

GLOBAL REALITY: THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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

Threat Summary

	<p>Environment. Illegal logging in Malaysia. Atlantic ocean circulation being tracked. Great Lakes dip.</p> <p>Inter-State Conflict. Saudis spoilers in Iraq. Occupiers often lose. US exhausted. Conflict resolution.</p> <p>Proliferation. Pakistan generals have the launch codes. Libya, South Africa look to nuclear again.</p>
	<p>Poverty. Famine in Somalia, Zimbabwe approaching fast.</p> <p>Infectious Disease. DDT still the winner. Fake drugs now organized crime.</p> <p>Civil War. Zimbabwe “anarchy in four months”. Somalia sliding back into old chaos.</p> <p>Genocide. <i>see links</i></p> <p>Transnational Crime. Will “Plan Mexico” have the success of “Plan Colombia? What is DEA doing?”</p>
	<p>Other Atrocities. Pakistan attacks human organs industry. Somalia, Ethiopia, Uganda accused.</p> <p>Terrorism Pak-Afghan joint peace jirga still talking. Taliban produce a field manual in Pashto.</p>

Policy Summary

	<p>Diplomacy. US continues single-bet policy on Israel in Middle East.</p> <p>Security. Ammunition shortage. No funds to maintain post-9/11 equipment. Chinese space threat.</p> <p>Society. <i>see links</i></p>
	<p>Economy. It’s <i>Fall of Rome</i> time; “The Crash of 2007-8” is underway.” US infrastructure collapsing.</p> <p>Education. Merit pay gaining in places. US must look to world’s best examples. CIA correcting Wiki.</p> <p>Health. <i>see links</i></p> <p>Immigration. Immigration “debate” reverts to vested interests – business, local government, citizens.</p> <p>Water. Biofuels are a bad water equation as well as a bad energy equation.</p>
	<p>Agriculture. Brazil against protests introduces Monsanto GM crops.</p> <p>Energy. Kazakhstan proposes <i>oil and gas agency</i> within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.</p> <p>Family. <i>see links</i></p> <p>Justice. Senate Judiciary Committee suggests A/General Gonzales “engaged in efforts to mislead”.</p>

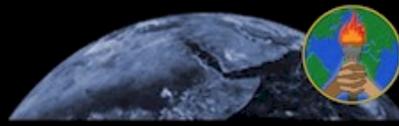
Major Player Summary

	<p>Iran. Iran entrenches itself with powerful Shanghai Cooperation Organization, woos Afghanistan.</p>
	<p>Venezuela. Chávez proposes removing the limit on presidential terms</p>
	<p>Brazil. Brazil toes the line on one-China.</p> <p>China. Air pollution may be a significant threat to Olympics visitors, despite efforts.</p> <p>India. Indian (scramjet) space shuttle by 2010. US nuclear deal still in doubt. Rich-poor gap widens.</p> <p>Indonesia. 90,000 call for Islamic Caliphate, worrying no informed observers.</p> <p>Russia. The good ol’ days return: Russia dusts off its strategic bombers and bans the BBC.</p> <p>Wild Cards. Pakistan takes it own counsel on tribal areas. Pakistan-Afghan Peace Jirga a “success”.</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 *see daily items with links to full stories on the web at [PDB-Threats](#)*

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

↓ **More than 600,000 hungry in Somali "bread basket"** -- *"The number of people in need of assistance has increased to 1.5 million. Of this ... 295,000 require **life-saving interventions**."*

Famine Early Warning System Network says **Zimbabwe's domestic grain production** meets only 55% of the country's needs -- *[Zimbabwe's Grain Supplies Running Low](#)*.

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

- Despite the bad reputation, some earned, some not, "**DDT continues to be the most effective tool we have, as well as among the cheapest**" in the control of **mosquito-borne diseases** -- *[The Uses of DDT](#)*.

Fake anti-malaria drugs have been recalled in **Kenya**; *"sophisticated trans-national [Asian] gangs are thought to be behind the counterfeit drugs, a fast-growing multibillion dollar business"* -- *[Malaria drugs recalled in Kenya](#)*.

