

GLOBAL REALITY: THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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

Threat Summary

	<p>Environment. United States third after India and China in death from pollution. <i>Aral Sea is back!</i> Inter-State Conflict. NYT calls Iraq a lost cause. Logistics attacks triple, Iran uses US' own rockets. Proliferation. GAO stings US nuclear licensing. China space weapon creates debris. Malaysia leads.</p>
	<p>Poverty. Colombia finally discovers that legitimacy can be gains through services to the poor. Infectious Disease. China threatens the world with potentially pandemic biohazards. Civil War. Iraq, Sudan, Zimbabwe all into chaos. Serbia and Russia oppose Kosovo's independence. Genocide. Generally quiet. Darfur a "bye." Visit www.genocidewatch.org. Transnational Crime. Drug gangs out-gunning police in Mexico, buying elections in Guatemala</p>
	<p>Other Atrocities. Argentina revokes unconstitutional pardon. Useful precedent for USA and others. Terrorism. Airport security unaffordable. Around the world, the Caliphate is stressed, US-UK fear.</p>

Policy Summary

	<p>Diplomacy. President Bush blows off ASEAN (as Secretary Gates blew off Latin America). Security. Average computer bug has 348 day lifespan. FBI profiling terrorists. NYC cameras galore. Society. Concerns grow over the failure of institutions that protect the Constitution and legitimacy.</p>
	<p>Education. See links. Health. Surgeon General was censored, full gamut of groups object to new nominee. UK "Fat Tax." Immigration. See links. Water. See Environment. Aral Sea is back (and the Dead Sea is also now being brought back to life).</p>
	<p>Agriculture. Brazil challenges US farm subsidies in new WTO case. Economy. U.S. Dollar recovers from all-time low. Energy. Coal liquefaction and ethanol are losers, not enough focus on sun, water, and ocean thermals. Family. Sex abuse cost for US Catholics over \$2B. Add to this Muslim abuse of women. Religion? Justice. Attorney General Gonzales outed as a clear and pre-meditated liar. Shames all Latinos.</p>

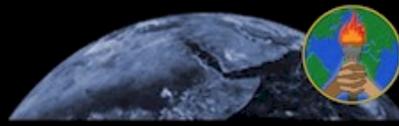
Major Player Summary

	<p>Iran. Mixed news—IAEA thinks things are getting better, but civil and inter-state war with Iraq loom.</p>
	<p>Venezuela. Russian-made submarines in Caribbean. \$4B deal with Iran on offshore rigs and tankers.</p>
	<p>Brazil. \$500M for nuclear-powered submarine. US Navy severely vulnerable to mines, missiles, subs. China. Gift Building for East Timor FM (electronic bugs included) Expelling missionaries. India. Upgrading ties with Australia. Maoists on the move. Rail traffic to Bangladesh resumes. Indonesia. Bali police calm in face of Australian terror alert (travel warning). Russia. 4.500 "missing" from Chechnya. Across the board military build up, Black Sea, in space. Wild Cards. French-led Mediterranean Union? Poor nations come together. Pakistan conflicted.</p>

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

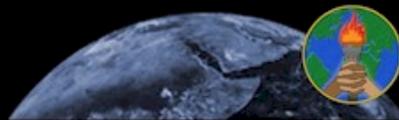
↗	<p>Alert: Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia/Eritrea, Pakistan</p>
↓	<p>Deteriorated: Afghanistan, Basque Country (Spain), Comoros Islands, Israel/Occupied Territories, Lebanon, Niger, Pakistan, Somalia, United Kingdom</p>
↑	<p>Improved: Burundi, North Korea, Yemen</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: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

