

Week: 23 April - 29 April 2007

GLOBAL REALITY: THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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

Threat Summary

	<p>Environment. DoD and NASA contaminating water in 25 states with rocket fuel chemical.</p> <p>Inter-State Conflict. Seven of eight Iraq reconstruction project not operating as designed.</p> <p>Proliferation. Oak Ridge finds means to convert nuclear waste into nuclear fuel.</p>
	<p>Poverty. Near-subsistence poor up 20% by 2015. Elite corruption killing many economies.</p> <p>Infectious Disease. New mosquito-borne diseases, and new resistant pneumonia strains.</p> <p>Civil War. Somalian hospital overwhelmed, 70 killed in Ethiopia, Sri Lanka & Zimbabwe flailing.</p> <p>Genocide. Darfur cannot be saved, even with 100,000 police. US issues ultimatum.</p> <p>Transnational Crime. UK credit cards being used to finance Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka.</p>
	<p>Other Atrocities. Indian parliament in human trafficking, 1 million Israeli bomblets litter Lebanon.</p> <p>Terrorism. 29% increase in attacks, 70 IED's found in Alabama cache. Chlorine being stolen.</p>

Policy Summary

	<p>Diplomacy. 70% polled in Islamic countries favor ejection of US forces while rejecting violence.</p> <p>Security. US suffers from a broken foreign policy, a broken budget process, a broken military.</p> <p>Society. Pentagon corruption and lies exposed to Congress by unwilling false heroes.</p>
	<p>Education. No major stories.</p> <p>Health. Mexico decriminalized abortion. Thailand breaking medical patents under WTO rule.</p> <p>Immigration. Nevada is 30th state to declare "English Only" as state language. Felonies 4X in NM.</p> <p>Water. Mumbai India going dry. 16% of Africans will face water scarcity by 2025.</p>
	<p>Agriculture. No major stories.</p> <p>Economy. Pentagon weakening US economy, largest budget since World War II.</p> <p>Energy. Wind power on a roll. Carbon dioxide as a fuel. Hydroelectric gains, ecological costs.</p> <p>Family. Mexico has decriminalized abortion.</p> <p>Justice. US Attorney General under fire, Congress grants immunity to key aide.</p>

Major Player Summary

	Iran. Threatens US with long-range missiles, but also ready to talk about stabilization of Iraq.
	Venezuela. All but one oil company agree to Venezuela's nationalization plans.
	<p>Brazil. President says Chavez is not a problem, focus should be on brutal rule by local elites.</p> <p>China. Admits pollution is a grave problem. Buying four nuclear reactors from US, \$8B deal.</p> <p>India. Launches first commercial satellite, for Italy. Pakistan stirring pot, India to train Afghan army.</p> <p>Indonesia. Calling on US to leave Iraq.</p> <p>Russia. Proposes undersea tunnel to connect Russia to Alaska. Opposes missile shield in Europe.</p> <p>Wild Cards. Pakistan, Pakistan, and Pakistan. Central Asia needs US policy. AFRICOM spongy.</p>