Simple answers: "Scientists have known for over 15 years that sleeping under a **mosquito net treated with insecticide** can halve the number of episodes of malaria and save lives." -- *[Kenyan malaria success strengthens call for free insecticide-treated nets for all](#)*.

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

- **Malaysia's Anti-Corruption Agency** has uncovered large **illegal logging** activities in **Sabah** [the Malaysian portion of **Borneo**]; *"we acted following numerous public complaints about suspicious movement of logs in the interior areas of Sabah"* -- *[ACA uncovers major illegal logging operations in Sabah](#)*. [Comment: High-level **corruption** enables this massive illegal logging.]

[Water Levels in 3 Great Lakes Dip Far Below Normal](#) -- *"Although the cause of the falling levels is in dispute, the effects in **Lakes Michigan and Huron** are visible everywhere."*

Sony has started to address the large and problematic mountain of **e-waste** by introducing its own **recycling** arrangement for end-users -- *[Sony, Waste Management To Start Recycling Program](#)*.

Scientist are now capturing good data on one of the world's most important natural systems, **Atlantic ocean circulation**; *"In March 2004, the scientists deployed an instrument array across the Atlantic at 26°N from the Saharan coast of Africa to the Bahamas."* -- *[Unique monitoring system for the Atlantic circulation proves its worth](#)*.

[India okays field trial of 1 GM food crop \[and testing of 8 others\]](#) -- elaborate precautions against **cross-pollination** claimed by the government are met by a raft of serious concerns, including **death of livestock**, by critics.

Some rare good news: *"Peru's forest reserves and conservation areas appear to be working well."* -- *[Satellites Show Logging Decline in Peru's Amazon Region](#)*.

Inter-State Conflict
[news list](#)[forecast](#)

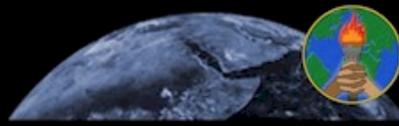
↓ A discussion of the "secret" **Saudi** role in **Iraq** -- *[Saudi Arabia's Myth of Moderation](#)*.

No less than the **US Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Relations** has urged **NATO** to seek **conflict resolution** other than **conflict** in various parts of the world -- *[NATO asked to review policy in Afghanistan](#)*.

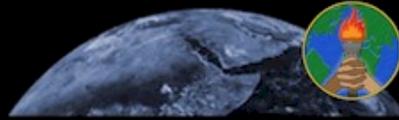
A short history of **disasters** that befell **occupying Powers** in recent history -- *[Why Blair and Bush should have known Iraq would be a disaster](#)*.

Given the nature of both parties, **conflict** of some kind between the **US** and **Iran** seems unavoidable, even if just a matter of face-saving -- *[US steps closer to war with](#)*

