

**GLOBAL REALITY: THE WEEK IN REVIEW**

*Destabilizing Threats, Stabilizing Policies, and Global Powers at a Glance*

**Threat Summary**

	<b>Environment.</b> Warming and toxins multiply hazards. Google Earth helping indigenous monitoring.
	<b>Inter-State Conflict.</b> West chooses Fatah, but Palestinians do not. Iraq surge appears to have failed.
	<b>Proliferation.</b> Russians lead in enrichment for export. US Army destroys 45% of chemical weapons.
	<b>Poverty.</b> 2007 Failed States Index, 8 of worst ten in Africa, joining Afghanistan and Iraq.
	<b>Infectious Disease.</b> WHO focus on local capacity & bottlenecks. Dengue epidemics in Phil & S'Pore..
	<b>Civil War.</b> Somalia a killing field. Sudan and Nigeria very unstable, Tunisia and Ghana very peaceful.
	<b>Genocide.</b> Darfur genocide spreads to Chad—local communities murdering one another.
	<b>Transnational Crime.</b> Colombia and Venezuela join Mexico as major narcotics exporters.
	<b>Other Atrocities.</b> 218 million children engaged in labor, with 126 million engaged in worst forms.
	<b>Terrorism.</b> Africa on the brink—Senegal, Mali, Niger, Chad could join other destabilized failed states.

**Policy Summary**

	<b>Diplomacy.</b> AFRICOM HQS rejected by several north African countries. CARICOM cool to US.
	<b>Security.</b> Navy cyber-security numbers 15,000. CIA's dirty laundry coming out. DHS hacked.
	<b>Society.</b> USG continues to struggle in caring for wounded and dismembered returning from Iraq.
	<b>Education.</b> Merit pay gains some support. 80% US states behind on disabled education.
	<b>Health.</b> Coming health war enabled in part by Congressional limits on negotiation over high prices.
	<b>Immigration.</b> Checklist of the top human smuggling routes.
	<b>Water.</b> See links.
	<b>Agriculture.</b> See links.
	<b>Economy.</b> US debt worsening--\$29,000 "owed" by every US man, woman, and child. Hedge scare.
	<b>Energy.</b> Military needs fuel wars over fuel. Nigeria on brink of export stoppage. Hydrogen storage.
	<b>Family.</b> Extremist right continues to threaten family and community with cult-like divisiveness..
	<b>Justice.</b> See Society. Cheney refuses all oversight, which Bush destroying Constitutional foundation.

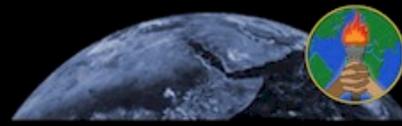
**Major Player Summary**

	<b>Iran.</b> White House exaggerating the threat, generals saying it does not exist as stated.
	<b>Venezuela.</b> Showdown with oil companies, denies state-sponsorship of narcotics traffic (pot & kettle?)
	<b>Brazil.</b> Landless may yet win decision to deprive absentee foreign landlords of ill-gotten estates.
	<b>China.</b> Anti-slavery crackdown. Bridge finishes road from China to Mekong via Thailand, Laos.
	<b>India.</b> Upgrading to laser/GPS guided bombs. Infrastructure "war" along line of control with China.
	<b>Indonesia.</b> Relations with India emerging as a major plus for a peaceful Asian periphery.
	<b>Russia.</b> Malaysia joins Russia in a proposal for expanding & reforming UN Security Council.
	<b>Wild Cards.</b> EU has new ops and intel centers independent of NATO. Africans wary of Arabs.