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Threats	
<i>see daily items with links to full stories on the web at PDB-Threats</i>	
Poverty news list forecast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WHO says <u>13 million deaths</u> could be prevented each year by improving the environment, particularly water and cooking fuels -- Afghanistan, Angola, Burkina Faso, Mali are worst affected. <p>A <i>revolutionary new weapon</i> against rebels in Colombia ... development; a multi-agency task force operated out of Bogota is building schools and roads and introducing public institutions such as courts in 52 towns.</p>
Infectious Disease news list forecast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several facts such as "<i>The H5N1 virus made the first known jump into humans in Hong Kong in 1997, infecting 18 people and killing six of them</i>" -- <i>Bird flu's spread around the globe [Reuters Factbox]</i>. <p>The biohazard that is China continues to threaten the world -- pigs that were sick and dying [<i>with an unidentified disease</i>] were butchered daily and transported to market.</p> <p><i>Is HIV a time bomb under the mining industry?</i> -- "<i>Miners -- many migrant workers -- risk their lives to make money daily, so unprotected sex seems a minor hazard</i>" -- from Africa to Russia, from Peru to China.</p>
Environment news list forecast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A study claims air pollution causes <u>527,700 deaths</u> each year in India -- "... <i>only China has more number of premature pollution-related deaths than India, while the United States comes a close third</i> " <p>Showing environmental disasters can be tackled, the Aral Sea is slowing returning after devastation by cotton misadventures and other gross abuse -- "<i>We have shown that even the worst environmental disaster can be reversed, somewhat. But we need to be realistic.</i>" [further to the Aral story dated 20070411]</p>
Inter-State Conflict news list forecast	<p>↓ Eight months ago CIA Director Hayden gave a "dark assessment" of Iraq, saying instability seemed 'irreversible'. [Comment: The foresight award still goes to Gen Colin Powell for his <u>13 Jan 2003 pottery-shop warning</u>: "you break it, you own it"]</p> <p>"A barrage of up to 35 missiles and mortars slammed into the fortified Green Zone ... the <u>largest such assault to date on the safest place in Baghdad</u>."</p> <p>It's official: the <i>New York Times</i> has called Iraq a 'lost cause' -- "<i>the influential daily wrote in a rare, single-issue editorial taking up one-half of an entire news page.</i>"</p> <p>The bomb death toll of <u>around 150</u> in the Shiite Turkmen village of Amerli in northern Iraq is among the war's <u>worst single attacks</u>. [Comment: "<i>Desperate dead-enders</i>" maybe, but still with range and lethality.]</p>
Civil War news list forecast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understandable but perhaps unhelpful, after a weekend of violence that claimed more than <u>220 lives</u>, prominent Shi'ite and Sunni politicians have called on Iraqi civilians to <u>take up arms to defend themselves</u> -- <i>Iraqis told to arm themselves</i>. A Sunni former officer in Saddam's Fedayeen says "<i>There will be a fierce civil war, a grinding civil war, because Iran will always be there</i>" -- <i>Sunni Insurgent Leader Paints Iran as 'Real Enemy'</i>. But some are trying to defuse the millennium-old antipathy; <i>Iraq, Saudi agree to monitor sectarian fatwas</i> -- <u>if real</u>, the agreement announced by Iraq's national security chief could be a landmark forward in resolving the chasm that runs through Iraq between the Shi'ite and Sunni worlds. <p>Sudan has arrested retired army officers and a former presidential adviser now opposition leader, mainly from central Sudan, for allegedly plotting a coup.</p> <p>Zimbabwe's main opposition figure, Morgan Tsvangirai, is sure chaos is looming as President Mugabe struggles to maintain the dying economy by regulation -- "<i>We are</i></p>

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now approaching another election and Mugabe is on us again." President **Mugabe** has evicted 300 families as fears for his own safety increase -- "*President Robert Mugabe is evicting 300 families from a farm adjacent to his expensive mansion in Harare citing security reasons.*"

Perhaps inspired by action at *Pakistan's Red Mosque*, the **Lebanese** army seemed poised to storm the **Palestinian** camp in **Tripoli** -- "*the army was concerned it was being dragged into a war of attrition with the militants dug in inside the narrow alleys of the camp and decided to move in*".

