

Week: 12 - 18 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. Chlorine bombs make their debut in Iraq. Africa has several wars in gestation. Proliferation.
	Poverty. Twelve food emergencies. Opus Dei against the poor. World Bank/IMF not working. Infectious Disease. 4 th Bird Flu Summit very useful, identified gaps across the board on pandemics. Environment. China, India not in Kyoto Treaty. Pollution cuts rain 50%. Mega-fires. UK legislation. Civil War. Sri Lanka, Yemen, Somalia, Zimbabwe, Rwandan fighters into Congo seeking revenge. Genocide. Rwanda Genocide Court still after alleged financier of the genocide, retaliation killers. Transnational Crime.
	Other Atrocities. Human trafficking ring broken up. Argentines convicted in Italy. Tibet alone. Terrorism. No fixed profile—US faces home-grown terrorism. Pakistan wants to do hearts & minds.

Policy Summary

	Diplomacy. Bush mocked in Latin America, zero credibility. Definition of stable “west” up in air. Security. DHS finally focusing on information sharing. Navy hard pressed to recruit 1000 sailors. Society. Bush has sacrificed all US blood, treasure, and spirit on Iraq—a war based on a web of lies.
	Education. Neither the federal nor the state education architects have any clue on how to go forward. Health. .Nothing in the media—Global Health Institute finds that localized resilience works best. Immigration. Mexican president blames US for illegal immigration, lies about actual Mexican policy. Water. Five Central Asian nations discuss water sharing—more initiatives like this long overdue.
	Agriculture. Monsanto corn causes kidney and liver problems in rats—corn for cattle into people? Economy. Nothing in media despite collapsing markets and GAO declaration of USG insolvency Energy. Village bull can charge a battery. Microbes the answer on C2O. Oil extraction cost rising. Family. Homosexuality, a biological predilection, dominates news while families become extinct. Justice. Justice not impartial if US Attorneys can be fired at President’s will. Appoint for life?

Major Player Summary

	Iran. Russian nuclear experts leaving for lack of payment. Al Qaeda would love US-Iran war.
	Venezuela. 98% of cocaine runs from here to US successful. Massive devaluation. Confused & risky.
	Brazil. Arab nations continue to engage Brazil; meanwhile, Brazil active in Africa. China. Heavy into Africa, Olympics will be water-stressed, 20,000 riot, security heavy-handed. India. Ganges river is dying, government of India appears impotent and corrupt, while farmers riot. Indonesia. Confrontation may be lurking again with Singapore. Installing radar, surveilling Internet. Wild Cards. One tribe in Waziristan has agreed not to shelter foreign militants. Ecuador, Turkey.
	Russia. Reclaiming Central Asia, energy as a strategic resource. US alarmed by this sensible effort.

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](#)

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Threats	<i>see daily items with links to full stories on the web at PDB-Threats</i>
Poverty news list forecast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A current snapshot of food emergencies in 12 locations (mainly Africa): <i>Hunger's global hotspots 16 Mar 2007</i>. <p>Doha was a central issue in President Bush's talks in Brazil – if Brazil and the US can agree, as surrogates for the <i>South</i> and <i>North</i>, a revival of Doha may be possible.</p> <p>The Vatican's war against liberation theology continues in El Salvador. [The hereditary bankers of <i>Opus Dei</i> ensure the downtrodden stay that way.] But the Vatican's Inquisition may this time be challenged in its repeated attempts to cripple liberation theology on theological pretexts.</p> <p>"President Bush promised this week to deliver 'social justice' to poor and struggling Latin Americans left behind by the global economy." [How was not detailed.]</p> <p>A checklist of arguments why the World Bank and IMF monetarism are part of the problem, not the solution: <i>IMF, World Bank are a Major Cause of Poverty</i>.</p>
Infectious Disease news list forecast	<p>↓ The US wargamed an Asian flu outbreak -- "<i>the exercise had identified 'gaps and weaknesses in systems for detecting, monitoring, tracking and containing' pandemic influenza.</i>" Representatives from 30 countries attended the 4th Bird Flu Summit in Washington DC March 14-15.</p>
Environment news list forecast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior UK scientists advise accuracy and moderation in climate warning discussion; else the climates skeptics may ultimately win public opinion. <p>The Kyoto concession that excluded "developing economies" such as China and India from emission reductions now seems short-sighted.</p> <p>Thailand is considering declaring an emergency over the haze problem -- air quality in three provinces double the hazardous level is caused by farmers clearing land. Research in China shows that air pollution inhibits rainfall -- "<i>on the haziest days, rainfall can be reduced by half.</i>"</p> <p>According to one review, the Prius outdoes the Hummer in environmental damage, when all inputs (such as nickel batteries) are taken into account -- when upstream and downstream impacts are included -- all INPUTS and all OUTPUTS -- green ain't always green.</p> <p>The Canadian government contributes \$100,000 to a microalgae demonstration project. [CO₂ conversion]</p> <p>Energy is never free -- "An all-out development of biofuel crops in ecologically sensitive southwestern China will almost certainly wreak havoc on the environment.</p> <p>The UK proposes "bold" climate-change legislation -- "<i>the draft climate change bill would be the first legislation in an industrialized country to set such long-range goals</i>".</p> <p>Experts warn that global warming brings increased risk of megafires -- "<i>we're looking at least 100% increase in bushfire risk, and regionally substantially more than that.</i>" [In Australia, and elsewhere.]</p>
Inter-State Conflict news list forecast	<p>↓ In Iraq, a chlorine bomb killed 10 and injured at least <u>350</u> -- at least one miscreant group is learning the leverage of CBRN. [This attack may be timed to coincide with the anniversary of the 1988 Kurd incident.] Iraqi Kurds commemorated the chemical attack -- the gassing of Kurds in March 1988 is likely to remain a reminder of one of Iraq's fault-lines.</p>