**World Crises - from monthly assessments by *International Crisis Group* - JUNE 2007**

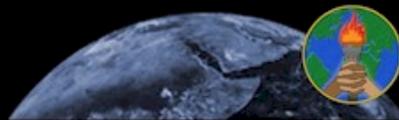
↗	<b>Alert:</b> Pakistan
↓	<b>Deteriorated:</b> Ethiopia, Israel/Occupied Territories, Lebanon, Pakistan
↑	<b>Improved:</b> Northern Ireland (UK)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Unchanged:</b> Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Basque Country (Spain), Belarus, Bolivia, Bosnia &amp; Herzegovina, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Chechnya (Russia), Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia/Eritrea, Fiji, Georgia, Guinea, Haiti, India (non-Kashmir), Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kashmir, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Macedonia, Mali, Mauritania, Moldova, Morocco, Myanmar/Burma, Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan), Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, North Caucasus (non-Chechnya), North Korea, Philippines, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Somaliland, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Syria, Taiwan Strait, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Western Sahara, Yemen, Zimbabwe</li> </ul>

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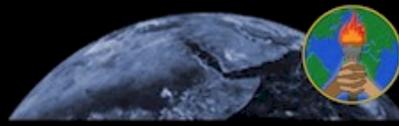
<b>Threats</b>		<i>see daily items with links to full stories on the web at <a href="#">PDB-Threats</a></i>
<b>Poverty</b> <a href="#">news list forecast</a>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>2007 Failed States Index</b>, by <i>Foreign Policy</i> magazine, finds <b>8 of the worst 10 states in Africa</b>, along with <b>Afghanistan and Iraq</b> -- <i>Iraq now ranked second among world's failed states</i>.</li> </ul>
<b>Infectious Disease</b> <a href="#">news list forecast</a>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>WHO's</b> new 10-year strategy on <i>Diseases of Poverty</i> will address key <b>bottlenecks</b> to health-care delivery, and <b>local capacity-building</b> in countries where parasitic tropical diseases are endemic -- <i>WHO to Implement New Strategy on Diseases of Poverty</i>.</li> </ul> <p>The <b>Philippines</b> has seen a 6.8% increase in <b>dengue fever</b> cases, declaring it now 'hyper-endemic'-- "warmer temperatures caused by <b>global warming</b> make <b>mosquitoes</b> more hungry for blood and therefore bite people more often in order to feed." <b>Dengue</b> in <b>Singapore</b> also has reached technically 'epidemic' levels -- this number breached the "epidemic threshold" of 378 cases per week for the first time since 2005 and is rising.</p>
<b>Environment</b> <a href="#">news list forecast</a>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The [US] <b>EPA</b> has proposed a tighter permitted level on <b>ground-level ozone</b>, the main component of <b>smog</b>.</li> </ul> <p>A <b>hazard multiplier</b> -- the "harmful reciprocal relationship" between <b>warming</b> and <b>environmental toxins</b> -- <i>Global Climate Change and Toxic Chemicals: A Potentially Lethal Combination</i>.</p> <p><i>Expect more health problems from global warming</i> -- "... we would expect a higher incidence of <b>mortality</b> and <b>morbidity</b> from <b>vector borne diseases</b>, infant and maternal mortality, cardio-respiratory related diseases in the next 50 years".</p> <p>"Dramatic changes to the environment in the <b>Darfur</b> region of <b>Sudan</b> helped lay the ground for today's conflict ... " -- just a tiny presage of countless <b>environmental conflicts</b> to come -- <i>Climate change and the fight for resources 'will set world aflame'</i>.</p> <p><i>Carbon-offset schemes 'inherently flawed'</i> -- "The only long-term solution to <b>climate change</b> is to reduce <b>carbon emissions</b>" -- for instance, rushed "<b>carbon-offset</b>" tree plantings can cause severe problems for local <b>water security</b>.</p> <p>Another <b>Google Earth</b> project brings the previously impossible into the realm of the do-able; <b>indigenous Brazilians</b> will be able monitor <b>road-making</b> and <b>illegal logging</b> -- <i>Indians, Google Earth to fight illegal logging in Brazil</i>. [Comment: Google Earth is far from <i>real-time</i>, but is "good enough" for processes spanning months or years.]</p>
<b>Inter-State Conflict</b> <a href="#">news list forecast</a>	↓	<p>In the <b>Palestine Occupied Territories</b>, the <b>US</b> and <b>Israel</b> bet on a horse-race; <b>Fatah</b> politicians are not popularly elected, and are "<i>unimaginative, self-serving and corrupt, satisfied with the emoluments of power</i>" -- just the type the <b>US</b> sadly often chooses as friends -- <i>West Chooses Fatah, But Palestinians Don't</i>.</p> <p>Some analysts say, five months in, the <b>Iraq</b> "<b>surge</b>" has <u>already failed</u>; "[it] could not compensate for the lack of an <b>effective government and security forces</b> ... nor provide a quick fix for the <u>four years</u> of <b>failed strategy, passivity and complacency</b>" - - <i>Eye on Iraq: Why the surge failed</i>.</p> <p>No-one seems to be following even the basic lessons proven by the author of <u>the one truly successful counter-insurgency campaign in modern times</u>, Sir <b>Robert Thompson</b> in the <b>Malay Emergency</b> -- <i>Can Counter-Insurgency Succeed?</i>. But slowly, very late, <b>US</b> forces are being introduced to the new kind of war; "<i>We're starting to realize that we're never leaving that country if we don't do it right</i>" --</p>

