

**GLOBAL CHALLENGES: THE WEEK IN REVIEW**

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

**Threat Summary**

<p><b>Environment.</b> Ecuador demanding \$350M to not drill for oil. Time for a Baby Tax.  <b>Inter-State Conflict.</b> Viet-Nam seizes three Chinese ships and a barge. Russia threatens US.  <b>Proliferation.</b> 85 US nuclear plants now have no place to deliver their nuclear waste.</p>
<p><b>Poverty.</b> Global hunger hotspots. Progress Report on United Nations Millennium goals.  <b>Infectious Disease.</b> Clean up the water and 70% of the infectious diseases in Africa go away.  <b>Civil War.</b> Gaza crisis worsens. Kosovo closer to independence. Sri Lanka in pain. Congo crisis.  <b>Genocide.</b> Four genocides attributed to Ottoman Empire between 1914 and 1923.  <b>Transnational Crime.</b> Cuban Americans (the ones that killed JFK) turning to violent smuggling.</p>
<p><b>Other Atrocities.</b> China, India, and Viet-Nam lead the world in human trafficking and slavery.  <b>Terrorism.</b> Islamic parties crumbling. 11 UN staff die in Algiers. Al Qaeda could gut US economy.</p>

**Policy Summary**

<p><b>Diplomacy.</b> Chairman of Broadcasting Board of Governors to be new Undersecretary of State.  <b>Security.</b> Blackwater to police the Mexican border? Cyber-networks for spam can be rented.  <b>Society.</b> Warning on financial speculation augments Comptroller General declaration of insolvency.  <b>Water.</b> Colorado states reach agreement, southern states still fighting over water. Shortages grow.</p>
<p><b>Economy.</b> US economy very rocky, with confidence in banking system very low. Vulnerable!  <b>Education.</b> Flawed narrow education need to be displaced by broader programs including art.  <b>Energy.</b> United Kingdom going for 20% of energy from wind turbines by 2020.  <b>Health.</b> Health care is a cornerstone issue but Hillary Clinton still does not get it—quality for <i>all</i>.  <b>Immigration.</b> Businesses fighting immigration legislation. Addicted to slave labor?</p>
<p><b>Agriculture.</b> Tied to energy in new and deeper ways. India hurting, US grain stocks lowest ever.  <b>Family.</b> Six European Union countries have fertility under 1.4. This means China will grow West.  <b>Justice.</b> General Hayden has now violated the Constitution three times. Time for him to be fired.</p>

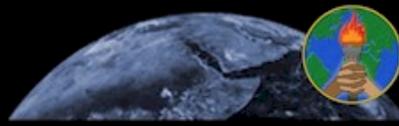
**Major Player Summary**

<p><b>Brazil.</b> Could become exporter of nuclear fuel. Successful space launch with Argentina.  <b>China.</b> China agrees to US food safety official on site.  <b>India.</b> Building 6000 km nuclear-capable missile. Spy agency is disgrace.  <b>Indonesia.</b> US tapping Indonesian telephones.  <b>Iran.</b> Rest of world starting to see US as the threat, not Iran.  <b>Russia.</b> Out of fuel in 22 years. Its weapons for sale are better and cheaper.  <b>Venezuela.</b> A continuing enigma, mystery, and puzzle.  <b>Wild Cards.</b> Turkey attacks Kurds with US approval. South Africa. Third World Counter-IMF.</p>
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**World Crises - monthly assessment by [International Crisis Group](#) - 01 December 2007**

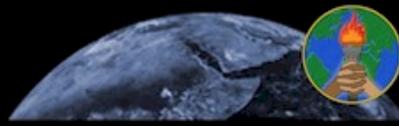
<p><b>Alert:</b> DR Congo</p>
<p><b>Deteriorated:</b> Bolivia, Cameroon, Chad, Georgia, Nigeria, North Caucasus, <b>Pakistan</b>, Somalia, Sri Lanka, <b>Venezuela</b></p>
<p><b>Improved:</b> Israel/Occupied Territories, Iraq, Sierra Leone</p>
<p>• <b>Unchanged:</b> Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Basque Country (Spain), Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chechnya (Russia), Colombia, Comoros Islands, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, DR Congo, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ethiopia/Eritrea, Fiji, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, India (non-Kashmir), Indonesia, Iran, Kashmir, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Macedonia, Mali, Mauritania, Moldova, Morocco, Myanmar/Burma, Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan), Nepal, Niger, Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan), Northern Ireland (UK), North Korea, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Somaliland (Somalia), Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Taiwan Strait, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Western Sahara, Yemen, Zimbabwe</p>