Serbia (and sponsor **Russia**) maintain their position against **NATO**-sponsored independence for **Kosovo** -- "*Kosovo will not gain independence. And no U.S. officials making daily statements in support of Kosovo's independence can obviate that fact.*"

Genocide

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

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Other

Atrocities

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

- The **Argentine** Supreme Court has revoked a *pardon* granted in 1989 by former Argentine president Carlos **Menem** to General Santiago Omar **Riveros**, now 83, because it the pardon was *unconstitutional*.

The UN has suspended the use of *rubber bullets* in *peacekeeping missions* -- "*following an inquiry into the deaths of two ethnic Albanian demonstrators killed by [outdated and unsafe] rubber bullets fired by Romanian police officers serving with the U.N. in Kosovo.*"

Another 26 people accused of forcing or tricking people to work in "unspeakable" *slave labor* conditions in brickyards have gone on trial in **China**.

Police have arrested another group in the **Athens** region for *trafficking women* -- "*the number of women victimised by such trafficking in Greece increased by a factor of 10 between 1990 and 1997, according to human rights organisation Amnesty International.*"

Thailand's child trafficking industry -- "*She tells me how she hires a van and goes to the countryside if she cannot find children in the city.*" [Light-weight backgroundner.]

Proliferation

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

↓ "*If all goes well, Malaysia will become the first developing country to have its own nuclear monitoring facility and the first in ASEAN*" The facility would be the 16th of its kind in the world.

Thailand is investigating construction of a *nuclear power plant* somewhere in the coastal provinces of **Ranong**, **Chumphon** or **Surat Thani**.

A Nuclear Ruse Uncovers Holes in U.S. Security -- a sting by **Government Accountability Office** obtained an easily forged *nuclear materials licence* from the **Nuclear Regulatory Commission** for handling of *americium-241* and *cesium-137*.

Pravda reminded the world it was better off to buy **Russian weapons** -- "*Today [Venezuela] has to pay billions for having chosen a wrong supplier of arms [the US]*"; *Buying US made arms endangers national security of a buyer*.

NASA has been forced to move a *satellite* to avoid *debris* from the Chinese satellite killer test -- "*the current [US] administration has argued a global space-weapons treaty was unnecessary ... because no such weapons existed.... It seems that argument is no longer operative.*"

See: **Russia** (CFE treaty)

Terrorism

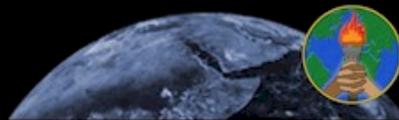
↓ In the **UK**, operators are saying that *airport security costs* are too high. [Comment:

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Terrorism is *win-win* -- prevention is almost as costly as potential losses.]

Bin Laden's deputy is said to be behind **Pakistan's Red Mosque** bloodbath -- "Government sources said up to 18 **foreign fighters** - including **Uzbeks, Egyptians and several Afghans** - had arrived weeks before the final shootout ..."

UK authorities say 4,000 "extremists" from the UK have trained in **Afghan** terror camps -- "The important question is, where are they now?" Also: *More Britons travelling to Bangladesh to train in terror* -- "However, **Pakistan** remains the country posing the greatest threat to Britain's security more than 30,000 between the ages of 18 to 35 [visit each year ... often traveling via **South Africa**]." *Concern over radicalisation of educated Muslims* -- "The stories that emerge are of men who led ordinary lives, often with no criminal record, and no reason for suspicion."

The **UK** has **Eurofighters** on 24-hour alert against terror attack from sky -- "The chain of command in such an emergency would always be ultimately **political, not military.**" [That is, bringing down a domestic aircraft.]

Could Terrorists Spread Killer Virus? -- "lax security in Britain's hospitals left them vulnerable to the theft of **lethal substances.**" Also: "Brussels will propose an **EU** system of **security clearance** for researchers to combat infiltration by **bio-terrorists.**" -- *University researchers to be vetted to tackle bio-terror threat.*

Australian authorities fear a "**lone wolf**" terror attack on the upcoming **APEC** meeting "intelligence authorities are monitoring some 20 people after they were assessed as posing a potential '**homegrown**' terrorist threat ..."

