be reduced by half.</i>" Elsewhere, scientists say that <i>aerosols (nanoparticulates)</i> produced by <i>coal-fired</i> processes around the Pacific [China] are, like <i>CO2</i>, bad for the atmosphere and may be contributing to increasing intensity in Pacific <i>storms</i>. If more examples were necessary ... the effects of <i>global warming</i> have been observed on the ice-cap of Mount Everest. The EU says it has challenged the world to match its <i>climate change</i> mitigation plan which includes a 20% <i>emission</i> reduction target --"<i>we can say to the rest of the world, Europe is taking the lead. You should join us fighting climate change.</i>" Three UN agencies and 16 corporations such as HP, Philips have now teamed to "<i>harmonize approaches to electronic waste around the world</i>".
Inter-State Conflict news list forecast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↓ Senior US generals give a bleak picture of how Iraq has shown US military might can be exhausted by <i>lightly armed irregulars</i> capable of destroying multimillion-dollar vehicles and aircraft. General Petraeus says there is <u><i>no military solution to Iraq</i></u>, leaving the US Administration [and perhaps some insurgents] now as the only party on earth who believes otherwise. A witty yet sad remark on the US <i>contingency plan</i> for Iraq -- "<i>Plan B was to make Plan A work.</i>" "<i>The US invasion of Iraq virtually instructed Iran to develop a nuclear deterrent. The message was that the US attacks at will, as long as the target is defenceless.</i>" – Noam Chomsky in <i>The Guardian</i> explores what next now the Bush administration has failed to establish Iraq as a reliable <i>client state</i>. <i>A predator becomes more dangerous when wounded</i> Civil Affairs takes another hit -- a US air-strike in Kabul killed nine members of a family, attracting condemnation of the Afghan president and others. Other reports from Afghanistan said the Taliban is tightening a noose around the capital Kabul. Another remark on the battle for <i>hearts and minds</i> in Afghanistan gone awry – "<i>A single death In an Afghani tribe can create scores of bitter foes, and NATO, like the Taliban, has killed hundreds</i>". Iraq says the <i>Baghdad conference of neighbors</i> was a success; symbolic more than practical but all parties agreed that none present would benefit from a <i>disintegrated</i> Iraq. [That may or may not be a sincere belief in all cases.] "<i>My troops have little left to give</i>" says the head of UK Armed Forces; his forces are experiencing a "skill fade".
Civil War news list forecast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↓ A year of negotiations over the status of Kosovo has ended in deadlock -- "<i>there was no will on the part of Serbian and Kosovo ethnic Albanian leaders to agree on a solution.</i>" [Russia and the EU are similarly deadlocked on the issue.]

↓ deteriorated • steady ↑ improved ✎ ALERT



Week: 05 - 11 March 2007

In **Sri Lanka**, over 42,000 civilians have fled fighting in last few days, moving to government-controlled areas.

Sudan seems about to scuttling a deal on **UN** troop deployment -- Sudan insists on an **AU-command** for peacekeeping as agreed in May 2006, not **UN-AU joint command** agreed in November 2006.

In **Zimbabwe** there was rumor of gun-fire at the State House and "*general confusion among members of the presidential guard*". Zimbabwean police have arrested members of the Opposition and at least one protestor has been killed in an opposition street protest.

Yemen says 160 rebels have been killed in the last two weeks -- around 250 rebels have been killed in the "sporadic but fierce" clashes in the mountainous area of **Saada** in the north of Yemen since the beginning of 2007.

The first of 4,000 **African Union** peacekeepers -- half of the AU's desired number -- arrive in the **Somali** capital, to replace **Ethiopian** troops who have been propping up the **transitional government**. Mortars greeted **Ugandan AU peacekeepers** in **Somalia** -- "*the violence was the latest example of the volatility the peacekeepers face in a country that has seen little but anarchy ...*"

France has sent **reinforcements** to **Central African Republic**, as a "precautionary measures".

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

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

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

- **Japan** again fails to own the atrocities of its past [and its present] – the Japanese Prime Minster says the "*comfort women*" have no evidence to prove their claims.
Two were arrested in Maharajganj district of Uttar Pradesh for holding 12 **Nepalese girls** with the intention to take them illegally to the **Gulf countries**."
Two days after the **US Human Rights** report, **China** issues a scathing and detailed report of US human rights abuses.

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

- ↓ There have been arrests in **DR Congo** over missing **uranium**, and a uranium "ring" smashed -- "*a large quantity of uranium is reported to have gone missing in recent years ...*"
As **Israel** has now all but formally admitted possession of **nuclear arms**, **Arab states** now want formal action by **IAEA** to bring Israel into conformance with international expectations.