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

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

↓ deteriorated • steady ↑ improved ↗ ALERT

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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	<p>↓ A meeting of the International Labour Organization in Addis Ababa said the number of working poor will increase by 20% by 2015 -- "<i>most of the work in Africa is of a near-subsistence nature, with more than eight out of 10 workers in the informal economy</i>".</p> <p><i>"Rising opportunism of the elite class and dirty tricks of the western world are breeding corrupt African dictators leading to run-down economies and mass suffering."</i> -- <i>Elite Fuelling Continent's Woes, Say Activists</i>. [This is "news" only in as much as nothing has changed in several decades.]</p>
Infectious Disease news list forecast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CDC held a "war game" [<i>exercise</i>] to test responses to an outbreak of an influenza pandemic; the next CDC exercise will assume the outbreak has become a full blown pandemic. In the absence of an influenza pandemic yet, Roche is easing off production of <i>Tamiflu</i>; anecdotal evidence lingers of the possible <i>psychotic (suicidal) side-effects</i> of <i>Tamiflu</i>. <p>Florida experts warn that a new mosquito-borne illness may be headed to the US -- "<i>based on the outbreak in the Indian Ocean, I think that pushes chikungunya right to the front as far as mosquito-borne diseases we need to watch out for.</i>"</p> <p>A new US government investigation has found new pneumonia strains <u>impervious to available vaccinations</u> are fast emerging [particularly in Alaska].</p>
Environment news list forecast	<p>↓ A rocket fuel chemical has been found in the US food and water supply; "<i>at sites in more than 25 states, perchlorate had leaked into the drinking water and soil. About 65% ... was attributed to the DoD and to NASA.</i>"</p> <p>Texaco / Chevron still refuses to pay for the cleanup of billions of gallons of toxic sludge it intentionally dumped in Ecuador in pristine rainforest to cut costs.</p> <p>The Democrats have owned the Environment for decades and all presidential contenders espoused broad agreement on a range of issues during the week, but lack of debate means none of the candidates have needed to display genuine insight. [Mercury globes it ain't.]</p> <p>A new report "<i>Restoring America's Wildlife Legacy 2007</i>" details the nationwide impact of funding shortfalls and illustrates the deteriorating conditions at national wildlife refuges.</p> <p>A group of UK scientists say of "<i>The Great Global Warming Swindle</i>" – an anti-Gore film -- "<i>free speech does not extend to misleading the public by making factually inaccurate statements</i>".</p> <p>Director of the Trudeau Center for Peace and Conflict Studies notes the UN Security Council now recognizes <i>Climate Change</i> as a global security issue -- <i>Terror in the Weather Forecast</i>.</p> <p>Biodiesel may worsen global warming relative to petroleum diesel -- "about two-thirds of greenhouse gas emissions from rapeseed biodiesel occur during the farming". [Again ... the total environmental impacts from cradle to grave must be used in considering and comparing processes.]</p>
Inter-State Conflict news list forecast	<p>↓ An independent inspection has sadly found a high proportion of Iraq reconstruction projects are inoperative -- "<i>in a sampling of eight projects that the United States had declared successes, seven were no longer operating as designed ...</i>"</p> <p>Textbook asymmetric tactics continue in a lethal attack near an Iraqi Shi'ite shrine --</p>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> ↓ deteriorated • steady ↑ improved ↗ ALERT </div>	



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"The terrorists have started to come up with creative attacks so that it's impossible for police to uncover them." April was the bloodiest month for **UK** troops in **Iraq** since 2003 -- *"Shi'ite militias are increasing their attacks so that they can claim victory when British forces eventually pull out."* The **US** construction of a **wall** in **Baghdad** has been halted by Prime Minister **Maliki**.

A former **Afghan** foreign minister accused President **Karzai's** administration of a fatal lack of "strategic vision" -- *Taliban Back Due to Karzai's Poor Strategic Vision* [Interview]. Elsewhere ... President **Musharraf**, bristling with years of being goaded on all sides, accuses the **Afghan** president of losing the war against the **Taliban** -- *"those who do nothing against terrorism, like Karzai, are also the ones who criticise those who are fighting, like us."*

The **Somali** conflict is emphasizing other regional tensions -- *"there is a close relationship between Somalia's Islamists and several rebel groups in Ethiopia."*

Fighting words in a fighting journal: *Armed Forces Journal* published an intelligent paper on "failures of generalship" in **Iraq**, and **Vietnam** -- *A failure in generalship*. [Generals are always one war behind.]

Civil War
[news list|forecast](#)

↓ In **Somalia**, **Mogadishu** hospitals were overwhelmed by victims of street fighting -- *"even the shade of the trees are occupied at this point"*. After two weeks, Ethiopian troops said they had taken back Mogadishu -- *"we have nearly concluded the fighting in Mogadishu against al-Qaeda insurgents and we are now chasing them away"*. The small contingent of **AU Ugandan peace-keepers** called for the numbers they had been promised -- *"for several weeks now, we have not got the troops promised and we are paying for that"*. In the comparative peace, the interim government appointed two "strongmen" ("warlords") to key positions in the capital; to observers *"it remained unclear whether the insurgents had been defeated or melted away to regroup"*. *The Guardian* reported that **troops** were robbing refugees -- *"fugitives are forced to pay to shelter in the shade."* For an arm's length view, see the UN OCHA sitrep; *"there are signs that the insecurity in Mogadishu is having a destabilizing effect on other regions"*-- *Somalia: Situation Report - 27 Apr 2007*.

Meanwhile in **Ethiopia**, as many as 200 gunmen -- presumed to be with the **Ogaden National Liberation Front** (ONLF) separatist group -- attacked a **Chinese-run** oil field in Ethiopia and killed more than 70.