U.S. Report: Al Qaeda Has Strengthened -- "**al Qaeda** has rebuilt its operating capability to a level not seen since just before the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks"; an assessment coinciding with DHS **Chertoff's** "gut feeling" that the clock is ticking.

The **Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat** used more than one tonne of explosives in a **suicide bombing** on an **Algerian military barracks.**

Saudi Arabia again multiplies the world's woes: "Calling oneself a **liberal Muslim** is a contradiction in terms ... one should repent before God for such ideas in order to be a real Muslim." -- *Saudi fatwa against liberals raises fears of violence.*

Transnational Crime

[news list|forecast](#)

- In **Mexico**, **drug cartels** are **outgunning** town **police** forces -- "Even those who agree to protect one band of traffickers risk being attacked by rival gunmen."

"Along **Guatemala's** drug corridor between **El Salvador** and **Mexico**, drug traffickers flush with money see this year's **elections** as a new way to extend their power."

Policy

Agriculture

[news list|forecast](#)

- **Brazil** has mounted a new **WTO** case against **US farm subsidies** -- "the first step in what could become another lengthy dispute between the U.S. and Brazil over the billions of dollars Washington gives out annually in farm subsidies."

Diplomacy

[news list|forecast](#)

- The **Washington Institute** reiterates the **US** belief that someone is up to mischief in **sub-Saharan Africa** – *Africa terror threat worries Pentagon.*

President **Bush** has cancelled an upcoming **summit meeting** with **ASEAN**. [Comment: One reason may be to signal dissatisfaction with arrangements in **Thailand.**]

Economy

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↓ On **Black Friday**, the **US dollar** touched an all-time low against the 13-nation **Euro**; retail sales month-on-month have the biggest fall since 2005.

Education

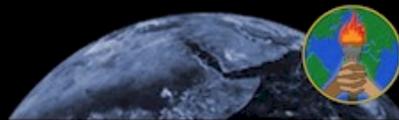
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[news list|forecast](#)

Energy

[news list|forecast](#)

- President **Lula** of **Brazil** enters the *ethanol* debate [possibly on the wrong side of history] -- [Brazil defends ethanol against detractors](#).
Squeezing clean fuels from U.S. coal – “plants built with the benefit of the knowledge and experience of the pioneers should be competitive at an oil price of \$40 to \$45 per barrel.” [An upbeat, uncritical piece on the *coal liquefaction* process.]

Family

[news list|forecast](#)

- ↓ **Los Angeles Roman Catholic Diocese** has opted for huge out-of-court settlements in pending *sexual abuse* cases -- “The settlements push the total amount paid out by the U.S. church since 1950 to more than \$2 billion, with about a quarter of that coming from the Los Angeles archdiocese.”

Health

[news list|forecast](#)

- ↓ A “**Fat Tax**” -- a **UK** study suggests taxing certain foodstuffs could prevent up to 3200 deaths from *heart attacks* and *stroke* every year.
 A range of community groups have expressed their objection to Dr. **Holsinger**, President **Bush’s** nominee for **Surgeon General** -- *HIV/AIDS, LGBT, women’s rights, human rights, advocacy* and other advocates affirmed their rejection in a letter addressed to the *Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee*. The retiring **Surgeon General** says he was *silenced* for political reasons on “*hot-button health issues such as emergency contraception and abstinence-only education.*”

Immigration

[news list|forecast](#)

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

Justice

[news list|forecast](#)

- “It appears the **Attorney General** also failed to disclose the truth about when he first knew of widespread abuses by the **FBI** of **National Security Letters**,” Leahy said -- [Report: Gonzales Knew of FBI Violations](#).