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	<p><i>How US Army trains for a different kind of war.</i></p>
<p><b>Civil War</b>  <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Somali authorities impose curfew as killings mount -- "Most of the residents in <u>one of the world's most heavily armed cities</u> now live in constant fear of being blown up in an attack by <b>insurgents</b> -- or shot by <b>Somali and Ethiopian</b> troops..."</i></li> </ul> <p>A new <b>Global Peace Index</b> lists two <b>African</b> states, <b>Sudan</b> and <b>Nigeria</b>, as among the world's <u>least peaceful</u>, but <b>Tunisia</b> and <b>Ghana</b> are among the world's <u>most peaceful</u> -- <i>Peaceful countries in Africa - Ghana in top 5.</i></p> <p>In <b>Zimbabwe</b>, <b>Mugabe's</b> own <i>party</i> and his <i>state intelligence</i> apparatus are said to be now feeling he is a liability -- <i>'Isolated' Mugabe told to step down - sources.</i></p>
<p><b>Genocide</b>  <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<p>↓ The thoroughly horrible situation of <b>Darfur</b> has now spread to eastern <b>Chad</b> where each community fears its neighbors -- <i>"it is the fighting between <u>local communities</u> which humanitarian workers say has had the most detrimental effect on civilians" -- Protection is the issue, but from whom?. [Comment: Good report worth reading.]</i></p>
<p><b>Other Atrocities</b>  <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>International Labour Organization (ILO)</b> estimates that <u>218 million</u> children worldwide are engaged in labor, with 126 million engaged in the <u>worst</u> forms of child labor -- <i>UN puts child labour laws under scanner.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>see also: China</i></p>
<p><b>Proliferation</b>  <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<p>↓ <b>Pakistan</b> is building a new <b>nuclear reactor</b> to produce <b>weapons-grade plutonium</b> at <b>Khushab</b> in <b>Punjab</b> province.</p> <p>The <b>US</b> says it is ready to work on a new nuclear security regime to replace the <b>START</b> treaty -- <i>"the [START] treaty has been largely criticized for the lack of <u>verification</u> provisions and the possibility of <u>re-deploying stored warheads</u>."</i></p> <p>The <b>US Army</b> announces it has reached a major milestone under the <b>Chemical Weapons Convention</b> -- <i>"we successfully met the 1-, 20- and 45-percent <u>destruction milestones</u> specified by the treaty while maintaining an outstanding safety record."</i></p> <p><b>Ukraine</b> says it will join the <b>Russian</b> international <b>uranium enrichment</b> project -- Russia's hopes its enrichment plant at <b>Angarsk</b> will obviate the need for nations such as <b>Iran</b> to do their own enrichment.</p>
<p><b>Terrorism</b>  <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amateur-grade <b>anti-satellite</b> weaponry is a real (theoretical) possibility; <i>"a terrorist organization or rogue state could threaten essential satellite systems" -- DIY anti-satellite system.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>"The [UK] government's persecution of the <b>Muslim community</b> is alienating the very people whose support is needed to stop further atrocities."-- Breeding resentment.</i></p> <p>Heavily redacted <b>FBI</b> documents fail to satisfy suspicions of <b>mystery flights</b> in the days after <b>9/11</b> -- <i>Bin Laden may have arranged for family to flee US.</i></p> <p>In <b>Indonesia</b>, recently captured <b>JI</b> leader <b>Abu Dujana</b> is refusing to give up fugitive mastermind <b>Noordin Top</b> -- <i>"it's not permitted to give up a Muslim brother to a government that does not implement Islamic law."</i></p> <p>In <b>Northern Ireland</b>, an insight into the life of a dedicated <b>Islamist</b>; <i>"... but at night, he allegedly assumed the role of a computer expert who made funds and shelter available to high-level <b>Jemaah Islamiyah</b> terrorists ..." -- Filipino terrorist was janitor, waiter by day.</i></p> <p>An interview with <b>Saadi Yacef</b>, one of the original "terrorists" in <b>Algeria's</b> independence fight against the <b>French</b> -- <i>Algerian Is Unrepentant on Role in</i></p>