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	<p>Morocco is playing on terrorism fears to deprive Western Sahara of independence - - "We are extremely concerned about increased terrorist operations in the <i>Sahel</i> region".</p>				
	<p>Civil War news list forecast</p> <p>↓ The Sri Lankan Navy destroyed two suspected <i>Tamil</i> Rebel arms ships -- arms shipments by <i>sea</i> are vital to the Tamil separatists</p> <p>Yemen says 7 troops and 25 rebels were killed in another clash with <i>Shi'ite</i> rebels -- at least 275 rebels and 124 soldiers have been killed in similar clashes this year.</p> <p>The Somali government makes an important symbolic move back to <i>Mogadishu</i> in the face of sporadic <i>mortar</i> and other attacks. The police commander of Somalia's third largest city, <i>Kismayo</i>, was killed by his <i>bodyguard</i> who then escaped with other armed men. According to UNOCHA 40,000 fled the capital during February, the latest act in a conflict that has lasted 16 years and displaced millions.</p> <p>The Zimbabwean Opposition leader was "in bad shape" from head injuries after being <i>bashed in police custody</i>. After years of deafening silence, South Africa issued a diplomatic, yet landmark, caution to Zimbabwe. President Mugabe said the <i>West</i> and any opponent can "go and hang". Days later, in even more brutal bashing of Opposition officials about to leave the country, the Zimbabwean government showed it is doing its best to provoke serious confrontation ... a final solution perhaps. [Regime change, anyone?]</p> <p>Rwandan fighters are said to be filtering into the Congo for to wreak revenge on perpetrators of the <i>genocide</i> – this involvement by Rwandan irregulars puts Congo's least stable region once more "<i>on the verge of total war</i>".</p>				
	<p>Genocide news list forecast</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With its mandate ending in December 2008, and fugitives still at large, the Rwanda Genocide Court is anxious to deal with Felicien Kabuga, alleged financier of the killing of 800,000. Elsewhere: the Rwandan genocide court insists its job will not be complete without examining the <i>retaliation</i> killings that followed the genocide. <p>The US administration has warned of a "<i>Turkish backlash</i>" if Congress formally condemns the deaths of many Armenians -- <i>Jewish genocide</i>, mention a lot: <i>Armenian genocide</i>, don't mention it. [As ever self-interest defeats human rights.]</p> <p>The UN has said there is evidence that Sudan orchestrated the <i>genocide</i> and other crimes in <i>Darfur</i>.</p>				
	<p>Other Atrocities news list forecast</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Italy has convicted five former Argentine military officers <i>in absentia</i> to life imprisonment for <i>human rights abuses</i> during the 1970s "<i>Dirty War</i>". Suriname's former military dictator, Desi Bouterse, has apologized for the 1982 killings of 15 critics of his military regime -- "<i>We must deal with this dark page in a mature way and make sure it does not happen again.</i>" <p>Russia's FSB in cooperation Interpol, secret services of Uzbekistan, Italy and Finland cracked a <i>human trafficking</i> network -- "<i>More than 20 criminals, including the ring leaders, have been arrested in a special operation</i>".</p> <p>In both a positive development and a grotesque parody of justice, the rules have finally now been agreed for trial of those involved in the <i>Khmer Rouge killing fields</i> in the years before 1979.</p> <p>In the first three months of 2007, unrest and emergency measures in Bangladesh have led to 95,825 arrests and at least 50 deaths.</p> <p>On the Tibet/China issue, chair of the US House Foreign Affairs Committee says</p>				
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">↓ deteriorated</td> <td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">• steady</td> <td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">↑ improved</td> <td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">↗ ALERT</td> </tr> </table>		↓ deteriorated	• steady	↑ improved	↗ ALERT
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		"it takes two to tango and the Tibetans have been dancing alone".	
Proliferation news list forecast	↓	<p>16 of 20 nuclear waste sites in the former Soviet Union and more than 700 highly radioactive radioisotope thermoelectric generators are <u>not</u> yet secure.</p> <p>Radium vial is missing from a holding site in the US – this is not itself a severe hazard, but the loss points to issues with control practices.</p>	
Terrorism news list forecast		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pakistan's Senate says "Any strategy to combat terror must focus on winning the hearts and minds of the people instead of bringing in more firepower". Moroccan security services have arrested seven Salafists involved in a recent bombing – they had been earlier released under a royal pardon. Based on experience elsewhere, the threat of home grown terrorism is probably growing in the US -- "the agencies involved ... are yet to come up with precise answers on why it is that America has yet to come up with a national assessment of the problem". In one of the most shocking attacks so far in Thailand's worsening Islamic insurgency, women and children on a bus were massacred. Malaysia thinks the threat to the Malacca Strait has been overstated -- "so far we don't think the threat is really real at this point of time." NATO denies involvement in a raid in Pakistan's tribal areas -- "It may have been other military forces, but it was not NATO." [That is ... deniable.] "Most medical professionals do not know how to deal with radiation injuries." An expert observes "terrorists" are proving harder to profile -- "there is no standard jihadi terrorist." 	