The **Tamil Tigers** -- the only insurgency with **air power** -- dropped **bombs** near oil storage cutting power to the capital while all **Sri Lanka** was watching the World Cup cricket final.

The **Hitler Youth** model in **Zimbabwe**; *"we were told anyone who did not agree with the policies of Mugabe deserved to die"* -- *The Mugabe Youth – trained for terror*. A regiment of **Zimbabwe's** army deserted across the border into **South Africa** -- *"this is the breakdown of Mugabe's most trusted sector"*.

Genocide
[news list|forecast](#)

↓ In **Darfur**, The **African Union** says *"Arab militias* were killing and pillaging in the region without fear of arrest by the Sudanese authorities". The **UNHCR** chief says *peace-keepers* cannot secure **Darfur** peace -- *"even if you have 100,000 policemen in Darfur, they will not be able to cover the whole territory."* The **US** has given **Sudan** an 'ultimatum' -- *"There is no specific deadline but US officials say they will only hold off for a matter of weeks."* [On top of the years that have already elapsed.] *Brotherly Leader and Guide of the Libyan Revolution Gaddafi* says emphatically that

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	<p>Sudan's <i>Darfur</i> is an <u>internal</u> African matter.</p>
<p>Other Atrocities news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrests in a human trafficking ring involving Indian members of parliament continue. <p>31 US congressmen have urged Guatemala to take action on the killing allegations against José Efraín Ríos Montt, a friend of the Reagan regime.</p> <p>Around one million Israeli bombs and bomblets still litter southern Lebanon.</p> <p>An Argentine court has overturned "<i>dirty war</i>" pardons given by former president Menem -- now Gen. Jorge Videla and Adm. Emilio Massera, both 81, will die in jail, not at home.</p>
<p>Proliferation news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commander of US forces in South Korea says the best estimate of DPRK's capability is around <u>50kg</u> of fissile weapons material. But ... "<i>The U.S. intelligence community is <u>less confident now than five years ago</u> that North Korea has a program to highly enrich uranium.</i>" <p>Oak Ridge National Laboratory is ready to demonstrate a reactor technology that would consume [some] nuclear waste -- "<i>the aim of the demo ... is to transform nuclear leftovers into fuel for a new breed of reactors.</i>"</p>
<p>Terrorism news listforecast</p>	<p>↓ The US State Department reports a 29% percent increase in terrorist attacks year-on-year in 2006 to around <u>14,000</u>, <u>excluding</u> attacks on US troops; worldwide 5,800 attacks resulted in at least one fatality. New CENTCOM chief Admiral Fallon thinks "long war" has many unhelpful nuances and particularly conflicts with the US intention to vacate Iraq as soon as it can.</p> <p>Saudi Arabia announced a series of arrests and weapons finds over recent months, breaking a plot that closely resembled 9/11 -- Saudi arrests suspects planning oil attacks.</p> <p>The Pentagon said a key al-Qa'eda operative has been captured -- Nashwan Abdulbaqi (<i>aka Abdul Hadi al-Iraqi</i>) is possibly the number-three in the group.</p> <p>The US ambassador to Mali thinks Mali can be a bulwark in West Africa against Islamism sweeping south across the Sahel, but he says aid not military force is the key weapon.</p> <p>US federal officers raided an Alabama militia group and "<i>uncovered a small arsenal of home-made weapons that included a rocket launcher, 130 hand grenades and 70 IEDs</i>".</p> <p>A Pakistani Islamic charity has won a court case against closure -- "<i>the court has instructed the government that such action cannot be taken under the rules of the UN</i>". [The Pakistan government subsequently refused to obey the court order.] The suspected US head of the Tamil Tigers was arrested in New York -- "<i>as the director of the US branch of the Tamil Tigers, based in Queens, New York, Kandasamy oversaw the organization's activities, including its fund-raising ...</i>" EU foreign ministers have agreed to tell groups and individuals on its terror register <u>why</u> they are listed.</p> <p>UK Home Secretary Reid says <i>Don't scare the public</i> -- fear does not necessarily produce security; also, don't underestimate the threat of economic or electronic attack.</p> <p>A good primer on suicide tactics in the history of asymmetric warfare -- "<i>men will refuse to accept longer a burden they find too great to bear</i>" -- Roots of suicide</p>

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terrorism [book review].