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*Popularizing Terror Tactic.*

It is getting harder to detect movement of **terrorist funds** --"they're now investing in securities and moving money through securities transactions ....".

**Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Chad** – does "**terrorism**" really have any meaning in this part of the world, or is it just a word for any civilization the **US** does not understand -- *Somalia in the eye of the storm.*

**African** countries of the **Sahel** -- **Senegal, Mali, Niger, Chad** are among the world's poorest and seem vulnerable to Islamist inspiration -- *W Africa a 'breeding ground' for terrorists.*

**Transnational Crime**  
[news list|forecast](#)

- **Colombian** President and friend of the *White House* **Uribe** continues to reject claims that he had received cash from **paramilitaries** and **cocaine traffickers** during his 2002 presidential campaign.

**Spanish** authorities seized 4,000 kilograms of **cocaine** from **Venezuela** and arrested 11 people during an anti-drug operation in the **Atlantic** Ocean.

**Policy**

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

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

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

- Several **north African** countries have declined an opportunity to host the proposed **AFRICOM**; "*people on the street assume their governments have already had too many dealings with the U.S. in the war on terror*" -- *North Africa Reluctant to Host U.S. Command.*

Are some posts too tough for the **US Foreign Service**? -- *Stress Taking Toll on Foreign Service.*

Reports of the **US-CARICOM summit** displayed little diplomatic warmth for or by the **US** -- *US-CARICOM SUMMIT - US tells Caribbean to improve business climate.*

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

↓ For such a big number, the **US Debt** gets curiously little air-time; "*it would come to \$29,245.82 for every man, woman and child*" -- *President Bush And The National Debt.*

Some cracks are appearing in the vast **US capital** edifice -- *Bear Stearns says bails out hedge fund.*

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

- *\$8.7 Million in Grants Awarded for Critical Foreign Language Instruction* -- "*the grants are intended to address the shortage of **critical foreign language speakers** by supporting new and expanded programs in grades **K-12.***"

The first-ever federal "report card" on state implementation of the **Disabilities Education Act** finds 80% of states are below requirements.