Transnational Crime news list forecast		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$206M in cash was seized in Mexico City connected to one of the hemisphere's largest pseudoephedrine trafficking network. In Colombia, prosecutors are about to arrest the Magdalena governor for links with Hernan Giraldo, one of the largest drug-traffickers in Colombia, In Dubai, 21 Indians are held after an hawala [underground money-laundering] network is busted. Brazil will build a mile-long wall on the Paraguay border near the "Friendship Bridge" in the "Tri-border" area. 	
Policy		see daily items with links to full stories on the web at PDB-Policy	
Agriculture news list forecast	↓	<p>According to Greenpeace, a new study shows GM corn can harm human organs -- "rats fed with the genetically-altered corn Monsanto 863 YieldGard Rootworm displayed kidney and liver diseases."</p>	
Diplomacy news list forecast	↓	<p>Does 'the West' still exist? What of Japan? Central Asia? What is the West, and what are its borders? [Or is it a state of mind?]</p> <p>A UK coroner has found that an Iraq "friendly fire" death at the hands of US pilots was "criminal" -- the case, and this verdict, exposes differences between the two allies.</p> <p><i>The Guardian</i> says President Bush returns from his Latin America tour "empty-handed" -- "the collapse of American credibility under Bush accelerated a process already underway." A Harvard commentator says "Washington is learning that not every problem is like a nail" -- "[Democracy] must be rooted in the indigenous</p>	
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	<p><i>society and bear its characteristics, not be imposed from abroad."</i></p> <p>The US seems intent on returning Mohiuddin AKM Ahmed to Bangladesh to a death sentence for his role in the 1975 coup.</p>
<p>Economy news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [nothing significant to summarize but see links to stories in this topical area]
<p>Education news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Democrats are intent on "softening" inequities in the No Child Left Behind law, but the very role of the federal government in schooling is also on the table. <p>The <i>Maryland State Card</i> may assist (there and elsewhere) in comparing schools apples-to-apples fashion for funding -- "<i>it's designed to provide an immediate start to the discussion of what high schools look like and what should be done</i>"</p>
<p>Energy news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the village bull to generate electricity is a no-brainer ... once it's been perfected -- an Indian engineering has designed a village power system that uses draught animals to charge a battery bank. <p>The world is <u>not</u> running out of oil -- to be accurate, there are "unlimited" petroleum reserves but the cost of extraction and processing will increase to \$100 (or \$1,000) per barrel as the best and most profitable reserves are exhausted.</p> <p>There are so many unknowns about CO₂ sequestration that no-one should crack the champagne yet -- <i>Scientific American</i> examines the issue: Future of 'Clean Coal' Power Tied to (Uncertain) Success of Carbon Capture and Storage.</p> <p>Microbes, the majority of life on Earth, will almost certainly be the only rational answer to CO₂ sequestration. [Converting CO₂ into ocean fish is more sensible than hiding it.]</p>
<p>Family news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Pace felt pressured to resile from his <i>Abrahamic</i> commentary on homosexuality; when asked for his own view, Secretary Gates said his own view is "irrelevant".
<p>Health news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [nothing significant to summarize but see links to stories in this topical area]
<p>Immigration news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mexican President Calderón deflects blame for the border / immigration to the US -- not enough border checkpoints, unrelenting demand for cheap labor (and expensive drugs). <p>In Guatemala, President Bush says the immigration issue [impossible to resolve before now] will be resolved by August -- "<i>deportation is a sore issue in Guatemala.</i>"</p> <p>US-Mexico border arrests are down 30% --"the Border Patrol said the National Guard troops added more eyes to the crossing areas and freed up immigration agents."</p>
<p>Justice news listforecast</p>	<p>↓ As the scandal grows over the selective dismissal of District Attorneys, there are accusations of "<i>politicising the justice system by firing prosecutors who did not support Republican interests.</i>" Elsewhere: "Gonzales appeared to be battling for survival ... amid a mounting political firestorm over his Justice Department's dismissal of eight U.S. federal prosecutors."</p> <p>Admission by Khalid Shaikh Mohammed that he is guilty of most terrorist incidents in living memory, prosecutors are faced with an interesting problem in pursuing cases against other accused.</p>

