

**Week: 26 March - 01 April 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> Car bomb deaths steady, just outside the surge area. US losing ground in AF/IQ. <b>Proliferation.</b> North Korea not a nuclear power. Snapshot of global uranium trade.
	<b>Poverty.</b> Climate change spawning more food crises. Africa has resources, they are being stolen. <b>Infectious Disease.</b> H5N1 killing regular—if it goes human-to-human, tourists will be major vector. <b>Environment.</b> Satellite imagery could help curb illegal logging. Gore bringing out the beast in many. <b>Civil War.</b> West losing in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Militias well funded, dominating the poor. <b>Genocide.</b> Cultural genocide in Tibet receiving renewed attention as China transfers populations. <b>Transnational Crime.</b> Saudi prince caught smuggling cocaine, drug-crime-terrorism links increase.
	<b>Other Atrocities.</b> 3M African slaves created wealth that can be traced today. US torture continues. <b>Terrorism.</b> Some are finally turning on Wahabbiism. War on terror is idiocy—this is a war for minds.

### Policy Summary

	<b>Diplomacy.</b> US losing all standing in Middle East with respect to an unprovoked attack on Iran. <b>Security.</b> Continued waste and mismanagement of Defense and Homeland Security staggering. <b>Society.</b> Senator Barak Obama slams President Bush for “Social Darwinism”—starve poor, feed rich.
	<b>Education.</b> Senator Clinton criticizes private US tutors, does not notice superior Indian tutors, \$18/hr. <b>Health.</b> Nothing major to report. <b>Immigration.</b> Newt Gingrich speaks out for the English-speaking peoples. Learn English or leave. <b>Water.</b> Two Chinese dams draining Mekong River. Nile Basin Commission. India fears year 2045.
	<b>Agriculture.</b> Nothing major this week. <b>Economy.</b> Other than still being insolvent, Bush-Cheney continue to run the country into debt. <b>Energy.</b> First solar-powered transatlantic crossing. Pipeline from Iran to India is a go. Bio-energy. <b>Family.</b> Nothing major this week. <b>Justice.</b> US Guantanamo trials described in Australia as very close to Stalinist theater.

### Major Player Summary

	<b>Iran.</b> Russians concerned about Iranian capture of UK Marines, US preparations for attack on Iran.
	<b>Venezuela.</b> The revolution continues, fueled by a strong oil market.
	<b>Brazil.</b> Half a million criminals at large, 400,000 in prison. <b>China.</b> Roughly 70% of the world’s electronic waste ends up in China. Several intelligence scores. <b>India.</b> Iran welcomed in South Asia (and Latin America, and everywhere Bush is not welcome at all). <b>Indonesia.</b> Ralph Peters said it best: “Ours to lose.” If security pro-female Indonesia falls, be scared. <b>Wild Cards.</b> Egypt proposing comprehensive review of nuclear issues in the region.
	<b>Russia.</b> Arms exports grew 50%, to Algeria, China, India, Iran, Malaysia, Serbia, Venezuela.

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

↗	<b>Alert</b>	<b>Nigeria, Timor-Leste, Zimbabwe</b>
↓	<b>Deteriorated</b>	<b>DR Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe</b>
↑	<b>Improved</b>	<b>Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Israel/Occupied Territories, Mauritania, Nepal, Northern Ireland [UK]</b>