A checklist on the **NCLB** "warnings" system -- *How 'No Child' forces schools into restructuring.*

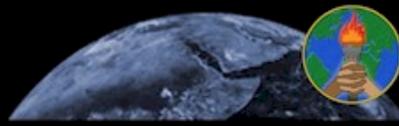
**Merit pay** is a sensible idea but fraught with problems when more closely considered; "*this is a complex process of changing a culture, and it will fail if teachers don't support it.*" -- *Long Reviled, Merit Pay Gains Among Teachers.*

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

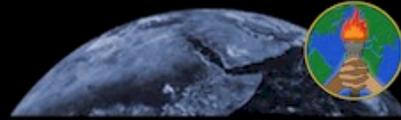
- "*How wars of the future may be fought just to run the machines that fight them*" -- *The Pentagon v. Peak Oil.*

If the situation in **Nigeria** worsens, oil markets will have yet another worry; "*an indefinite stoppage is expected to cut supplies from the world's eighth largest oil exporter*" -- *World oil threatened by Nigeria strike.* "*When I was the boss of an oil company I would never tell the truth. It's not part of the game.*" -- *Clock Ticking On*

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	<p><i>Global Oil Supply.</i></p> <p><i>Iran says won't rule out using oil as a weapon</i> -- "When the Americans say that <b>military action</b> in regard to the nuclear issue has not been put aside, <b>Iran</b> can also say that it will not put aside <b>oil</b> as a tool."</p> <p>Senate passage of the bill that mandates <u>40%</u> increase in <b>fuel economy</b> standards by 2020 revealed "<i>deep partisan and regional divides over the nation's energy future</i>".</p> <p><b>Dimethylfuran</b> (DMF), produced using a combination of conventional biological and new chemical methods, has a <u>40% higher energy density</u> than <b>ethanol</b> -- <i>Better Biofuel Uses Best of Both Worlds.</i></p> <p>Research into new alloys as <b>hydrogen storage media</b> will obviate problematic hydrogen <b>pressure tanks</b> -- <i>Light years ahead.</i></p>
<p><b>Family</b>  <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<p>↓ A checklist of the <b>Christian-Zionist</b> psychoses that have been driving US policy; "Mike <b>Evans</b> is a shock jock for <b>Armageddon</b>, a cheerleader for the <b>apocalypse</b>" -- <i>A New General for God's Army?</i></p>
<p><b>Health</b>  <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• " ... between [Michael] <b>Moore's</b> slick illusion that a valuable service can be provided for "free" and the chance to get the same buying power for health care that Americans have in the rest of the economy" -- <i>The Coming Health Care War.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Immigration</b>  <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A checklist of the five most-trodden <b>people smuggling</b> routes -- <i>The List: The World's Top Immigrant Smuggling Routes.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Justice</b>  <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [nothing significant to summarize but see links to stories in this topical area]</li> </ul>
<p><b>Security</b>  <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be released in days ... James <b>Schlesinger</b> started a collection of documents on any activity that contravened the agency's charter -- <i>CIA's 'family jewels' on show.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>US general laments Google Earth capability</i> -- "It's something that was a closely guarded secret not that long ago and now everybody's got access to it."</p> <p>A useful insight; a paper by DNI Mike <b>McConnell</b> -- <i>Overhauling Intelligence.</i></p> <p><b>DHS</b> admits it has been attacked by <b>hackers</b> -- "How can the Department of Homeland Security be a real advocate for sound <b>cybersecurity</b> practices without following some of its own advice?" Ludicrously poor <b>handling practices</b> again haunt a US agency; the <b>backup tape</b>, stolen from an intern's car, contained "<u>myriad crucial data</u>" -- <i>Interns carried state data home nightly.</i></p> <p>A look at the "<b>diseases of interest</b>" that could be studied at the new <b>Bio-Defense / Agro-Defense</b> Facility in east Columbia, Missouri -- <i>List of diseases shows possible contents of lab.</i></p> <p>"Why has the <b>U.S. Navy</b> increased its <b>Internet defense force</b> from 200 sailors, to 15,000, in the past three years? <u>Mainly fear.</u> " -- <i>The Secret Cyber War.</i></p>
<p><b>Society</b>  <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<p>↓ The administration seems unprepared not only for the <u>3,500 deaths</u> in <b>Iraq</b> but as well for the over <u>35,000 serious injuries</u> that will cost families and a nation for a lifetime -- <i>Gov't struggles to care for wounded GI's.</i></p> <p>"George W. Bush has degraded many important American concepts and values, such as the <b>rule of law</b>, <b>human rights</b>, and <b>just government</b>. <b>Civilian control of the military</b> is his next victim" -- <i>The End of Supreme Command.</i></p> <p><i>The Cheney Branch of Government</i> -- "rather than proving to be an asset with no liabilities, he has turned out to be a liability with hard-to-identify assets."</p> <p>Latin <b>street gangs</b> have dynamic links with counterparts in the <b>US</b>; "many of these</p>