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

- The **US** is reported to be hunting **bin Laden** anew in **Pakistan** -- "*Reports that the trail has gone stone cold are not correct*" says a US official.
"*Zawahiri has fashioned a core group of around 100 Arab trainers - experts in explosives, finances, communications, military training, urban warfare and propaganda*" - *How a battered al-Qa'eda was rebuilt*.
The **Islamic American Relief Agency**, now defunct, was indicted in the **US** for **unlawful money transfers** to **Iraq**. Over half of **UK terrorism arrests** have been freed without charge -- less than 20% are **charged** with terrorism offenses; only 3% of arrested persons are **convicted**.
An Australian anthropologist is calling on T.E. Lawrence's insights [*Lawrence of Arabia*] to brief troops in **Afghanistan** on the **ethno-social** context. **Counter-**

↓ deteriorated • steady ↑ improved ✎ ALERT



Week: 05 - 11 March 2007

	<p><i>terrorism</i> officials from nine countries met in <i>Paris</i> for "closed-door talks on creating a new international network to ward off attacks and to work out a common definition of charges." An important observation from India that beat policing is under-used in counter-insurgency, doing what distant war-rooms of analysts can not -- <i>Policemen on foot can help break terrorist modules</i>. A good overview of ethno-religious considerations in Iran and its neighbors -- <i>Iran Blaming the West for Sunni Unrest</i>.</p>
<p>Transnational Crime news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DPRK may have created its own monster -- there is evidence that the narcotics and counterfeiting enterprises it created now have a life of their own. <p>A Department of State document is a useful checklist of the world-wide narcotics situation -- <i>Release of the 2007 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report</i>.</p> <p>Guatemala has asked the US for assistance in counter-narcotics efforts -- only 50 of 401 [12%] elite narcotics agents passed drug and lie-detector tests.</p>
<p>Policy see <i>daily items with links to full stories on the web at PDB-Policy</i></p>	
<p>Agriculture news list forecast</p>	<p>↓ Major US rice seed stocks have been contaminated with genetically-modified varieties -- "the tremors going through the <i>U.S. long-grain rice industry ... have revealed how vulnerable a \$1 billion agricultural sector can be ...</i>"</p> <p>US embargoes on trade with Iran has not prevented Iran receiving the benefits of US tobacco, exempt because it is an agricultural product -- "from 2002 to 2005, tobacco made up nearly <u>half</u> of the value of all <i>U.S. exports to Iran</i>."</p>
<p>Diplomacy news list forecast</p>	<p>↓ The US has again refused to run for a UN Human Rights Council seat -- the US rejects membership of the body because it perceives an anti-Israeli bias.</p> <p>In Latin America, President Bush says "the region's grinding poverty is a scandal that has caused some to question the value of democracy". [Some observe this realization is 80 years too late.] In Argentina, "President Hugo Chavez will lead a leftist rally in an Argentine stadium ... when US President George W. Bush is due to arrive in neighboring Uruguay." In Brazil, President Lula's own Workers' Party (PT) will protest President Bush's visit -- "The government has to maintain a state-to-state relationship. But the PT, as a party, has an opinion ... " Over twenty are injured in clashes with police in anti-Bush protests. In Uruguay "demonstrators carried signs which claimed Bush was guilty of 'genocide' and accused him of intending to 'break Latin American unity' with his visit." In Guatemala, Mayan priests will purify a site after it is visited by President Bush -- "spirit guides of the <i>Mayan community decided it would be necessary to cleanse the sacred site of bad spirits after Bush's visit ...</i>"</p>
<p>Economy news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [nothing significant to summarize but see links to stories in this topical area]
<p>Education news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The "dumbing-down of America" say some -- the latest test scores for US high school students have hit a new <u>40-year low</u>. <p>Kerala, site of the first elected communist government in the world in 1957, tops the Indian Educational Development Index, followed closely by <i>Delhi</i> and <i>Tamil Nadu</i>.</p>
<p>Energy news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new nanoscale engineering breakthrough may lead to dramatic cost reductions in hydrogen-powered vehicles, "will bring polymer electrolyte membrane fuel cells for hydrogen-powered vehicles closer to massive commercialization." DOE has proposed a range of grants with the policy goal of reducing photovoltaics from 18c-23c per
<p>↓ deteriorated • steady ↑ improved ↗ ALERT</p>	