↓ deteriorated      • steady      ↑ improved      ↗ ALERT

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<b>Threats</b>	<i>see daily items with links to full stories on the web at <a href="#">PDB-Threats</a></i>
<b>Poverty</b> <a href="#">news list</a>   <a href="#">forecast</a>	<p>↓ WFP says ten of thousands lack <i>food</i> in east <b>Chad</b> -- "<i>life in eastern Chad has always been precarious, but now tens of thousands of Chadians are being pushed to the breaking point.</i>" Many of the 7,000 <i>refugees</i> in <b>Angola</b> who have been living in <b>Angola</b> since fleeing <b>DR Congo</b> [then <b>Zaire</b>] in 1960s do not want to return home. <i>Adverse weather</i> [climate change?] brings an "unprecedented food crisis" to usually self-sustaining <b>Botswana</b> putting it to the verge of a <i>food crisis</i>. Some suggest that <i>Africa</i> now needs "its own <b>OPEC</b>" to enforce the sort of "<i>resource nationalism</i>" newly emerged in <i>Latin America</i>.</p> <p>In <b>Colombia rural poverty</b> has fallen, but is still over 62%.</p>
<b>Infectious Disease</b> <a href="#">news list</a>   <a href="#">forecast</a>	<p>↓ <b>China</b> confirms the country's <i>third</i> death from <b>H5NI</b> so far this year. <b>Indonesia</b> confirms three more <b>H5NI</b> deaths, taking the death toll from the virus to 69. A meeting of experts agrees that, scientifically, much about the spread of <b>H5NI</b> is still a <i>mystery</i>, but <i>early detection</i> and <i>early treatment</i> certainly reduce mortality. The <b>UN World Tourism Organization</b> has reviewed procedures in case of an <i>viral pandemic</i> -- if <b>H5NI</b> goes <i>human-to-human</i>, <i>tourists</i> will be a major vector.</p> <p>The <b>Paraguayan</b> government's lack of <i>planning</i> is blamed for a surge in <i>dengue fever</i> to over 18,000 cases.</p> <p><i>Tuberculosis</i> already kills <u>4,400 people every day</u> but <b>WHO</b> says that <i>re-treatment</i> of imperfectly cured cases increases the risk of wider spread of the more lethal <i>drug-resistant</i> strains.</p>
<b>Environment</b> <a href="#">news list</a>   <a href="#">forecast</a>	<p>↓ <b>Australia</b> has offered to help curb <i>illegal logging</i> in <b>Indonesia</b> -- "<i>satellite imagery would be offered to help partner countries curb illegal logging.</i>"</p> <p>A good brief factual tutorial on <i>greenhouse gas levels</i> -- <a href="#">Carbon Dioxide and the Greenhouse Effect</a>. An example of the rabid attacks on the <b>Gore climate</b> position -- "<i>Everything that is wrong with this world is embodied in his porcine hulk.</i>"; <b>Malthus</b> = <b>Hitler</b> = <b>Gore</b> -- <a href="#">The New Environmentalist Eugenics: Al Gore's Green Genocide</a>.</p>
<b>Inter-State Conflict</b> <a href="#">news list</a>   <a href="#">forecast</a>	<p>↓ In <b>Iraq</b>, deaths from car bombs in <b>Baghdad</b> have decreased since the "<i>surge</i>" began, but the death toll from car bombs <u>outside the capital</u> has more than doubled. Now more than ever, the well-funded <b>Iraq militias</b> are feeding on <i>poverty</i> -- "<i>working-class people unable to leave because they are poor and unskilled have been falling prey to militias who enjoy incredible financial power.</i>" The non-partisan <b>Baghdad Institute for Public Policy Research</b> says the US should stay out of <i>Shiite</i> areas and stick to the more diverse areas of <b>Baghdad</b>.-- <a href="#">An Iraqi plan to oust militias [Analysis]</a>. US forces claim two men detained in northern <b>Baghdad</b> are responsible for manufacturing many of the <i>car bombs</i> used in the area, responsible for as many as 900 deaths. The <b>USMC</b> has called 1,800 more from the <b>Ready Reserve</b> -- there is a shortage of <i>volunteers</i> to fill some jobs in <b>Iraq</b>. A detailed essay on the use of <i>EFPs</i> in <b>Iraq</b> and the <b>Iran</b> connection -- <a href="#">U.S. worried that Iran supplied weapons to Iraq &amp; Lebanon</a>.</p> <p>In <b>Afghanistan</b>, the <i>West</i> has involved itself in a conflict it does not understand, an insurgency with deep roots in <i>Pashtun</i> history -- <a href="#">West a partisan in the Afghan civil war</a>.</p>
<b>Civil War</b> <a href="#">news list</a>   <a href="#">forecast</a>	<p>↓ In <b>Zimbabwe</b>, activists in <i>hospital</i> with injuries inflicted by state agencies have been abducted and rearrested -- some were on intravenous drips when they were taken away by <i>state security</i>. The powerful <b>Congress of South African Trade Unions</b></p>

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**Week: 26 March - 01 April 2007**

(COSATU) is planning sympathy actions to coincide with a planned strike by the **Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions**. *International Crisis Group* has suggested "an inclusive transition process" in Zimbabwe -- [Crisis Group Board Calls for New Zimbabwe Compact](#). The US (and others) were critical of the **South African** response to the **Zimbabwe** crisis. [South Africa and others have a decades old *revolutionary loyalty* to Mugabe, and fear a flow-on of any victory by Zimbabwe's *union-led leftist* opposition.] It has not been clear who is responsible a series of *petrol bombings* in recent weeks but Zimbabwe's Opposition says *State Security* is to blame.