The **Chlorine Institute** recently alerted the **FBI** to several thefts or attempted thefts of 150-pound chlorine tanks from *water treatment* plants in California.

"*al Qaeda has more bases, more partners, and more followers today than it did on the eve of 9/11*" -- *Al Qaeda Strikes Back*. The head of **Scotland Yard** observes that *al-Qaida* seems to be thriving despite the "war on terror" -- one reason for the resilience of Islamist extremism is the *lack of trust* in authorities by local **Islamic communities**. "... *the United States now seems poised to start at the wrong end of the learning curve in facing a new challenge*" -- *The Counterinsurgency Fight: Think Globally, Lose Locally*.

Transnational Crime
[news list|forecast](#)

↑ The **US Coast Guard** interdicted 40,000 pounds of *cocaine*, "*the largest single sea-based seizure of cocaine by a U.S. agency*".

Venezuela is taking more steps to secure the *border* with **Colombia** -- "*the operation will ensure security in a zone mainly affected by illegal armed groups, drug traffickers and criminals.*"

UK authorities say *credit cards skimmed* in the **UK** have been illegally used for funding **Tamil Tiger** activity in **Sri Lanka**.

Policy

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

Agriculture
[news list|forecast](#)

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

Diplomacy
[news list|forecast](#)

• Following the *Virginia Tech shooting*, the **State Department** was moved to quickly disseminate talking points to *overseas posts* on the safety of US campuses for *foreign students*.

Saudi Arabia: "*The problem is that Bandar has been pursuing a policy that was music to the ears of the Bush administration, but was not what King Abdullah had in mind at all*" -- *U.S. puzzled by diminishing clout of Saudi prince*.

The **US** has negotiated a major *arms deal* with **Qatar** -- "*the deal will be worth several billions of dollars and transform the Qatari military.*"

Thailand is angry at a piece by a lackey of big *pharmaceuticals* in the *Murdoch Washington Times* that calls the country a member of "*the axis of IP evil*" for breaking patent on expensive badly needed medications.

A *public opinion poll* in **Egypt**, **Morocco**, **Pakistan** and **Indonesia** show many reject *violence* but many support ejecting the **US** from all *Islamic* lands; more than 70% believe the United States is *trying to weaken and divide the Islamic world*.

Russia says it is working for a *multipolar* world -- "*all friends of America, and we consider ourselves such, should help the United States to make 'a soft landing' in the multipolar reality.*"

Former **Portuguese** president Jorge **Sampaio** has been appointed the first **UN High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations**, an initiative to promote reconciliation between religions, cultures and nations.

Economy
[news list|forecast](#)

• "*If Congress funds the president's \$623 billion FY2008 military budget request, we will spend more on our forces next year than at any time since World War II.*" -- *A Unified Security Budget for the United States, FY 2008*. [see also **Security**]