Week: 05 - 11 March 2007

	<p>kWh now to 5c - 10c per kWh by 2015. A new Los Alamos thermo-acoustic gas liquefaction technology may turn the 100B m3 of natural gas wasted every year into fuel. Another advance in cheap nano solar cells may be used to make hydrogen for fuel cells <u>directly from water</u> or for producing electricity.</p> <p>Brazil, as the world's top ethanol producer, is a key member of a new forum with India, China, US, EU on biofuels. But the critics of the ethanol frenzy are gathering. <i>"Strong demand for corn from ethanol plants is driving up the cost of livestock and will raise prices for beef, pork and chicken"</i> The new "ethanol diplomacy" is called a hoax by some -- <i>"the US government is more interested in protecting US farmers than strengthening ties with Brazil."</i></p>
<p>Family news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [nothing significant to summarize but see links to stories in this topical area]
<p>Health news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>National Center for Policy Analysis</i> says a new order of transparency in health-care – a consumer-rights orientation -- is as important as equity in availability. Also: "it is critical to remember there are other solutions besides overpriced, one-size-fits-all comprehensive plans."
<p>Immigration news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [nothing significant to summarize but see links to stories in this topical area]
<p>Justice news listforecast</p>	<p>↓ The Bush administration has pledged swift action in the FBI security letters "scandal" -- the Attorney General said he was upset to learn the FBI did not have sufficient controls and failed to follow its own policies.</p> <p>An ICJ-appointed panel of jurists – as it has done in India and elsewhere -- criticized Pakistan's counter terrorism laws.</p> <p><i>International Crisis Group</i> says the future of the World Court is presently in the balance -- <i>"by backing away from Sudan's defiance and atrocities, the international community could strip the world court of its power."</i></p>
<p>Security news listforecast</p>	<p>↓ Five years after 9/11, no-one can account for any benefits brought by \$5B funding to harden the US against bio-terrorism or pandemics -- "we're not able to demonstrate accountability" says the CDC.</p> <p>DHS is reported to have resumed data-mining.</p> <p><i>Brookings</i> and <i>Stanford</i> have launched a project on global insecurity -- <i>"new security challenges are more complex than our institutions are capable of managing"</i>. The US Defense Science Board [rather belatedly] says Cold War technologies are useless in detecting an enemy of irregular forces that hide in plain sight.</p> <p>1,000 journalists have been killed in the last 10 Years -- many of these on the front line of open source intelligence have been murdered.</p> <p>China's intelligence services are said to be actively targeting US advanced technology -- <i>"These services are eating our lunch."</i></p> <p>Indicative of a faster pace in the evolution of cyber-threats, the top three threats to computer users in February 2007 were all new to the top ten.</p> <p>The European US missile shield controversy with Russia is solved ... a Russian general says <i>"Russia's strategic aviation has sufficient potential to suppress elements of a US missile defense shield"</i>.</p>

↓ deteriorated • steady ↑ improved ✎ ALERT



Week: 05 - 11 March 2007

Society news list forecast	<p>↓ Investigators say the <i>Walter Reed army hospital</i> scandal is just an instance of <u>wider</u> problems at veterans' hospitals across the country. Some say the <i>Walter Reed</i> situation is further proof of the lack of Iraq war planning.</p>
Water news list forecast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kazakhstan and China have not yet been able to resolve differences over access to the resources of <i>Lake Balkhash</i>, the <u>third-largest freshwater lake</u> on earth.
Challengers	
Brazil news list forecast	<p>↑ Brazil signed an agreement to supply 800M gallons of <i>ethanol</i> per year to Japan. <i>Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agrícola</i> has opened an office in Ghana and hopes to work with 18 <i>African</i> countries on agricultural technology transfer. The US is attempting to play energy diplomacy [with few bargaining chips] in <i>South America</i>, particularly with Brazil to isolate the various Bolivarian initiatives. Brazil says its production of a highly effective H5N1 vaccine demonstrates its strategic capability to produce large-scale quantities of any vaccine quickly.</p>
China news list forecast	<p>↓ A \$13B coal-liquefaction plant in <i>Ningxia Hui</i> [adjoining Inner Mongolia] will risk the downsides of this infamous polluting process. China has gone green – the Premier Wen Jiabao urges "save energy, lower energy consumption, protect the environment and use land intensively". China launches another "counter-terrorism" raid in <i>Xinjiang</i> killing 18. Elsewhere China puts a brave face on increasing stability in <i>Xinjiang</i> Autonomous Region, but is not answering questions on how the stability is being achieved. China hopes to have its first aircraft carrier by 2010 -- with the acquisition of one (or more) carrier groups, China for the first time will have a credible projection capability. Taiwan tested missiles capable of hitting <i>Shanghai</i> and <i>Hong Kong</i> -- "officials apparently leaked information about the test-firing to serve the political purpose of showing <i>Taiwan</i> has the capability to deter a war with China." China issues another warning about unlawful surveys -- "surveying and mapping offices across the country tackled 571 illegal surveying and mapping cases in 2006." China has banned opening of new internet cafes for a year -- "The state media said today that the freeze is designed to protect young people from the harmful influence of the web." China has increased its defense budget by 18% -- China says the budget of around \$44B is to improve the military's ability to fight a defensive war. China has also increased education spending, an increase of 42% over the previous year to \$11B.</p>
India news list forecast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India again signals that it regards <i>southeast Asia</i> as part of its strategic neighborhood. [Southeast Asian nations have often signaled acceptance of this.] India says maritime terrorism, gunrunning, drug trafficking and piracy are threats that India faces at its sea borders. In April, Indian, Japanese and US navies will conduct, for the first time ever, trilateral exercises in the Pacific Ocean. The first meeting of the Pakistani-Indian counter- terrorism panel has ended after a frank exchange of recriminations but may reduce tensions over of fomenting insurgencies in each other's neighbor. A comprehensive checklist of Indian insurgent groups -- Terror Groups in India. A <u>female</u> squad of Maoist rebels (<i>Naxalites</i>) shot an Indian MP in <i>Jharkhand</i> state.