**Mosul [Iraq]** is getting only 4% of its *gasoline* needs; *water* and *sewerage* plants are intermittent. 800,000 **Iraqis** have been *displaced* in the last year by fighting bringing total displaced persons to around 2 million; a further 2 million have fled Iraq. *Plainclothes Iraqi Shi'ite police* slaughtered over 50 **Sunni** in *Tal Afar* after one of the largest vehicles bombs ever used in Iraq killed 85 **Shi'ites**.

Most **Ethiopian** troops have now left **Somalia** -- "*our mission was to destroy the fundamentalist threat posed on us and we have succeeded in achieving this.*" But the "worst fighting in 15 years" has hit **Mogadishu**; Ethiopia said its military had killed more than 200 "armed remnants" of a hard line Islamist movement; "*the whole city is being shelled indiscriminately.*"

**Israeli** Prime Minister Ehud **Olmert** has discarded the **Palestinian** "*Right of Return*" -- "*Israel would not allow a single Palestinian refugee to return to what is now Israel and that Israel bore no responsibility for the refugees.*"

The **US Treasury** has named seven companies and three individuals who have supplied *arms* or supported *militias* in the **Congo**.

In **Sri Lanka**, **Tamil Tigers** in two *light aircraft* have dropped bombs on the main government airbase. Behind a *press blackout* are reports that 40% of Sri Lanka's air capability has been destroyed by the barnstorming attack.

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

↓ **NGOs** have warned of *cultural genocide* in **Tibet** -- "*the world must now realize the human rights dimensions of **population transfer** of Chinese settlers into Tibet, before it becomes too, too late!*"

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

↓ The **Central African** president admits that troops were to blame for some past *atrocities* -- "*drastic measures - including demotion and expulsion - have been taken against those guilty of abuse.*"

An 11 (or 12) year old girl, recruited by the **Communist** rebels, has been killed in a clash in the **Philippines**.

Someone close to the action says "*you take a healthy guy and you turn him into a cripple, at least for a period of time. I don't care what Alberto Gonzales says. That's torture.*" -- "[We were torturing people for no reason](#)".

**Guyanese** President Bharrat **Jagdeo** has called for *reparations* for the *slave trade*. [Around three million were shipped across the North Atlantic between 1700 and the early 1800s creating *wealth* that can be still *traced* today.]

In eastern **Chad**, *refugees* are being attacked with impunity by armed raids and air strikes.

At least 100 are dead or missing off **Yemen** after *people smugglers* forced hundreds of would-be immigrants to jump from boats into the high sea.