Security

[news list|forecast](#)

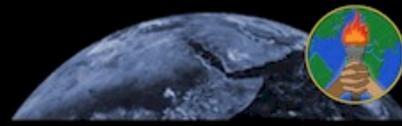
- Choosing its words carefully, the **FBI** says it intends to get more formal about **Risk Assessment** [in the *Israeli* manner] -- “assigns risk scores to possible suspects based on a variety of information, similar to the way a credit bureau assigns a rating based on a consumer’s spending behavior and debt” -- [FBI Plans Initiative To Profile Terrorists](#).
On Leave, Hurricane Center’s Director Is in the Eye of the Storm [What’s killing off the great chiefs of America?]
Military Papers Found Unprotected Online -- “military detainee **holding facility** in southern **Iraq**. Geographical surveys and aerial photographs of two **military airfields** outside **Baghdad**. Plans for a new **fuel farm** at **Bagram** Air Base in Afghanistan” all on the *internet*.
 “[S]omeone with inside access to the cellphone company switches had been bugging more than 100 high-ranking government officials and dignitaries including the **prime minister of Greece**” -- [Engineers as Counterspies: How the Greek Cellphone System Was Bugged](#). [It ends in a “suicide”.]
 The average **zero-day bug** has 348-day lifespan [i.e. has been around almost a year before it is admitted] -- “When discovered and not disclosed, these bugs can be used by hackers and criminals to break into corporate systems to steal or change data.”
 Emulating **London’s** “*ring of steel*”, up to 3,000 surveillance cameras may be installed in **New York** in the large area comprising *Wall Street* and the *World Trade Center*; funding permitting.

Society

[news list|forecast](#)

- [Putting the President in His Place](#) -- It’s nothing personal... it’s the **Balance** between institutions of government that is the key to stability.
[As Bush exits, his issues will linger](#) -- “the unfinished business **Bush** will leave for

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his successor is *unprecedented since at least World War II.*"

Water

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

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

Challengers

Brazil

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

- Brazil will invest \$500 million to revive a long-stalled navy project to build a **nuclear-powered submarine** for coastal patrol duties.

Rio's **police** announced a **strike** four days ahead of the *Pan Am Games* -- "*They are fighting for the restitution of a **bonus** that has been removed from their monthly wages to pay chiefs, military policemen and the fire brigade.*"

"**Violent conflicts involving Indians, landowners and police** have increased over the past year as more of the 40,000 Kaiowa and Guarani Indians ... seek to reclaim their **ancestral lands.**"

China

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

- The Chinese gift of a **building** for the **Foreign Ministry** of **East Timor** is yet another example of canny aid to loosely-aligned nations throughout the world.

China's **Communist Party** accepted 2.6 million new members in 2006 from the 19 million who applied to join -- total membership is now 72.39 million.

There are reports that **Uyghur** girls from the **Islamic** far west have been forced into labor far from home by Chinese officials -- "*'training' programs offered by local officials became effective **slave labor**, parents and officials say.*"

China has been quick to **execute** a convicted **drug agency official** -- a handy fall-guy in current embarrassing quality **scandals** is only the fourth ministerial-level official executed in 30 years.

China continues to **expel Christian missionaries** -- "*... the Chinese government launched a massive expulsion campaign of foreign Christians, encoded Typhoon No. 5, in February 2007.*"

To maintain the **One Child Policy** the government will crack down on **corrupt officials** and will **increase fines** for the newly rich who can afford to break the law.

India

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

- "*The **Glasgow attack** is the first known act of global terror involving an **Indian Muslim***"; the Muslim community in (post-Partition) India has no radical tradition -- Global terror's India connection.

Australia and India [already both members of the **Commonwealth**] are to upgrade **defence ties** -- "*China, on its part, remains deeply suspicious of this emerging so-called **quadrilateral 'axis of democracy'** in the **Asia-Pacific** region.*"

Soon, US jets can refuel here; "*the UPA government, much like the previous NDA regime, is steadily stepping up India's already robust defence and **strategic relationship** with the US*" – India and the US have entered into a large number of defence deals, contracts, and understandings. [see article] Elsewhere: The **US** says India's **phytosanitary** standards for **wheat** are higher than the US can meet but India refuses to shift.