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<b>Threats</b>		<i>see daily items with links to full stories on the web at <a href="#">PDB-Threats</a></i>
<b>Poverty</b> <a href="#">news list</a>   <a href="#">forecast</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>World Food Programme</b> updates on <b>Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Chad, DPRK, Somalia, Sudan, Zimbabwe</b> -- <i>Hunger's global hotspots</i>. A review of progress on each of the <i>Millennium Development Goals</i> -- <i>Poverty, hunger and disease: so much done yet so much left to do..</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Infectious Disease</b> <a href="#">news list</a>   <a href="#">forecast</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In <b>Africa</b>, clean up the <b>water</b> and 70% of diseases disappear -- <i>70 Percent of Diseases are Water Borne - Shagari</i>. <i>Shared crack pipes may spread Hepatitis C virus</i> -- "HCV is <u>by far the most prevalent viral disease</u> among street drug users. Its consequences cost Canadians an estimated \$500 million to \$1 billion each year".</li> </ul>	
<b>Environment</b> <a href="#">news list</a>   <a href="#">forecast</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "One must wonder why <b>population control</b> is spoken of today only in whispers" -- <i>'Baby tax will save the planet'</i>. A Protection Racket for a Good Cause: <i>Ecuador threat to drill jungle oil</i> -- "the government is seeking a minimum of \$350 million a year from the international community for 10 years <u>not to drill</u> in the <i>Ishpingo-Tiputini-Tambococha</i> fields located in <i>Yasuni National Park</i> ..."</li> </ul>	
<b>Inter-State Conflict</b> <a href="#">news list</a>   <a href="#">forecast</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Amid tensions over Spratlys, Vietnam seizes Chinese ships</i> -- 'We captured three ships and one barge on Friday last week for violating Vietnamese waters,' said <i>Nguyen Van Khanh</i>, head of Border Post 328 in central <i>Quang Ngai</i> province. See: <b>Russia</b> (US missile shield 'could spark Russian missile strike')</li> </ul>	
<b>Civil War</b> <a href="#">news list</a>   <a href="#">forecast</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Tutsis refuse to flee Congo town as army advances</i> -- "thousands of Congolese civilians are caught in the middle of an army offensive against a <b>rebel stronghold</b> in <i>North Kivu</i> province because they refuse to abandon their <b>livestock</b> ..." <i>Eleven killed in Mogadishu mortar strike</i> -- "... ordinary Mogadishu residents continued to bear the brunt of <u>relentless</u> fighting in the capital ...". <i>Red Cross says Gaza crisis worsening under Israeli restrictions</i> -- [Comment: This is the cue for the <b>Red Cross</b> to be called <b>antisemitic</b>, with the hope that everyone forgets <b>Palestinians</b> are <b>Semites</b> also.] <i>Bomb kills Lebanese general tipped for army chief</i> -- "... the ninth fatality in a string of <b>assassinations</b> that began with the 2005 killing of ex-premier <b>Rafik al-Hariri</b>". <b>Sri Lanka</b> tired of war: <i>Tamils in the East converge to protest against Tamil Tigers</i> -- "thousands of Tamil people from <i>Batticaloa</i> district, more than <u>10,000</u> of them, according to an independent estimate, marched shouting slogans against the <b>Tamil Tigers</b> ...". <i>Sri Lanka's Tamil party for political solution to ethnic issue</i> -- the leader of <b>Sri Lanka's</b> major <b>Tamil party</b> says "the country's <b>ethnic</b> issue could not be solved <b>militarily</b> and only a <b>political</b> solution can bring <b>peace</b> to the island". <i>Kosovo closer to independence [Analysis]</i> -- all but one of the <b>European Union's</b> 27 member states are ready to accept <b>Kosovo's</b> independence; <b>Russia</b> vehemently opposes it. [Good detailed update]</li> </ul>	
<b>Genocide</b> <a href="#">news list</a>   <a href="#">forecast</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>International Genocide Scholars Association Officially recognizes Assyrian, Greek Genocides</i> -- ... genocides inflicted on <b>Armenians, Assyrians, and Pontian and Anatolian Greeks</b> of the <b>Ottoman Empire</b> between 1914 and 1923.</li> </ul>	
<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Fujimori Gets 6 Years For an Illegal Search While Leader of Peru</i> -- <b>Fujimori</b> was</li> </ul>	

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**Atrocities**

[news list|forecast](#)

sentenced to six years for ordering an *illegal search* -- more serious *death-squad* charges are to come.

The **Guatemalan adoption** 'trade', which is mainly to the US, will now come under the terms of the *Hague Convention* -- . [New law to end adoption business](#)

"Tens of thousands of local *women* and *children* in **Vietnam**, one member nation of the GMS [*Greater Mekong Subregion*], have been *trafficked* abroad ..." -- [Mekong countries coordinate to tackle scourge of human trafficking](#).

"**India** figures among the top *human trafficking* destinations, with over 35,000 young girls and women from **Bangladesh** and **Nepal** being brought into the country every year" -- [Trading flesh, selling souls](#).