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	<p>Another Human Rights group said the <b>Philippines</b> government -- and its loyal supporter, the <b>US</b> -- is guilty of <i>extrajudicial killings</i> of <i>leftists</i>.</p> <p>The UN says again "<i>some 2.5 million people throughout the world are at any given time the victims of human trafficking.</i>"</p>
<b>Proliferation</b> <a href="#">news list forecast</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After a considerable period of introspection, the <b>CIA</b> says the <b>North Korea nuclear test</b> was a failure -- "<i>the United States does not recognize North Korea as a nuclear weapons state.... It's because the nuclear test last year was a failure</i>".</li> <li>• <b>France</b> is intending to try 42 for <b>arms trafficking</b> -- "<i>42 people, including the son of late French President Francois Mitterrand, stand trial for suspected roles in illegal arms sales to Angola ...</i>"</li> <li>• A survey of who's hot, and who's not -- <i>A snapshot of the global uranium trade.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Terrorism</b> <a href="#">news list forecast</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Bosnia</b> is turning on the <b>Wahhabi</b> militants in the population -- "<i>because of the Wahhabi military support in the 1990s, the Bosnian government has been reluctant to crack down on Wahhabi religious and military training efforts.</i>"</li> <li>• An argument that failing to conceive of the "fight" against <b>Islamists extremism</b> properly means it can never be won -- <i>It's Time to Stop Making 'War' on Terrorists.</i></li> <li>• Another useful item -- <i>Ideology is the new battlefield: Security expert .</i></li> <li>• The EU is formalizing efforts to protect <b>critical infrastructure</b> -- the <b>EU Justice and Security Commission</b> expects "<i>a swift adoption of the proposed Directive concerning the protection of European critical infrastructures ...</i>"</li> <li>• Two items appeared on the <b>Muslim Brotherhood</b>, a non-violent, highly influential organisation illegal in <b>Egypt</b> at the historical root of the modern <b>jihadi</b> tradition -- <i>Hear out Muslim Brotherhood</i> and <i>The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood: friend or foe.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Transnational Crime</b> <a href="#">news list forecast</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What might a <b>Saudi</b> "prince" whose allowance isn't enough and the <b>Medellin</b> cartel have in common? -- "<i>Cover-up to save royal who smuggled cocaine</i>",</li> <li>• <b>Mexico</b>, swamped with <b>illegal guns</b>, is seeking to swap computers and other valuables for surrendered firearms -- "<i>This is a barrio known for boxing champions, and now it has turned into a barrio where there were 32 murders last year.</i>" The <b>Mexican Attorney General</b> has urged the <b>US</b> to stem the flow of <b>guns</b> -- <b>drugs</b> and <b>illegal immigrants</b> may be coming from Mexico, but the guns are coming from the US.</li> <li>• <b>Mexican drug cartels</b> control most <b>Costa Rica</b> maritime <b>smuggling</b> -- "<i>Mexicans took the reins of international cocaine transport some years ago.</i>"</li> </ul>
<b>Policy</b> <span style="float: right;"><i>see daily items with links to full stories on the web at PDB-Policy</i></span>	
<b>Agriculture</b> <a href="#">news list forecast</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [nothing significant to summarize but see links to stories in this topical area]</li> </ul>
<b>Diplomacy</b> <a href="#">news list forecast</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before anyone asks ... the <b>UAE</b> has said no <b>attack</b> on <b>Iran</b> will be launched from its territory. Somewhat surprisingly, the <b>Saudi</b> "king" has condemned the <b>US occupation</b> of <b>Iraq</b>. [The Saudis are not ready to dirk <b>Bush-Cheney</b> yet, but they know the ball is moving towards the <i>Democrats</i>.]</li> </ul>
<b>Economy</b> <a href="#">news list forecast</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [nothing significant to summarize but see links to stories in this topical area]</li> </ul>
<b>Education</b> <a href="#">news list forecast</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senator Hillary <b>Clinton</b> has criticized funding of private <b>tutors</b> under <b>No Child Left Behind</b> law -- many large operations doing a lucrative trade in tutoring have close ties to <b>Republicans</b>.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Energy</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Canada</b> looks to double its output from <i>oil sands</i> but nearby <i>uranium</i> rather than natural <i>gas</i> may be used to power <i>energy-intensive</i> (and <i>water-intensive</i>) extraction from its vast reserves.</li> </ul> <p>The first <i>solar-powered transatlantic crossing</i> saved around 8,000 litre of fuel.</p> <p>At last some good sense from <b>DOE</b> in questioning the place of <i>corn ethanol</i> in the energy future -- "<i>I'm not going to predict what the price of corn is going to do, but I will tell you the future of biofuels is not based on corn.</i>" DOE says <i>coal liquefaction</i> technology has been around for 60 years but successful commercial implementation may still be a while in coming. [It is no magic bullet.]</p> <p>The \$7B <i>gas pipeline</i> from <b>Iran</b> to <b>India</b> via <b>Pakistan</b> looks set to proceed -- energy imperatives win against the <b>US</b> desire to isolate Iran by stopping the project.</p> <p>A "bio-cell" may offer mid-term promise for <i>fuel cells</i>; it uses <i>enzymes</i> from an ancient bacterium, one of the first forms of life on Earth, when there was no oxygen in Earth's atmosphere -- <i>New 'biofuel cell' produces electricity from hydrogen in plain air.</i> Another off-the-wall possibility is "<i>a fuel cell battery powered by sugars found in anything from sweet drinks to tree sap</i>" -- <i>New Batteries Get Their Buzz From Sugar.</i></p>
<p><b>Family</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>Health</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>Immigration</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Former Speaker Newt <b>Gingrich</b> opens his mind to the world on the topic of <i>multi-lingualism</i> -- "<i>learn the language of prosperity, not the language of living in a ghetto</i>" Gingrich said to cheers from the crowd of more than 100.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Justice</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<p>↓ The first case handled by a <b>Military Commission</b> at <i>Guantanamo</i> [Cuba] ended with a Byzantine plea bargain. The <i>Council on Foreign Relations</i> [US] said "<i>Around the world, many believe that the circumstances of their detention render such confessions useless.</i>" Australia's most respected newspaper, <i>The Age</i>, said "... <i>a trial that was uncomfortably close to Stalinist theatre .... The best thing one can say about the process is that one day there may be a reckoning for this despicable episode ...</i>"</p>
<p><b>Security</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<p>↓ The "<i>Information Sharing Environment</i>" that isn't. – the <b>Pentagon</b> has still not posted one of its own at the <b>US National Counter-Terrorism Center</b>.</p> <p><b>Hackers</b> stole 45 million <i>credit card</i> numbers from a US retailer -- "<i>the intrusions may have dated back as far as July 2005.</i>"</p> <p>The <b>UK Home Office</b> has handed <i>prisons</i> and <i>criminal justice</i> to a new justice ministry and has gained a new office for <i>Security and Counter-terrorism</i>.</p> <p><b>DHS</b> has established a <i>TechSolutions</i> program "<i>to collect technological requirements and provide solutions for first responders.</i>"</p> <p>There is shortage in supply of <i>UAVs</i> ["drones"] -- "<i>the Air Force has lost about 40% of its Predator unmanned aircraft and lacks enough trained crews to meet the demand for battlefield surveillance ...</i>"</p>
<p><b>Society</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senator Barack <b>Obama</b> accused President <b>Bush</b> of '<i>Social Darwinism</i>', law of the jungle. [An <i>American Dream</i> for a few means the <i>American Nightmare</i> for many.]</li> </ul>
<p><b>Water</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<p>↓ The great <i>Mekong</i> River is "drastically dry" -- "[two] <b>Chinese hydro-electric dams</b> contribute to severely low water levels impeding river navigation.... <i>The worst is yet</i></p>