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Security

[news list|forecast](#)

- Russian's **FSB** says "targeted and integrated *hacker* attacks using data encryption algorithms to block information systems are becoming more widespread over the Internet now." [These are system "hostage" for ransom schemes.] The latest annual report for the **FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center** refers to over 200,000 complaints and a reported loss of almost \$200M. **DHS** is planning a *computer forensic institute* -- "the **US Secret Service** will develop the institute, and the *National Cyber Security Division* of Homeland Security will provide some funding."
- DHS** has boosted the authority of its *Chief Information Officer*. [Finally, **DHS** realize *Information* is the beginning, middle, and end of what it should be doing.] **DHS** wants *broadband* universally available to *first responders* -- *communications* is the yet-unsolved requirement that directly cost lives on 9/11. **DHS** will soon start a test at *Staten Island* container terminal which will scan 10,000 containers for *radioactivity* during a four-week pilot. **GAO** has ordered a **DOE** report on the risk from **LNG** tankers in ports and waterways. [LNG is moved in purpose-built *spherical tanks*.]
- Sometime **CIA** officer **Valerie Plame** gets her day on record -- "*I feel passionately as an intelligence professional about the creeping insidious politicizing of our intelligence process.*"
- In the spirit of an Iraq surge, and possibly spurred by recent airport security breaches, **TSA** is launching a "*security surge*" featuring "*random, unpredictable screening of employees in secure areas*".
- A new director was appointed to the **FBI Terrorist Screening Center** -- "*the TSC serves as the single point of accountability for ensuring the merging and appropriate sharing of terrorist information ...*" The **FBI** is training its *threat response team* in **Afghanistan** "*in order to get real-life experience in environments where roadside bombs and improvised devices are common and very real.*"
- Head of the **Marine Corps** says building a larger force will be tough -- "*It is going to be a challenge*"; also the **Navy** will need almost 1,000 additional sailors to support the growing Marine Corps. A \$600M **Coast Guard** contract has unexpectedly hit the rocks.
- A far-ranging review of "*Future Combat Systems*": [Pentagon contemplating futuristic war plans](#).

Society

[news list|forecast](#)

- Analysts say that, four years on, all of the Bush administration's "*political capital*" of 2004 has been spent on **Iraq**, with no money, ideas or will for a social agenda.
- The **Surgeon General** is the third to be sacrificed in the *Walter Reed* scandal.

Water

[news list|forecast](#)

- Five *Central Asian* nations met to discuss *sharing water* and *energy* of *Amudarya* and *Syrdarya* rivers and other shared water resources.

Challengers

Brazil

[news list|forecast](#)

- Coinciding with the visit by President **Bush**, a series of events were held in *São Paulo* with the theme '*Party of Nations: the contribution of Arab culture*'.
 More on the work of *Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation* in *Africa: A Whole Lot Going on in Africa Courtesy of Brazil*.