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

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<p>Energy news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The <i>Bujagali hydroelectric</i> project near the <i>Nile's</i> source will <u>double</u> Uganda's grid capacity but will have ecological consequences. Using <i>food crops</i> to fuel <i>vehicles [biofuels]</i> is a dilemma with particular clarity in <i>developing countries</i> -- <i>Combustion Or Consumption? Balancing Food And Biofuel Production</i>. A primer and resource on <i>wind power</i> by <i>National Center for Policy Analysis</i> -- <i>Wind Power</i>. Work-in-progress -- <i>Making Gasoline from Carbon Dioxide</i> -- is cutting-edge science yet unproven but certainly a better direction than the limp-wristed efforts to hide [<i>sequester</i>] <i>carbon-dioxide</i> in some deep orifice.
<p>Family news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Mexico City</i> has decriminalized <i>abortion</i> -- "<i>This is an act of revenge against the Catholic church</i>", part of a wider trend throughout <i>Latin America</i>; "<i>It's inevitable. The churches cannot escape the general process of democratization here.</i>"-- <i>Abortion rights gain ground in Latin America</i>.
<p>Health news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More detail on Thailand's use of a WTO rule that permits a state to break a <i>patent</i> under certain circumstances -- <i>Thai 'drug war'</i>.
<p>Immigration news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immigration-related cases are swamping <i>courts</i> in border states -- "<i>each judge in New Mexico handled an average of 397 felony cases last year, compared with the national average of 84.</i>" The Senate of <i>Nevada</i>, which has a 23% <i>Hispanic</i> population, has passed an "<i>English Only</i>" Bill; it would become the <u>30th state</u> with an official English policy. Human rights groups and observers in both countries are baffled by the plan for the US and Australia to "<i>swap</i>" <i>asylum seekers</i>.
<p>Justice news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> US Congress has given <i>immunity</i> to an aide of Attorney-general Gonzales -- "<i>part of a rapid-fire schedule Democrats have set to compel Bush Administration officials, among them Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, to testify</i>" about a range of issues.
<p>Security news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Casey says the planned increase of 65,000 <i>active-duty soldiers</i> is needed "<u>now</u>" to relieve the strain of long and repeated deployments to Iraq. "<i>Star Wars</i>" passed another benchmark -- "<i>a sub-sonic cruise missile in the atmosphere and a ballistic missile in space with a ship-based interceptor.</i>" The V-22 aircraft has already cost \$22B and may be useless in the modern real-world when ready -- "<i>putting together the pieces of a broken budget process in a new way will be a necessary step in repairing a broken foreign policy.</i>" [see also Economy] More on the coming <i>cyber-wars</i>: "<i>a fundamental role for government is to ensure the continuity of society in times of crisis.</i>" -- <i>Al-Qa'eda's electronic 'ammunition'</i>. Also ... "<i>easy access to drone technology</i>" poses obvious available means for CBRN delivery -- <i>Radio controlled toys serious threat to security - NATO official</i>. New types of "<i>social</i>" sites -- such as <i>MySpace</i>, which has over 100 million pages, -- are a new target for <i>malware</i> and <i>identity theft</i>. An even-handed look at <i>outsourcing</i> in the US intelligence community -- <i>Contractors playing major role in U.S. intelligence</i>. An audit shows that the FBI has made strides in recruiting <i>intelligence analysts</i> but several traditional obstacles remain such as a wall between <i>field agents</i> and <i>analysts</i>, and inadequate <i>training</i>. New undersecretary of defense for intelligence Clapper has terminated the only

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	<p>known Pentagon program that collects intelligence on US citizens, <i>TALON</i>, which stored information on persons demonstrating at <i>US bases</i>. Long overdue, a House Homeland Security subcommittee has ordered the TSA to improve <i>security screening</i> of employees in <u>secure areas</u> of <i>airports</i>. The Transportation Security Administration is putting new emphasis on <i>risk-based behavioral recognition</i> systems and training [cf the Israeli approach].</p> <p>Three US towns were <i>evacuated</i> due to a nearby <i>ammonia</i> leak -- "<i>workers had been transferring anhydrous ammonia from a 9,000-gallon storage tank ... when the hose burst.</i>"</p> <p>US bases in <i>Europe</i> will conduct <i>security exercises</i> following threat alerts -- "<i>the military tests are aimed at randomly testing and evaluating force protection procedures at American military facilities to ensure the readiness of security personnel and base residents ...</i>"</p> <p>Under criteria of new rules governing the security of <i>chemical plants</i>, about 100 plants nationwide have a million or more people living in a "<i>vulnerability zone</i>" and 7,000 plants are in the "<i>high-risk</i>" category.</p>
<p>Society news list forecast</p>	<p>↓ A <i>bomb</i> was found outside a <i>Texas</i> clinic performing <i>abortions</i>, and disarmed.</p> <p>A tale curiouser and curiouser emerged at a hearing of the Oversight Committee into matters surrounding Jessica Lynch and Pat Tillman; it was <i>not spin</i> exposed but a psychotic desperation from the very top to rewrite reality -- <i>Pentagon spin on Iraq 'heroes' exposed</i>.</p>
<p>Water news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Interstate Commission for Water Coordination comprising delegates from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan met for the 47th time but there is still no credible strategy for <i>water security</i> for the region's more than 55 million inhabitants. <p>In Mumbai [India] taps are running dry – there is now a <u>continuous shortfall of around 1G litre/day</u>, about the same quantity estimated to be lost by <i>leakage</i> through the pipe network that dates in part to the 1860s.</p> <p>WHO says 16% or 230 million of <i>Africa's</i> population will face <i>water scarcity</i> by 2025, and as many again will live in <i>water-stressed</i> countries.</p>
<p>Challengers</p>	<p>see <i>daily items with links to full stories on the web</i> at PDB-Challengers</p>
<p>Brazil news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderate President Lula says President Chavez of Venezuela is <u>not</u> a problem for the region; focus should be kept on <i>Latin America's</i> real problem -- centuries of rule by brutal elites.
<p>China news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> China and the US are caught in WTO mechanisms that are dragging them into a <i>trade war</i> they would both rather avoid -- "<i>the escalation comes at a time when both China and the U.S. are preoccupied with domestic concerns which limit their potential to manoeuvre and compromise.</i>" <p>Li Zhaoxing stepped down as Foreign Minister earlier than expected and was replaced by former ambassador to the US and Vice Foreign Minister, Yang Jiechi. [The significance of the sudden change is not yet known.]</p> <p>China admits its <i>pollution</i> problem is 'grave' and the prime minister has now taken personal charge of the disastrous environmental situation to tackle head-on those officials "<i>obsessed with economic growth</i>". China has detained an activist who was once held as an environmental hero after he reported worsening <i>pollution</i> at the <i>Tai</i></p>