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*to come. China is now building a third dam ... "*

**India** is predicted to face *severe water crisis* by 2045 -- "*this is not just a technological problem, not just an economic problem, not even a social problem - it is a **political problem**.*" ["Severe" in this context means widespread death from lack of water.]

The 10 *Nile Basin* countries have agreed to a *Nile Basin Cooperative Framework* replacing a 1929 colonial arrangement created by the British.

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

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

- Brazil estimates half a million **criminals** are at large in the country -- "*Brazil currently holds 401,236 prisoners, which means if law enforcement units arrest all the fugitives, the prison system will collapse.*"

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

- The US says China has made "impressive gains" in military uses of **cyberspace**. Apparently with a straight face, China has urged a ban on **space weapons** -- "*the current **Outer Space Treaty** has clear inadequacies in preventing the weaponisation of outer space and arms races in outer space*".

China will formally start "monitoring relations among **ethnic groups**", code for **East Turkestan Islamic Movement in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region**. *Radio Free Asia* reports that **Uyghurs** are being forced to work on **development projects** such as almond plantations -- "... *the project was being overseen by the deputy secretary of the county Communist Party committee ...*" [In fairness ... it should be noted that people in many parts of China in previous decades were "forced" to work on local public interest projects.]

China aims to slash **SO<sub>2</sub> emissions** [the cause of **acid rain**] from power plants -- "*Many power plants now either do not have **desulfurisation** equipment or do not use the equipment they have because it is expensive to operate.*" An estimated 70% of the world's **e-waste** ends up in China, presenting an immense future cost in appropriate **disposal**.