**China**: [Action plan to fight human trafficking finalized](#) -- "the country's first action plan to better protect women and children from forced labor or prostitution has been finalized..."

"**UNICEF** estimates that some 7,000 children from **Benin** are currently working in **Nigeria** after being sold" -- . [Child slaves work Nigerian mines - UNICEF](#)

[The Impact of 21st Century Slavery and Human Trafficking on Development](#) -- address by the Director, **Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons**. [A global review, of sorts]

**Proliferation**

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- [Congo keeps uranium riches under wraps](#) -- "The vast former **Belgian** colony once supplied the majority of global uranium supply including the raw material for the two atomic bombs dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in World War Two".

[Loss of radioactive dump sparks security concerns](#) -- "the 85 nuclear power plants in the 36 states that have been using the Barnwell landfill, which has been in operation for 37 years, will be forced to **store** some of the materials they have been sending to Barnwell".

See: **Brazil**

**Terrorism**

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- [The Death of Political Islam?](#) -- "Islamic parties have begun to stumble" -- in **Morocco, Jordan**, and [perhaps] **Egypt**.

[Al-Qaeda uses elderly terrorists in change of tactic](#) -- "he was considered to be a normal person with very white hair and no-one imagined that he was a terrorist".

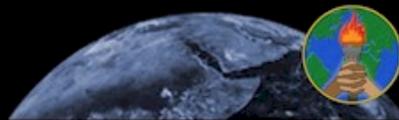
[11 UN staffers killed in Algiers bombings](#) -- "the blatant attacks, which killed UN staff members engaged in development and assistance to refugees, once again serves as a tragic reminder of the dangers faced daily by United Nations staff across the globe".

[Africa: the al-Qaeda Organization in the Islamic Maghreb](#) -- detailed profile.

[UN extends counter-terrorism office for 3 months](#) -- "established as a special political mission in 2004, the CTED assists the council's **Counter-Terrorism Committee** in monitoring the implementation of **Resolution 1373** ..."

[Al-Qaeda could spark US economic crisis: McCain](#) -- "**al-Qaeda** could trigger a major **US economic crisis** with just one successful attack on a **Middle Eastern oil installation**" [Comment: One of bin Laden's earliest explicit aims was to destroy the US economically.]

[RAND study outlines passenger-rail systems which cost-effectively prevent terrorist attacks](#) -- "... a **framework** to develop **cost-effective plans** to secure their rail systems



from *terrorist attacks*".

*Interpol holds counter-terrorism meeting* -- "the **Fusion Task Force** was created after what officials call an alarming rise in the **scale and sophistication of international terrorist attacks**".

*Pre-empting a 'dirty bomb' threat* -- "we are in the same global boat in the fight against **nuclear terrorism**".

*Saudi's size 'hampering terror clamp'* -- **Saudi Arabia** shares **land borders** with **Yemen, Oman, the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Iraq and Jordan ...**"

"Without question, the single American action since 9/11 that has reduced public support for **extremism** more than any other is **direct humanitarian assistance** from the United States to people in need" -- *To weaken al Qaeda, strengthen U.S. humanitarian role.*

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

- *Cuban-Americans fund smugglers* -- "a violent ring of immigrant smugglers operates in **Mexico**, where **Cubans** land on the coasts in rickety boats before crossing overland to the **U.S. border ...**"

**Policy**

**Agriculture**  
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- Reforms of the **EU Common Agriculture Policy** -- a "health check" rather than a "fundamental rethink" -- is attracting heated debate within the **food industry** -- *Health checks to improve CAP reforms.*

*Energy expert: Times changing in agriculture* -- "in the future, our **agriculture prices** will be tied to **oil**.... Policy has to take into consideration this new relationship between the agriculture and **energy markets**".

Democrats fold: *Farm bill clears Senate, but 'tough road ahead'* -- "significant new spending for farm programs ... but only modest changes in the **agricultural subsidy system** [which gives **handouts** to large commercial growers of rice and cotton]".

Nobody say **Food Crisis** looming: *Global Food Price Inflation to continue in 2008 as US wheat stocks projected to fall to 60-year low.*

India: *Researchers combat slowing yields with targeted fertilizer applications* -- "**site-specific nutrient management (SSNM)** the scientists increases average rice grain yields by 17% compared with current farmers' fertilizer practice".

**Diplomacy**  
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- *Bush to name Hughes replacement* -- "... **James K. Glassman**, now chairman of the Broadcasting Board of Governors, which oversees the **Voice of America**, to be the new **Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs ...**" [Comment: Not a very hard act to follow.]