↓ deteriorated • steady ↑ improved ✎ ALERT



Week: 05 - 11 March 2007

Indonesia
[news list|forecast](#)

- Indonesia has ignored goading by the *West* on how to run *counter-terrorism* but is now seen to have done the best job anywhere. Indonesia says "the country's commitment to *democracy* and *human rights* made Indonesia appear slow and reluctant to deal with terrorism" but also cautions there is no room for complacency, that militants are agile and in southeast Asia they have found "*smarter ways to cross borders*". [New strategies keep terrorists a step ahead - Indonesia](#)

Indonesia's Defense minister says forces deployed on the outskirts of the archipelago are still minimal -- "*the country's territorial waters were in dire need of adequate vessels as striking, patrolling and supporting forces to maintain them*".

Iran
[news list|forecast](#)

- US federal agents have seized disabled *F14 fighter jets* from museums in California because of fears that parts would be sold to Iran. [The aircraft had been originally disposed of for scrap.] The **US State Department**, petulantly refusing any talks with Iran or **Syria** until now, says it will "*not walk away*" from talks with Iran on **Iraq** during the upcoming conference of Iraq's neighbors -- "*If we are approached over orange juice by the Syrians or the Iranians ... we are not going to turn and walk away.*" **Iraq's Moqtada al-Sadr's** unsurprisingly has alliances with Iran, but *Jamestown Foundation* says "*the future of this alliance largely depends on how U.S. policy toward Iran will evolve in the months to come.*" -- [Moqtada al-Sadr's New Alliance with Tehran](#).

Central Asia is Iran's insurance against **US** encirclement -- [Iran's Equities in the Turkmen Succession](#).

Iran waxes philosophical about the nature of knowledge, saying no *attack* will destroy its *atomic know-how*. Analysts note that there is now a clear contrast between the **US** and **Israeli** assessments of Iran's *nuclear threat* -- "*much of this may be Israeli hype designed to push the US*". [On past performance, the White House is more likely to heed the Israeli assessment.]

"*The initial strike could come from stealth Air Force fighters and bombers and cruise missiles launched from B-52Hs, Navy submarines and surface warships*" – so runs a scenario in *Defense News* probably close to the Iran contingency *war plan* last revised in September 2006.

Russia
[news list|forecast](#)

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

Venezuela
[news list|forecast](#)

- A **National Guard** general has been arrested in connection with an alleged *coup* plot.

Venezuela has given \$20M in *aid* to **Haiti** to fund for basic necessities, including *healthcare, education and housing*.

In its annual report, the **US State Department** singles out Venezuela and **Cuba** for having the worst *human rights* records in the region.

Venezuela claims it has feeble *intelligence* capability in the face of *al Qaeda* threats against *petroleum infrastructure* -- "*there is need to trigger very thorough intelligence mechanisms, but I am afraid they do not longer exist in the country*".

In another almost weekly exchange on the topic, Venezuela's *National Anti-Drug Office* says a **US** drug accord is not needed -- "it's not necessary to sign an agreement with any particular country". [However, a bilateral accord is in place with **Germany**.]

↓ deteriorated
• steady
↑ improved
↗ ALERT



Week: 05 - 11 March 2007

Wild Cards
[news list|forecast](#)

↓ Four were killed in another attack by *Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK)* on Turkish troops in southeast **Turkey**. A **Kazakh Christian** missionary has been detained in **Uzbekistan** where possession of a second copy of a bible is "possession with the aim to *proliferate*".

al Qaeda-linked rebels and *Pashtun* tribesmen were reported to be holding talks following "the first reported clash between the militants and ethnic *Pashtun* tribesmen in the area" – this may signal a turning of the situation in the **Pakistan** tribal areas. The **US** Senate has tied aid to **Pakistan** to satisfactory progress in counter-terrorism – although the provisions may be moderated by joint House-Senate discussions, any such move shows distrust of a key ally.

DPRK may have created its own monster -- there is evidence that the *narcotics* and *counterfeiting* enterprises it created now have a life of their own.

20070312w

.oOo.

↓ deteriorated

• steady

↑ improved

↗ ALERT