gangs are formed by young **Central American** men who have trained in the streets of **California**" -- *The Scourge of Juvenile Gangs in Central America*.

**Water**

[news list|forecast](#)

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

**Challengers**

**Brazil**

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- **Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra** (MST, *Movement of Landless Rural Workers*) says it will settle for nothing less than **appropriation** of foreign capital land-holdings -- *Brazil's landless break up with Lula and call him tragedy for country*.

**Rio** sees another fierce battle between authorities and **criminal gangs**; "there were several gun battles and police used heavily reinforced vehicles to maintain their presence" -- *Brazil police mount Rio crackdown*.

**China**

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- *Chinese officials held in anti-slavery crackdown* -- "the detentions reflected growing acknowledgement that official indifference [or involvement] was crucial to the trade in **enslaved workers**." Also *China Works to Shutter Forced Labor Camps* -- the son of a local Communist Party leader is implicated in profiting from slave workers. As the scandal breaks, many are being freed by authorities but unknown numbers remain enslaved.



China: Slave workers freed this week / AP -EyePress

A **bridge** funded by the *Asian Development Bank*, connecting *southwestern China* to **Thailand's Chiang Khong** via **Laos**, will be the final link in a road network through the **Mekong** region.

*China overtakes U.S. as top CO2 emitter: Dutch agency* -- but China's **per capita CO<sub>2</sub> emissions** are about one quarter that of the **United States**.

Beijing will hold a "**dirty bomb**" exercise in training for the *Olympics* -- "a 'dirty bomb' packed with explosives and radioactive material that is set off outside a mock Olympic stadium".

*The six megatrends that are changing China* -- the era of **cheap labor** is at an end, and other forecasts.

A **US hot-line** with Beijing, similar to the one established with **Moscow** in 1963, will be established in September 2007.

**India**

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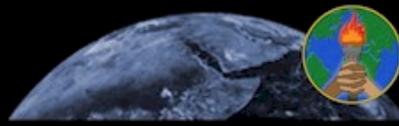
- The biography of former **US Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker** documents events of 1957 -- *How CIA ousted Left govt in Kerala*.

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India continues to upgrade its **armaments** – it is in discussions to transfer the technology for the *Enhanced Paveway-II Dual Mode GPS/Laser Guided Bombs*.

Significant **counter-insurgency** operations are almost a daily occurrence in India – this week two suspected **Pakistan**-trained terrorists were apprehended in *Lucknow* with 7kg RDX.

India is becoming conscious of its world role and reiterates its commitment to ensuring a “peaceful periphery” in Asia -- *India says it is a linchpin for Asian security not just economy*.

*"Chinese infrastructure building along the Line of Actual Control has forced India to hasten its own development process along the borders ..."* -- *India's riposte to Chinese activity along the border*. India stresses that even the several abiding **boundary issues** with **China** cannot be allowed to stall development of relations between the two countries -- *Boundary issue not to affect ties with China: Mukherjee*. But India makes clear it is no-one's lap-dog -- *India last week signaled that it had diplomatic options for Taiwan that might not be comfortable for Beijing*".