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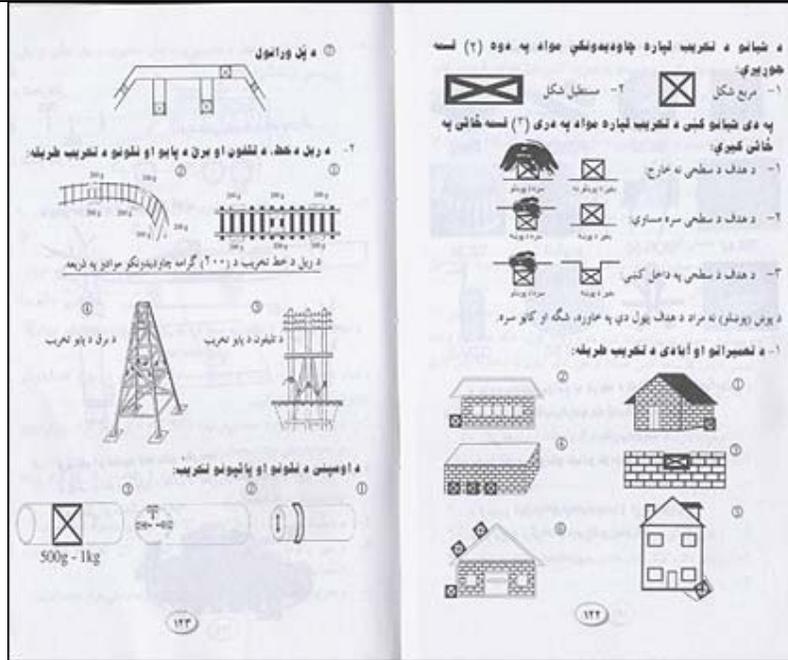
	<p><i>Iran.</i></p> <p>"The <u>demand for our forces exceeds the sustainable supply</u>," the Army chief of staff, Gen. George Casey, said last week -- <i>Army too stretched if Iraq buildup lasts.</i></p>
<p>Civil War news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Zimbabwe, lawyers for six alleged <i>coup plotters</i> argued against the case being heard in <i>secret</i> -- <i>Alleged Zim coup plotters appear in court</i>. Some analysts predict Zimbabwe will descend into <i>anarchy</i> in about <u>four months</u>; "80 per cent of Zimbabweans live below the poverty line and the economy is close to total collapse" - none of the possible scenarios are attractive -- <i>Anarchy in four [months], says the West</i>. <p><u>Reparation for victims of civil war</u> -- A good jurisprudential discussion of issues of the majority victims in most conflicts -- <i>civilians</i>.</p> <p>In South Africa, all parties agreed the case about the <i>poisoned underwear</i> was one of national unity, not the trial of one man -- <i>Apartheid minister Adriaan Vlok walks free from underwear poisoning case</i>.</p> <p><u>In Somalia, return to the anarchy of old</u>: "Gun battles have replaced courts as a means of resolving disputes." -- <i>Armed clan feud in Somalia kills 16</i>. Separately, a key <i>clan elder</i> falls victim to the chaos; "The 63-year-old played a key role in a government sponsored <i>clan reconciliation</i> meeting in July." -- <i>Clan elder shot dead in Somalia</i>.</p>
<p>Genocide news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [nothing significant to summarize but see links to stories in this topical area]
<p>Other Atrocities news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human Rights Watch has accused both Somalia and Ethiopia of recent war crimes in Somalia; "The warring parties have all shown <i>criminal disregard</i> for the well-being of the civilian population of Mogadishu" -- <i>Somalia and Ethiopia Are Accused of War Crimes</i>. <p>Chinese authorities have broken another <i>slavery / trafficking</i> gang; "... the gang that had already sold off two of the boys for around 4,000 US dollars each and was trying to sell the third ..." -- <i>Police break up China child slavery gang</i>.</p> <p>In Tajikistan, "the Dushanbe mayor's office has set up a special commission to fight <i>human trafficking</i>, which officials say has been increasing at an alarming rate" -- <i>Tajik Officials Step Up Fight Against Human Trafficking</i>.</p> <p>The Ugandan government hopes to charge <i>Lord's Resistance Army</i> rebels for <i>war crimes</i> in a <i>national court</i> but will <u>not</u> investigate crimes by its own forces; "the population ... believes that <u>both</u> the LRA and the government ... should be held accountable for the harms they have caused during the conflict." -- <i>Uganda wants local war crimes courts for rebels</i>.</p> <p>Pakistan has introduced legislation aimed at controlling "a lucrative illegal trade in <i>human organs</i> that preys on the 'poorest of the poor'" -- <i>Pakistan Needs to Take Stringent Measures to Curb Illegal Organ Trade</i>.</p>
<p>Proliferation news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With the help of France, and some old Uranium stocks, Libya is still within grasp of a <i>nuclear program</i> -- <i>Libya stalls on vow to destroy uranium stock</i>. <p>"South Africa has unveiled an ambitious strategy that could see it develop the full scope of <i>nuclear power technology</i> ..." -- <i>South Africa aims high</i>.</p> <p>A lengthy paper by International Crisis Group with good references to the nature and extent of the WMD situation around the world -- <i>Weapons of Mass Destruction: Maintaining the Rage</i>.</p>



Kazakhstan announces an international *conference* on peaceful uses of *nuclear* technology ; "*The symposium will take place as the international attention is drawn to Kazakhstan's becoming a major global player in the peaceful use of atomic energy.*" -- *Kazakhstan to host international conference against nuclear weapons.*

How secure are Pak nukes? -- "... control of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal depends on the loyalty of the **generals in the field** who have **operational control** over these weapons and their security."