China

[news list|forecast](#)

- ↓ An ex-official and critic says reversion of *property law* towards *private ownership* will not necessarily mean benefits for the masses. An estimated 20,000 *rioted* in *Hunan*, burning at least nine police cars. An on the spot non-government report and photographs: [20,000-Person Protest Turns Into Riot in China's Hunan Province](#).

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	<p>Coincidentally, the People's Congress was discussing increasing heavy-handedness - <i>"the use of excessive force by Chinese security officials to break up demonstrations is becoming increasingly common."</i></p> <p>China has stopped an enterprise that was selling land on the moon -- the company, <i>Lunar Embassy to China</i>, had already sold a total of 49 acres (20 hectares) to 34 customers. It will take ten years for the US to return to the moon; already it seems China could get there first.</p> <p>Beijing's water pipes are being replaced 300 kilometres (190 miles) a year, but officials admit the Olympiad will place great stress on water demand.</p> <p>A comprehensive essay on China in <i>Africa: China in Africa: It's (Still) the Governance, Stupid.</i></p>
<p>India news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In ongoing resistance, farmers fought police with rocks, machetes and pickaxes over plans to resume farmland for a <i>Special Economic Zone</i>. <p>Maoists executed a pre-dawn attack on a police post in <i>Chattisgarh</i> state, killing at least 49 police.</p> <p>While the great Ganges dies, corruption and impotence continue to paralyze the government of "high tech" India.</p>
<p>Indonesia news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following another fatal domestic airline crash, the air transport chief has been replaced – enigmatically, the <i>Transport Ministry Inspector General</i> and <i>Head of Air Transport</i> have swapped jobs. <p>As a counter-terrorism measure, Indonesia is to tighten surveillance of its estimated 16 million internet users.</p> <p>The Air Force will install radars in remote West Papua --<i>"the radar will be installed to monitor and anticipate air violation of foreign airplanes as well as sea crimes."</i></p> <p>An outbreak of tribal warfare in West Papua involving spears and arrows has killed nine.</p> <p>Indonesia may ban sand and granite exports to Singapore; a serious move -- sand is a strategic resource for construction; an Indonesian president once called Singapore that <i>"unfriendly little red dot"</i>.</p>
<p>Iran news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Russian nuclear experts have started leaving Iran - the halt in Russian nuclear construction in Iran is said to be over contract payments. <p>Some observe that a war between the US and Iran -- <i>al Qaeda's</i> two most hated foes -- would be a Godsend for al Qaeda.</p>
<p>Russia news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The US is said to "alarmed" that Russia is treating its energy as strategic resources and is maximizing revenue from them. The Jamestown Foundation says Russia is gaining ground in reasserting influence in Central Asia -- <i>Russia Reclaiming Central Asia as Sphere of Influence.</i>
<p>Venezuela news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cocaine trafficking from Venezuela, rather than Colombia, is said to be now 98% successful. <p>Venezuela will redenominate and rename its currency -- the "<i>Bolívar Fuerte</i>" will equal 1,000 old <i>Bolívar</i>, an almost neutral anti-inflation measure, or an act of pointless insanity, depending on view. A Bolivian academic articulates the risks of the current Bolivarian revolution -- <i>"the most flagrant confusion is that which conflates state and nation"</i> -- <i>A taste of 21st-century socialism.</i> An interview:</p>

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Interview with the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez Frías.

President **Chavez** remains a firm supporter of **Iran** but has disavowed the destruction of **Israel**. Venezuela continues its *energy diplomacy* among its poorer neighbors with discounted *petroleum* and infrastructure *joint ventures*.

Wild Cards

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

↓ In **Pakistan's** north-west a *jirga* of the *Mamoond* tribe has agreed, at its own pace under its own democratic process, not to shelter *foreign militants*. There has been strident street protest by lawyers and others to the dismissal of the **Chief Justice** -- "*God will punish Musharraf for what he has done with the chief justice.*" **Pakistan** has started *fencing* limited stretches of the border with **Afghanistan**, that arbitrary line drawn on a map in 1893 by the British ["the Durand Line"]. A **Chinese** navy task group leaves **Karachi** after exercises. [This would have been irksome to neighboring **India**.]

Minor clashes between riot police and **PKK Kurdish separatists** across **Turkey** came hours after a fatal clash near the **Syrian** border.

There are calls in **Colombia** to charge **Chiquita** executives for involvement 1997-2004 the rightist militia, *United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC)*, designated a terrorist organization by the US in September 2001.

In **Ecuador**, the **Electoral Court** has dismissed 57 members of the 100-seat *legislature* when they attempted to impeach the Court – both parties are thought to be in breach of the Constitution.

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