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	<p>lake from chemical factories -- "police officers broke through our door at night and took him away".</p> <p>The US says China "should not use the war on terrorism as a pretext for cracking down on Uighurs or anyone else engaged in peaceful political dissent."</p> <p>China is trying is trying to clean up the internet – this week the Communist Party's Politburo asked media and cultural groups to promote and produce more "healthy online cultural products".</p> <p>China is trying to preserve a <i>green</i> subtext to its energy policy -- a strategic uranium reserve and <u>30 new nuclear plants</u> over the next 10 years is just a <i>transitional</i> phase to meet energy needs which will <u>quadruple</u> by 2020. China is set to buy four state-of-the-art <i>Westinghouse AP1000 nuclear reactors</i> at an estimated cost of \$8B from the US.</p>
<p>India news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India has launched it first commercial satellite (for Italy), joining France, Russia, US, China, Japan in the commercial launch market. <p>More allegations that Pakistan and Bangladesh are radicalizing dissident groups in north-east India -- '<i>ISI creating trouble in India</i>'.</p> <p>India will give training to the Afghan Army -- "the Indian move is sure to ruffle feathers in Pakistan and further complicate India's situation in Afghanistan ..." -- <i>India's 'Great Game' in Afghanistan</i>.</p>
<p>Indonesia news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> President Yudhoyono has reshuffled his cabinet but has been forced to balance allegations of corruption and incompetence against political reality -- "Yudhoyono will need to balance a string of competing demands from parties crucial to his political survival, analysts said." <p>A bomb blast in Ambon coincided with a key anniversary for pro-independence rebels.</p> <p>Indonesia has drafted a resolution for the upcoming International Parliamentary Union meeting that calls on the US to quit Iraq.</p>
<p>Iran news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Islamist "fashion police" have been active -- "at Shiraz University, at least 2,000 students voiced anger over new rules banning the wearing of sleeveless shirts, tight pants, shorts and tank tops in school premises." <p>Baghdad says an upcoming meeting on stabilizing Iraq, "might be a turning point for regional cooperation in easing the violence". Both Iran and the US say they may find themselves talking to each other.</p> <p>"... even if <u>Iranian-built EFPs</u> are finding their way into the hands of the Sunnis, we don't really know who the culprit is" -- <i>Don't Blame Iran for Iraq</i>.</p> <p>In the daily exchange of diplomatic (and undiplomatic) threats Iran says that if attacked it can make 'nowhere safe' for the US -- "Iran has long-range missiles that can make nowhere safe for America" said the deputy interior minister for security affairs.</p> <p>Iran will soon host a <i>Summit of Caspian Sea Littoral States</i> (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Iran, Russia, Azerbaijan).</p> <p>Nicaragua expressed support for Iran's nuclear program -- "all countries should be allowed to access peaceful nuclear technology and this right is not just for some countries" Ortega said.</p>