China continues its attack on those **mapping** China without permission -- websites that have illegally made maps that "endanger" **national security interests** will be "severely dealt with".

As the *Olympiad* approaches, "*China is still failing to comply with its Olympic commitments, particularly with regard to **Tibet** ...*"

A US corporation, *ITT*, has been fined \$100 million for illegally exporting advanced **night-vision technology** -- "*ITT's exportation of this sensitive technology to China and other nations jeopardized our national security ...*". Separately, an engineer **defense contractor** is being tried for passing **US submarine silent drive secrets** to China.

China is seen to be making a "**gas grab**" in **Burma [Myanmar]** -- "*the construction of more gas **pipelines** across Burma is likely to line the pockets of the country's leaders while causing suffering for thousands of people.*"

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

- India says it would welcome **Iran** as an *observer* to the *South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)*. [SAARC comprises **India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Maldives, Bhutan, and Afghanistan** will join from 03 April 2007. **US, China, Japan, South Korea, EU** have observer status.] An example of **South-South** high-tech aid -- India will offer **telemedicine** services to two hospitals

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	<p>in each SAARC member country.</p> <p>India has been invited as an <i>observer</i> to the <b>Arab League</b> summit this week in <i>Riyadh</i>.</p> <p><i>Naxalites (Maoists)</i> are active in several regions across India, but in the central state of <b>Chhattisgarh</b> the conflict is reaching the scale of a minor war greatly afflicting the local population-- "<i>The Naxalites take away our food. The police come and harass us.</i>"</p> <p>India and <b>Pakistan</b> have been developing a framework for <b>counter-terrorism cooperation</b> – India seeks to exclude <b>Jammu-Kashmir</b> from any framework; Pakistan says that is absurd.</p>				
<p><b>Indonesia</b>  <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The fundamental importance of Indonesia's role for <b>stability</b> in the world puts any dim memories of political and economic instability well into the background -- <i>Why Indonesia matters</i>. The Indonesian government has had to vigorously defend at home its decision to join the unanimous <b>Security Council</b> vote on <b>Iran</b>.</li> </ul> <p>Indonesian police have found over 25kg of <b>explosives</b> and <b>jihadist literature</b> has been found in <b>Surabaya</b>.</p>				
<p><b>Iran</b>  <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<p>✓ Some say that sanctions against Iran have hit Iran's <b>Revolutionary Guards</b> more than most and the <b>kidnap</b> of the <b>UK Marines</b> may be direct retaliation. Iran has shown images of the captured <b>UK Marines</b> along with their admissions of trespass. Iran and the UK exchange notes that hinge on the alleged <b>GPS position</b> of the crew when captured -- "<i>Iran at first offered a different co-ordinate and then, when it was pointed out that even this was in Iraqi waters, another reading was given, this time on the Iranian side.</i>" General Leonid <b>Ivashov</b>, deputy head of the <b>Russian Academy of Geopolitical Sciences</b> think tank says incidents like this can be non-trivial -- "<i>Wars often begin with provocations</i>".</p> <p>Russia said "<i>The latest military intelligence data point to heightened <u>US military preparations for both an air and ground operation against Iran.</u></i>"</p> <p>Iran made a partial payment on the <b>Bushehr nuclear reactor</b> being constructed by <b>Russia</b> – the reactor is <u>not</u> directly involved in the international dispute over Iran's <b>enrichment</b> program.</p>				
<p><b>Russia</b>  <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Russia's <b>Central Election Commission</b> has become a <b>security agency</b> and will have the added function of preventing "<b>undesirable parties</b>" from taking part in elections.</li> </ul> <p>An update on Russia's continuing <b>Chechen</b> adventure -- <i>In the front line of Putin's secret war</i>.</p> <p>The testing of <b>Angara</b> launch vehicles (the <b>Baiterek</b> project) at <b>Baikonur</b> space center in <b>Kazakhstan</b> has been delayed.</p> <p>Russia reconfirms that <b>land forces</b> are the core of its armed forces -- "<i>Russian Land Forces are deployed in all six military districts of the country and, according to some estimates, about 400,000 personnel are enlisted.</i>"</p> <p>Russia, borrowing terminology from others, says it is <b>a force for good</b> in the world -- "<i>New-found political stability at home under President Vladimir Putin and high energy prices have given Russia the confidence to assert itself abroad.</i>"</p> <p>Russian <b>arms exports</b> grew 50% 2001-2006 -- major importers are <b>China, India, Algeria, Venezuela, Iran, Malaysia</b> and <b>Serbia</b>.</p> <p>Russia's destruction of <b>chemical weapons</b> is presently on schedule – it has so far</p>				
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">↓ deteriorated</td> <td style="text-align: center;">• steady</td> <td style="text-align: center;">↑ improved</td> <td style="text-align: center;">✓ ALERT</td> </tr> </table>		↓ deteriorated	• steady	↑ improved	✓ ALERT
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**Week: 26 March - 01 April 2007**