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

- Interrogation following recent **Ji** arrests reveal that, as suspected by the best analysts, there has been a policy rift in Ji for some time -- *Indonesian militant opposed JW Marriott bomb-report*. And the best analysis recognizes that Indonesia's own Islamist tradition runs deeper than Ji, to the **Darul Islam** Islamist-nationalist movement; *"a lesser-known cadre of leaders should be expected to emerge out of the more traditional Darul Islam wings ..."* -- *Indonesia Neutralizes Ji as Immediate Threat [Analysis]*.

**India** and Indonesia approach “a wide-ranging review of bilateral relations between Asia's two largest pluralistic democracies.” -- *Indonesia for more cooperation with India*.

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

- Iran claims to have stockpiled 100kg of **enriched uranium** -- *Iran moves closer to making a nuclear bomb*. **Russian** Foreign Minister **Lavrov** said he does not understand why the **United States** needs to cite an Iranian threat in order to justify setting up its **missile shield** in Europe -- *Russia Sees No Threat From Iran's Ballistic Missiles*.

This will be the Century of **Central Asia** and strategic regional plans such as the **Turkmenistan-Iran corridor** will be part of it; *"the project has been around since the 1990s but, like many other regional plans and agreements, it has yet to be implemented."* -- *Turkmenistan Pushing North-South 'Trade Corridor' With Iran*.

The **White House** civilians again think they know better than US commanders on the ground -- the *White House* says Iran is heavily arming the **Taliban**: US generals say a few weapons are turning up from thieves markets – *New Arms Claim Reveals Cheney-Military Rift*.

see also: **Energy**

**Russia**  
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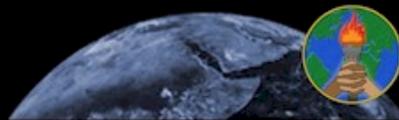
- President **Putin** and **Malaysian** Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad **Badawi** have called for expansion of the **UN Security Council** and reform of the methods under which it functions -- *Putin, Badawi want to enlarge UN Security Council*.

**Venezuela**  
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- Some of the world's biggest **oil** players, yet unidentified, are heading towards a showdown with Venezuela's new oil **nationalization** policy -- *Venezuela says some oil majors reject takeovers*.

Venezuela says *Show or Fold* on constant **US** accusations of state-sponsored **drug trafficking** -- *Venezuela to US: Give Us Drug Facts*. Without offering details, **US**

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**World Bank** appointee **Zoellick** says cash-rich Venezuela is a "a country where economic problems are mounting" -- *Zoellick: Venezuela Economy in Trouble*.

A poll of 600 Venezuelans found that 56% supported students from a *Catholic university* who were protesting the closure of a rightist *TV channel*; Chavez accused the students of being part of a *US-backed "soft revolution"* -- *Most Venezuelans back student protests, says poll*.

President **Chavez** has threatened to *expropriate* land from producers who refuse to follow *government price controls* [on commodities such as *milk*]; President Chávez said that the private firms lose their "right to play a role in the economy" when they buy any items at prices exceeding the regulated price. -- *Gov'n't threatens to expropriate farmers*.

**Wild Cards**  
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- The **European Union** has established an *Operation Center* independent of **NATO**; "it poses no duplication of effort with *NATO's Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE)*, even though the two will perform exactly the same tasks ..." -- *EU Opens Military Ops HQ*.

The *United States of Africa* is far from a done thing; "Black Africans must say no to this agenda because the *Arabs* see us as dumbs who can easily be duped." -- *Danger of an Organised United States of Africa*.

**Turkey** [along with **Indonesia** and **Brazil**] becomes a *global diplomatic player* as a focus for '*the South*' -- *Turkey to host meeting of world's poor countries*.

The **Australian navy** plans to spend around US\$9B on *warships* -- "the purchases would transform *Australia's navy* into one of the most powerful in the *Asia* region ..."

The 24 member **Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic**, comprising **Angola** and other south-west *African* countries is potentially a significant *south-south* alliance -- *Premier Presents Strategies of Angola's South Atlantic Presidency*.

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