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	<p>A worthwhile discussion on Iran's true <i>strategic significance</i> -- while the US is distracted by a nuclear paper tiger of its own making, Iran builds an empire -- <i>Iran: dangerous simplifications</i>.</p>
<p>Russia news list forecast</p>	<p>↓ Ethnic Russians rioted in Tallinn [Estonia] with at least one death on the removal of a <i>war memorial</i>; Russians see a memorial respecting the costly <i>anti-fascist victory</i>; Estonians see it as Russian <i>imperialism</i>.</p> <p>President Putin says US plans to deploy a "<i>missile shield</i>" in Poland and radars in the Czech Republic increases the risk of <i>MAD</i> "many times". "<i>We do not understand what is happening in Europe now that requires such aggressive actions</i>" says President Putin. To punctuate its disapproval, Russia <i>suspended</i> participation in the <i>Conventional Forces in Europe</i> (CFE) treaty.</p> <p>President Putin has expressed impatience with <i>foreign 'interference'</i> in Russian affairs -- "<i>Not everyone likes the stable, gradual rise of our country....The flow of money from abroad used for direct interference in our affairs is growing.</i>" The US admitted it "<i>has been rendering technical and financial assistance to support civil community groups and non-governmental organizations ...</i>"</p> <p>Russia has proposed the <i>world's longest undersea tunnel</i> -- the proposed tunnel with a <i>highway, railway, pipelines, and power lines</i> will run under the Bering Strait and connect Russia directly to Alaska.</p> <p>Russia has said it will veto the UN Kosovo resolution as presently formulated -- Kosovo is confident it will become independent in <u>May 2007</u>; Russia says that is unlikely.</p> <p>India accounts for about 40% of Russian arms exports.</p> <p>Russia is striving to increase its world share of <i>uranium enrichment</i> which presently stands at <u>40%</u>.</p>
<p>Venezuela news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A poll reveals majority opposition to closure of a virulently anti-Chavez TV station, but this seems largely because of the vapid <i>soap operas</i> and other popular programs it offers. <p>All foreign oil companies except Conoco have agreed to Venezuela's provocative <i>oil nationalization</i> arrangement -- ConocoPhillips has the heaviest presence of any foreign company in Venezuela's vast Orinoco belt.</p>
<p>Wild Cards news list forecast</p>	<p>↓ [In Turkey, parliament elects the president.] Following massive protests by secularists in Turkey, Prime Minister Erdogan, alleged to be strongly <i>Islamist</i>, will not stand for election as president, leaving Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul, said to be equally <i>Islamist</i>, well positioned to be elected. Intently watching developments, the Turkish <i>military</i> warned it would intervene to defend the country's <i>secular</i> system if necessary [<i>cp</i> Algeria], prompting the EU to warn that the military should stay out of politics. Further mass street demonstration by secularists left Gul unmoved.</p> <p>Pakistan again insists the <i>border</i> with Afghanistan is "completely sealed" -- "<i>the Pakistan-Afghan border has been sealed completely and aerial monitoring of the area through state-of-the-art devices was continuing.</i>" Pakistan's plan to fence 35 km of the 2,500-kilometre border is drawing heat from Afghanistan and has already brought exchange of fire between troops across the border.</p> <p>A survey shows that 54% of Pakistanis approve of President Musharraf's performance; but responses on <i>preferred leader</i> show why Benazir Bhutto and the</p>

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president can benefit from a political marriage of convenience: Musharraf - 32%, Benazir Bhutto - 25%, Nawaz Sharif - 15%. Continuing blowback from Pakistan's *Islamist north-west* remains serious as a *suicide bomber* almost succeeds in killing the **Interior Minister**.

President **Musharraf's** summary dismissal of **Pakistan's Chief Justice**, either a regrettable error of judgment, or a vendetta originating in the *security service*, has brought stinging condemnation from the **International Commission of Jurists** -- "virtually unprecedented in the legal annals of the world"; -- *Pakistan rapped over judge crisis*.

A convincing argument that *Latin America* has moved on from the old *left-right* polarities -- *Latin America: Four Competing Blocs Of Power*.

The *Project on Transitional Democracies* believes the **US** must re-think and re-do its **Central Asia** policy to make any gains on the obvious historical and geographical advantages of **China**, **Russia**, and **Pakistan**-- *Central Asia: Strategist Wants U.S. To Make Fresh Start In Region*.

The vision of **AFRICOM's** look and feel is still spongy. Its creation is a response to ; "the spread of extreme *Islamism* and other destabilizing forces in *sub-Saharan Africa*" but the command will not get any new resources; rather it will be an efficient consolidation of what already exists. The US adds that AFRICOM is not naked imperialism; "The goal is for AFRICOM not to be a U.S. *leadership* role on the continent, but rather to support African leadership efforts ..." - *AFRICOM won't get new resources: Pentagon* and *U.S. Military's Continental Command Will Help Leaders*.

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