	destroyed 7,000 tonne, 17.5% of total declared quantity of 40,000 tonne.
<p><b>Venezuela</b>  <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Chavez</b> has a revolutionary agenda similar to <b>Gadhafi's</b> but he may learn in time from a jaded <b>Libya</b> that generosity to neighbors does not buy friends -- <i>The Chavez-Gadhafi link</i>.</li> </ul> <p>President <b>Chavez</b> opened the new <i>Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela</i> for membership; other parties may lawfully exist but are likely to be ineffective.</p> <p><b>Belarus</b> has offered Venezuela "... <i>an arms package for anti-aircraft and high-tech weapons designed to defeat US military technologies ...</i>"</p>
<p><b>Wild Cards</b>  <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<p>↓ The <b>Pakistan</b> government has completed the third <i>accord</i> of its kind with <i>local tribal groups</i>, near <i>Khar</i> in the <i>Bajur</i> region, in a move aimed to isolate <i>foreign Islamists</i> in the <i>Afghan border</i> area. Next day, at <i>Tank</i> near <i>South Waziristan</i>, dozens were reported killed in an attack by "hundreds" of <i>militants</i>. <i>International Crisis Group</i> released an update on Pakistan's militant movements -- <i>Karachi's Madrasas and Violent Extremism</i>. Pakistan test-launched its <i>Hatf II Abdali nuclear-capable missile</i> which has a range of 200 kilometers (125 miles). <i>Balochistan</i>, simmering with discontent since annexation by the <b>Pakistan</b> in 1948, is a major element of Pakistan's stability quite distinct from the newer Taliban related issues -- <i>Balochistan - A Crucible of International Intrigue</i></p> <p>A checklist of foreigners <i>kidnapped</i> so far during 2007 in the <b>Nigerian</b> oil delta -- <i>Nigerian kidnappings of foreigners in oil delta</i>. Nigerian <i>rebel groups</i> appear to be now fighting for dominance among themselves.</p> <p><i>The Jamestown Foundation</i> notes the resilience of the <i>Kurdish Workers Party (PKK)</i> -- "Turkey's discriminatory policies toward its Kurdish minority ensure that there will continue to be a steady stream of recruits for the PKK ..." -- <i>PKK Survives EU Arrests</i>.</p> <p>In <b>Thailand</b> a Swiss man has been jailed for 10 years for defacing posters of the king, indicating that <i>lese majeste</i> against Thailand's king, the world's longest-reigning monarch, is taken very seriously.</p> <p>A Chilean <i>Airbus A-340</i> was nearly struck by <b>Russian space junk</b> over the <i>South Pacific</i>.</p> <p>The "<i>Contact Group</i>" on <b>Kosovo</b> -- <b>US, Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Russia</b> -- are still at deadlock.</p> <p><b>Egypt</b> may be proposing a formal <i>military pact</i> for the <b>Arab League's</b> 22 members, and a "comprehensive review of the <i>nuclear issues</i> in the region". Few <b>Egyptians</b> turned out to a <i>referendum</i> aimed at strengthening state powers -- "What's the use?" some said.</p> <p>The president of <b>Kyrgyzstan</b> has called on the <i>opposition leader</i> to be <i>prime minister</i> -- "It is the first time an opposition politician has been made a prime minister in <i>Central Asia</i>."</p> <p>The <b>Shanghai Cooperation Organisation</b> -- a regional alliance of <b>China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan</b> and <b>Uzbekistan</b> -- has plans to expand its membership and its areas of cooperation.</p>

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