In **Bihar**, **Maoists** have made good their promise to **kill farmers** who disobeyed a ban on cultivation as part of a political campaign against authorities -- "*the farmers were picked up and taken to a nearby forest for defying the Naxalites' diktat against cultivation.*" *Tribal groups caught in armed conflicts* -- the **landless indigenous groups** of India's heartland do not share the dreams of the **Maoists** of establishing a **proletariat state** in India but the Maoists articulate the indigenous people's plight.

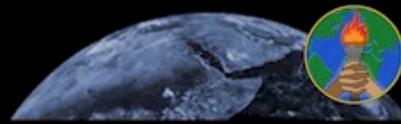
23 Indian troops remained "missing" after a clash with **Maoists** in **Chhattisgarh** --

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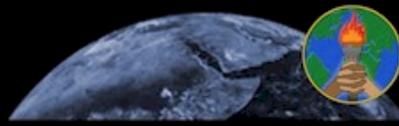
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	<p>"the men were part of a 100-strong unit investigating a tip about the possible location of a camp run by the ultra-leftist insurgents". After the loss, security forces planned a major assault on Maoist rebel hideouts.</p> <p>The Dhaka [Bangladesh] to Calcutta rail service has been resumed <u>40 years</u> after it was suspended during the India-Pakistan war.</p>
<p>Indonesia news list forecast</p>	<p>↑ Bali police are calm about an Australian travel warning on Indonesia -- "The warning advised that terror attacks in Indonesia were "imminent", but a senior Bali Police officer said the island's security was suitable and would not be tightened in reaction to the notice."</p>
<p>Iran news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iran said it has uncovered and arrested twenty people five new spy networks "linked to Western intelligence services". IAEA secretary general ElBaradei announced that Iran has "slowed" its uranium enrichment activity and was markedly up-beat on the opportunity to "to cool things down" on the issue. Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, leader of the self-styled Islamic State in Iraq has threatened Iran with consequences if it does not withdraw its support for Iraq's Shi'ites -- "In the first such threat by his group, Baghdadi said that unless Iran meets his demands, the group will wage a 'brutal war' against Iranians." Satellite images show new work near an Iranian nuclear site -- Iran is putting in a pool, or something else. Reportedly, Iranian artillery started bombarding the area known as Hajj Omran in a Kurdish-controlled area of Iraq.
<p>Russia news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "More than <u>4,300 people</u> are considered missing in Russia's North Caucasus republic of Chechnya since 1994, the republic's human rights ombudsman said." The US formally declined Russia's offer of a joint missile shield; somehow mistrust has been dragged from the jaws of <i>détente</i> -- the US says it will proceed with plans in the Czech Republic and Poland; Russia says it may deploy new missile units to the westernmost Kaliningrad region. Then ... it was as though the Kremlin had the press releases ready to go... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Russia to Build New Nuclear Submarine Base in Kamchatka -- the town of Vilyuchinsk in the Kamchatka Peninsula will host a modern base for the nuclear submarine forces of the Pacific Fleet in the next two or three years. ▪ U.S. missile shield plans affect Asia - Russian FM -- "we realize that this region [Central Asia] will certainly feel the consequences of these unilateral [US] actions," Sergei Lavrov said at a meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in the capital of Kyrgyzstan. ▪ Kremlin chief 'sacked to pave way for Putin' -- "Ivanov's departure is either a sign that a reform is in the making to elevate the role of the security council or that <u>some influential figure wants to take it under his control</u>". ▪ Russia declares its independence in space -- the Plesetsk space center in the Arkhangelsk Region meets Russia's goal to have access to outer space without relying on any other country for launches or vehicles. ▪ Russian Navy chief says new Black Sea base complete by 2012 -- "as a result, the base will be able to accommodate up to 100 ships of the Black Sea Fleet." says Russian Navy Commander Admiral Vladimir Masorin. ▪ Russia suspends application of arms control treaty -- "The suspension is

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motivated by some points of the initial 1990 accord 'concerning the security of the Russian Federation'."