Terrorism
[news list|forecast](#)



A new *Taliban training field manual* sourced in **Pakistan**, written in *Pashto*, is the first of its type and “shows a significant level of organisation” -- *How to be a jihadi: Taliban's training secrets.*

With *science and technology* as now identified key future *drivers for development* in **Africa**, so too *biosecurity measures* must keep pace -- *Continent Must Commit to Biosecurity Measures.*

In **North Africa**, a deserter from *al Qaeda* says morale is low; "*Most of those who operated in the Sahara have gone back home after discovering that the situation they had hoped for was just a delusion.*" -- *Al-Qaeda in North Africa losing recruits - deserter.*

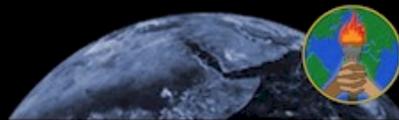
A working committee of the *Pak-Afghan joint peace jirga* has produced some useful preliminary analysis on the nature and treatment of terrorism -- *Pak-Afghan jirga body presents proposals against terrorism.*

Transnational Crime
[news list|forecast](#)

↓ The **US** realizes that encouragement and criticism is not enough to turn the tide in **Mexico's drug war**; "*This is a policy shift based on necessity to address the growing violence we are seeing in Mexico because of the drug war.*" -- *Military aid to Mexico on SPP summit agenda.* [SPP - Security and Prosperity Partnership] Quickly, observers coined the phrase “*Plan Mexico*”; "*So Plan Mexico would face formidable challenges — from the drug cartels themselves, as well as political complications on both sides of the border.*" -- *Will a “Plan Mexico” be the New “Plan Colombia”?*

In **Colombia**, charges of complicity in the *drug trade* have now extended to an

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admiral; "the Prosecutor's Office informed that at least 20 high-ranking officers are under investigation ..." -- [Colombian Admiral Tied to Drug Traffic](#). Once a *rural* pursuit, **Colombia's** drug wars are now moving into the *cities*; "the future of Colombia's conflict lies in the cities - the guerrillas and the security forces know that." -- [Colombia's new urban drugs war](#).

President **Ortega** of **Nicaragua** made some enigmatic allusions to the **US DEA**; "... Ortega insisted that behind the DEA's operations exist '**unexpected interests**' and '**terrible things**'. He did not elaborate." -- [Nicaragua's Ortega says 'unexpected interests' behind U.S. DEA](#).

Police in **Moscow** seized 50 kilos of **heroin**.

Policy

Agriculture
[news list|forecast](#)

- Against *protests* by *farmers* and Brazil's own **Environment Ministry**, another **Monsanto GMO cereal** has passed an important approval stage -- [Brazil Approves Release of Monsanto's Transgenic Corn Under Protests](#).

Diplomacy
[news list|forecast](#)

- [U.S. Offers \\$30B In Military Aid To Israel](#) -- "We look at this region and we see that a secure and strong Israel is in the interest of the United States."

Economy
[news list|forecast](#)

↓ The **comptroller general** of the **US** has waxed poetic in finding "striking similarities" between America's current situation and the factors that brought down Rome; "... *unsustainable policies and practices with **fiscal deficits, chronic healthcare underfunding, immigration and overseas military commitments**...*" -- [Learn from the fall of Rome, US warned](#).

The "Crash Of 2007-8" Is Underway -- "We now need a **New Deal** for the 21st century that would correct the flaws of the last one, resolve the present crisis, and carry us into a future that will benefit everyone, not just the privileged few."

25% of **US bridges** are "**structurally deficient or functionally obsolete**" and other **infrastructure** throughout the US desperately needs funds -- yet "*Cheney's Wars*" take priority -- [Has Dick Cheney Gone A Bridge Too Far?](#).

Education
[news list|forecast](#)

- "[All the world's best education systems] select their teachers from the top third of their college graduates, whereas the U.S. selects its teachers from the bottom third of graduates." -- [Imported From Britain: Ideas to Improve Schools](#).

Ministry of Truth: Wikipedia's change logs note that the **CIA** edits entries in the **online encyclopaedia** -- [Wikipedia 'shows CIA page edits'](#).

Although **US federal teachers' associations** still oppose **merit pay**, it is now being negotiated by some chapters at a local level -- [Teachers Say Yes to Pay Tied to Scores](#).

Energy
[news list|forecast](#)

- **Kazakhstan** has proposed an **oil and gas agency** within the **Shanghai Cooperation Organization** -- [Kazakhstan proposes establishing oil and gas regulator, exchange](#). [Comment: Such an agency – cartel? – would be of significant strategic importance.]

Family
[news list|forecast](#)

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

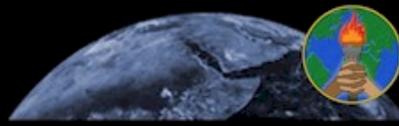
Health
[news list|forecast](#)

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

Immigration
[news list|forecast](#)

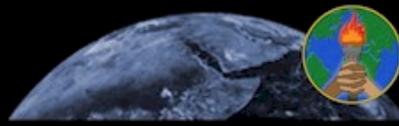
- Immigration as seen by Business Week: "**Homeland Security's plan to crack down on employers will gut industries of workers and drive more immigrants underground** ..." -- [Immigration Rules: An Economic Disaster?](#).

Local governments extemporise: inaction in **Congress** has led to "*dozens of*



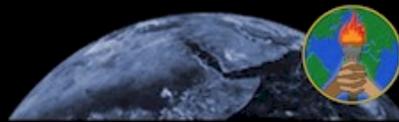
	<p><i>infuriating, unjust, unworkable — and often heartless — immigration policies" -- Washington's failure triggers anti-immigrant backlash [editorial].</i></p> <p><i>And some citizens just hit the streets: "Seven weeks after the collapse of legislation in Congress, the outcry against illegal immigration is louder than ever ..." -- Grassroots opposition to immigration is on the rise.</i></p>
<p>Justice news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senator Leahy (US Senate Judiciary Committee Chair) says he has "identified numerous instances in which the attorney general [Gonzales] appears to have contradicted his own previous testimony ... or engaged in efforts to mislead" -- Gonzales testimony contradicted.
<p>Security news list forecast</p>	<p>↓ As in the US, the wish-list inter-agency counter-terrorism system in the UK is years late; the critical 'phase two' -- to connect 10 agencies including MI5's Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre -- is not due to start until next year -- Anti-terror system is up to five years late. In the UK, the Intelligence Corps has lost <u>20% of officers</u> in the last three years -- Exodus of officers hits war on terror.</p> <p>Much of the equipment distributed bomb squads across the US under a <u>\$25 million</u> grant by the FBI now sit idle because local agencies did not have recurrent funds for operating costs; "The FBI bomb-kit program shows how even the best-intentioned plans to equip first responders can go awry over the simple question of maintenance" -- Upkeep Of Security Devices A Burden.</p> <p><i>US military sees looming China threat to satellites</i> -- "It is not inconceivable that within about three years we can be <u>challenged at a near peer level</u> in a region," said head of the US Army's Space and Missile Defense Command.</p> <p>"... a new office will be set up inside the Homeland Security Department to act as a clearinghouse for all domestic agencies wanting to use spy satellite data" -- New Office to Usher Domestic Use of Spy Satellites.</p> <p>Around <u>1 billion rounds</u> are being fired off each year in Iraq and Afghanistan, causing shortages, delays, and price increases for US police -- Ammunition shortage squeezes police</p> <p>The suicide rate among US active service members was <u>17.3 per 100,000</u> in 2006, almost <u>double</u> the 2001 rate -- Suicide rates rise among US army soldiers.</p> <p>"The Defense Intelligence Agency is preparing to pay private contractors up to <u>\$1 billion</u> to conduct core intelligence tasks of analysis and collection over the next five years ..." -- Defense Agency Proposes Outsourcing More Spying.</p> <p>More evidence the military is at its limits: "One training course that is considered the "first step" in educating newly minted sergeants -- the noncommissioned officers considered the backbone of Army units -- has been <u>cut in half</u> to 15 days." -- Army cuts time spent on training.</p>
<p>Society news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [nothing significant to summarize but see links to stories in this topical area]
<p>Water news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More evidence mounts that the "biofuel solution" is dumb; the International Water Management Institute says "You can live with less energy but not with less food" -- Water experts concerned over biofuels.
<p>Challengers</p>	
<p>Brazil news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>US freezes assets of alleged Colombian trafficker arrested in Brazil</i> -- while governments carve up Abadia \$1.5B in assets, rivals are poised to replace him. <p>Brazil toes the line on the one-China doctrine in rejecting Taiwan's move to join the</p>