Russia rediscovers its swagger said *The Telegraph* [UK] - "The Kremlin believes it has three key weapons — its abundant natural reserves, its vast nuclear arsenal and its permanent seat on the UN Security Council ..."

Venezuela
[news list|forecast](#)

- For some, Satan is again on the move again; "wealthy and middle class citizens are fleeing, just as their counterparts did soon after Fidel Castro seized power in Havana more than 40 years ago" -- [Venezuelans, fleeing Chavez, seek U.S. safety net](#). [Note: Chavez won power in several consecutive elections.]

As expected, Venezuela will buy new **Russian submarines** -- "experts said the appearance of these "silent killers" in the **Caribbean** would seriously alter the regional balance of power."

Venezuela and **Iran** will spend \$4B on four Aframax **tankers and offshore oil rigs** in Venezuela's **heavy-crude-producing Faja del Orinoco**.

Wild Cards
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- In a season for new **multilateral arrangements**, French President **Sarkozy** went to **North Africa** to sell his proposal for a **Mediterranean Union** -- "Sarkozy intends to defend his proposal to create a "Mediterranean Union" among nations on the north and south shores of the Mediterranean basin."

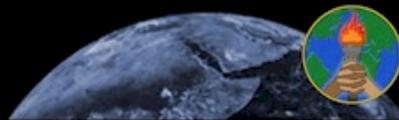
[EU kicks off Great Game in Central Asia](#) gave yet another cut-and-dice on planet earth's **Wild West**.

The world's **poorest nations** gathered in **Istanbul** organized by **Turkey** and **UN** agencies including UN Development Programme (UNDP) and **FAO** -- [Poor nations discuss impacts of globalisation](#).

A concise backgrounder on the issue that is **Turkey**, the **PKK**, and northern **Iraq** -- [Reports of Turkish troop concentrations on Iraqi border spur debate about possible invasion](#). Separately, a **bomb** probably the work of **PKK Kurdish** rebels has derailed seven cars of a **freight train** in eastern **Turkey**.

In **Pakistan** hundreds were killed; and then the real nastiness started. "There is **intense engagement** ... Militants are taking positions in almost every room, they're fighting from room to room, they have positions in the basement, on the stairs." A turning point: [Pakistan's Red Mosque leader killed](#) -- "other reports said **Ghazi** was killed by followers when he tried to surrender. There was no way of independently verifying the claims." Then the wisdom of hindsight was everywhere: [Think tank report faults Pakistani military](#) -- "Pakistan's **military** leaders have mobilized **religious parties, militants, foreign 'freedom fighters,'** and other players to get and keep national **power and resources**." Pakistan's *Daily Times* gave some insight into the complexity of Islamic politics behind the mosque siege -- [Lessons of Lal Masjid \[Editorial\]](#). "How could **Islamic radicals** build a fortress under the noses of **intelligence agencies** in the capital?" some asked. Official statements clarified some





details on the death toll but unanswered disparities remained -- *300 confirmed dead in Lal Masjid Operation*. Operation Silence was over; "how come everyone in the corridors of governance was blind and deaf to this gathering storm?" -- *A deafening silence*. [Comment: In a simple sense, *Lal Masjid* was avoidable but in another it was the 'Lal Masjid' that Pakistan had to have if it is to resolve its *Islamist, Secularist, Civil* and various *ethnic* identities.]

Pakistan remains one of the keys to the *Kingdom*, recognized not least by **China** as a firm *strategic partner* -- "Chinese assistance to Pakistan has been instrumental in strategic projects such as the *JF-17* aircraft, *F22* frigates and *al-Khalid* tank". Also, an excellent thumbnail background on **India, Pakistan**, and Yuri **Andropov** appeared in *The great game: The KGB and Pakistan*.

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