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	<p>UN -- <i>Brazil rejects granting UN membership to Taiwan.</i></p>
<p>China news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An almost weekly occurrence, China's callous headlong pace sacrifices more <i>miners</i> -- <i>In China, Pessimism About Rescue of 180 Miners.</i> <p>Some say there may be a genuine danger from <i>air pollution</i> during the <i>Olympics</i> despite efforts; "it's possible the beneficial effect of cutting the traffic in the city will be compensated by the transport of pollution from other parts of China" -- <i>Olympics spectators warned over air in Beijing.</i></p>
<p>India news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India is moving aggressively into <i>space</i>: It will launch 15 <i>telecommunications satellites</i> and 8-10 earth <i>remote sensing satellites</i> by March 2012, and plans to launch its first "<i>space shuttle</i>", probably using <i>scramjet</i> technology, by 2010 -- <i>India plans to launch first space shuttle in 2010 - space official.</i> <p>"The <i>Assam</i> government Monday launched a massive <i>anti-insurgency offensive</i> after <i>separatists</i> killed 36 people in the past week, most of them <i>Hindi-speaking people</i> ... " -- <i>Massive military offensive launched in Assam against militants.</i></p> <p>The once sweetheart civil <i>nuclear</i> deal with the <i>US</i> has rapidly become tiresome; for both parties <i>nuclear resting</i> is now the deal-maker / deal-breaker -- <i>US to scrap nuclear deal if India tests weapons.</i></p> <p>After much brow-beating, <i>Australia</i> has agreed to sell <i>Uranium</i> to India -- <i>Australia Lifts Ban on Uranium Sales to India.</i> [Comment: India is <u>not</u> a signatory to <i>NPT</i> but Jesuitical logic permits the deal because India behaves <i>as though it were a signatory.</i> The revenue opportunity may also have been an issue.]</p> <p>India reminds itself to maintain superiority against creeping <i>Chinese</i> influence in the <i>Indian Ocean</i> -- <i>The Indian Ocean is not a Chinese lake.</i></p> <p>A useful glimpse into India's <i>foreign intelligence agency</i> -- <i>What's the score on India's covert operations.</i></p> <p><i>FAO</i> says that <i>climate change</i> could cause India to lose as much as <u>125 million tonne</u> of its rain-fed <i>cereal</i> production -- <i>Climate change will trigger hunger crisis in India.</i></p> <p>In <i>high-technology</i> areas, India competes with the best in the world, but for this highly <i>rural</i> country this means the <i>rich-poor gap</i> is growing inexorably wider; "How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions? How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life?" -- <i>The gulf between two Indias is growing.</i></p>
<p>Indonesia news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some 90,000 members of the million-strong <i>Hizb ut-Tahrir</i> [Party of Liberation] gathered in <i>Jakarta</i> calling for the establishment of a <i>Caliphate</i> across the <i>Islamic world</i> -- <i>Jakarta throng calls for Islamic state.</i> [Comment: The <i>Caliphate</i> is in fact the <i>raison d'être</i> of the group; <i>Hizb ut-Tahrir</i> is banned in some countries.] <p>The first death in <i>Bali</i> from <i>H5NI</i> is likely to affect <i>tourism</i> revenue more than any other case of the disease.</p>
<p>Iran news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Ahmadinejad</i> replaces key ministers -- "... a <i>major Cabinet reshuffle</i> widely seen ... as increasing his control over <i>industries</i> that are the source of most of the country's <i>revenues.</i>" <p>The <i>US</i> is proposing to proscribe Iran's <i>Revolutionary Guard</i> as a <i>Terrorist Organization</i> which would allow its <i>finances</i> and <i>overseas assets</i> to be targeted; "the <i>Revolutionary Guard</i> would be the first national military branch included on the list" -- <i>Iranian Unit to Be Labeled 'Terrorist'.</i></p>

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President **Ahmadinejad** made a diplomatically successful visit to **energy-rich Turkmenistan** and other **Central Asia** states -- *Ahmadinejad takes diplomatic offensive to Turkmenistan*. Similarly, his visit to **Kabul** was seen as a diplomatic coup signaling that **Afghanistan's** destiny has more in common with Iran than the **US**; he observed that Iran and Afghanistan are "two brother nations with common interests, cultures and histories The present condition of the region demands more exchange and negotiations between Tehran and Kabul. ..." -- *US feels heat as Iranian leader visits Afghanistan*. The highlight of Ahmadinejad's Central Asian tour was attendance at the annual summit of the **Shanghai Cooperation Organization** which invited Iran to become an observer in 2005 -- *Russia, China Host Ahmadinejad at Anti-U.S. Security Summit*.

In the **Pakistan border region** where 3,300 Iranian security personnel have already been killed, civilians have been **kidnapped**, possibly by an **al Qaeda** group led by **Abdolmalek Rigi** -- *Gunmen take 30 hostage in southeast Iran*.

Russia
 news list|forecast

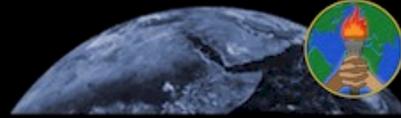
↓ It's **Duck and Cover** time again: Russia continues to demonstrate its annoyance with US **missile-shield** moves by putting its **strategic air wings** back into the air -- *President Putin scrambles bombers*.
Australia ready to sell uranium to Russia – "We should support **civil nuclear power programs** in responsible countries with responsible and appropriate protections".
 The **BBC Russian Service** has been ordered off air for being "**foreign propaganda**" -- *Kremlin orders BBC off the air*.
 Russia will refit its **Army** and **Navy** with new **C2** systems 2007-2015 -- *Russian Armed Forces to adopt new communications system by 2015*.

Venezuela
 news list|forecast

- President **Chávez** has proposed removing the **limit on presidential terms**; the aim of the overhaul is "to guarantee to the people the largest amount of happiness possible". This, and most other **Chávez** initiatives, are anathema to his opponents who see any transition to "**a new society**" as a power grab by an increasingly autocratic leader - *Chavez foes rally against reform*.

Wild Cards
 news list|forecast

- *Southern Africa launches peacekeeping brigade* -- "... as part of a planned **African standby force** to be deployed on **peace missions** and to tackle **disarmament** and **humanitarian crises** on the continent."
- Pakistan** again asserts that a complex web of *realpolitik* is arrayed against it -- *Global conspiracies against Pakistan*; "The nerve centre is at **Jabal-us-Seraj** ..."
- Russia blocks deliveries of Chinese fighters to Pakistan* -- "... **India**, concerned over **Islamabad's** growing military potential, has asked **Russia**, its close ally, to "freeze" the deal ..." [The aircraft are made under Russian license in **China**.]
- "**Pakistan's tribal areas** and **Afghanistan** may not embrace **central government control**, but they reject the **militant radicalism** that is ravaging their communities." -- *'Militant radicalism lacks popular appeal in Tribal Areas'*. [Comment: **Musharraf's** much-criticized strategy hinges on the tribal groups tiring of the **foreign radicals** before losing patience with government.] For the present, radical Islamists in the north-west say all deals with the government are off since the storming of the **Red Mosque**; "Tensions were running high in the region since mid July when the **Pakistani commandos** stormed a radical mosque and an Islamic seminary in **Islamabad** and killed more than 70 students." -- *Islamic militants scrap another peace deal with Pakistan*. The hawkish talk of the **US** going into **Pakistan** is best left as talk; "American way of war depends on massive **firepower from the air**, not



*the determined, loss-inflicting, **village-to-village** way that is necessary in **irregular warfare.**" -- Analyst says US Special Forces will be ineffective in Pakistan.*

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