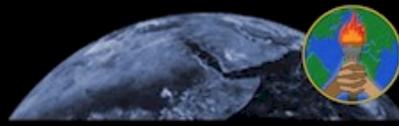
*Recognise Somaliland, analysts tell U.S.* -- "**Somaliland**, an area in northwestern Somalia that unilaterally declared independence in 1991, enjoys the inter-clan tranquility that Somalia itself so ruinously lacks".

*No giant leap for EU-Africa relations at summit, analysts say* -- "a step forward, but no giant leap for **European-African** relations ..."

**Economy**  
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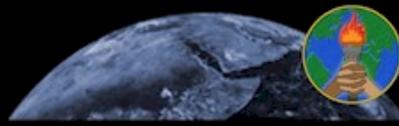
- *China, US warn of protectionism as economic talks begin* -- the talk is always tough but this time the sentiments are tough too -- "I need to be quite candid about this: If these bills are adopted, they will severely undermine US business ties with China".

*Economic cross-currents hit Wall Street* -- **wholesale prices** saw the biggest gain in more than 30 years; confidence in the **banking system** remains low; the **interest rate** move by the **Fed** may do little to stimulate **bank lending**, leaving **recession** risks



	<p>high.</p> <p><i>Federal Reserve's attack on deflation like charge of the light brigade -- "... between the unstoppable force of <b>inflation</b> and the immovable object of <b>falling prices</b>. <u>So, into the Valley of Death go the central bankers</u>".</i></p>
<p><b>Education</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Calls grow for a <u>broader yardstick for schools</u> -- "preparing a child for the 21st century means <b>reading</b> and <b>math</b>. But it also means <b>science</b>; it means <b>civics</b>; it means <b>art</b>".</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Energy</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"The <b>British</b> Government has approved <u>thousands of offshore wind turbines</u>.... The UK is aiming for <u>20%</u> of its power to come from <b>renewables</b> by [2020]" -- <b>UK approves offshore wind turbines</b>.</i></li> </ul> <p>The <b>color</b> is not right yet but <b>light-emitting diodes (LEDs)</b> are certain to save energy for lighting and make inroads into the miniature <b>mercury fluorescent</b> market -- <i><b>A Brave New LED World</b></i>.</p> <p>The start of an Age of <b>energy conflict</b> -- <b>British Gas</b> warns of "challenging conditions" in the <b>wholesale gas markets</b> -- <i><b>British Gas warns of big price rises in the pipeline</b></i>.</p> <p><i><b>EU's eastern newcomers to plot common energy policy</b> -- <b>Gazprom</b> is up to something; the new eastern <b>EU</b> states are up to something -- when it comes to energy strategies, everyone is suddenly up to something.</i></p> <p>The <b>US Senate</b> voted to <u>increase</u> automobile <b>gas-mileage standards</b> for the first time since the <u>mid-1970s</u>-- <i><b>Senate passes energy bill; bush to sign into law</b></i>.</p> <p>The <b>US energy bill</b> sensibly <u>slows</u> the growth of <b>corn-based ethanol</b> and <u>encourages</u> development of <b>cellulosic ethanol technologies</b> -- <i><b>Energy bill to cap corn's ethanol role</b></i>.</p> <p>A silver lining in a dark cloud – <b>US energy demand</b> responds to slower <b>economic growth</b> -- <i><b>US energy demand seen rising more slowly</b></i>. [with useful <b>annual usage forecasts</b>]</p> <p>See: <b>Agriculture</b></p>
<p><b>Family</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Franco <b>Zeffirelli</b> is offering his services to <b>Pope Benedict</b> as an <b>image consultant</b>, saying the German pontiff comes across as cold and needs to review his <b>wardrobe</b> -- <i><b>Film-maker Zeffirelli vows to help Pope with image</b></i>.</li> </ul> <p><i><b>EU Devalues Family Life to Level of a "hobby"</b> -- the <b>European Large Families Confederation</b> [a <b>Christian</b> group] warns that <b>EU</b> policies are not sufficiently <b>pronatalist</b> -- <u>not a single EU country has the <b>ZPG fertility</b> of 2.1 and six countries have fertility under 1.4.</u></i></p>
<p><b>Health</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i><b>Health savings accounts for poor tested</b> -- the <b>Indiana "Personal Wellness and Responsibility Accounts"</b>, available to adults with incomes below twice the <b>federal poverty level</b>, may be a try-out for schemes elsewhere.</i></li> </ul> <p><i><b>Small businesses oppose mandated health benefits</b> -- unsurprisingly, small business is opposed to any new burden from a health care plan -- <b>Hillary Clinton</b> hopes her proposal to exclude businesses with fewer than <u>25 workers</u> will insulate her plan a little.</i></p> <p>Some see <b>health care</b> as a cornerstone issue in what governments are about; <i><b>Health care challenges fire up U.S. students</b> -- "there are fascinating <b>economic</b> issues, fascinating <b>politics</b>, fascinating <b>cultural</b> and <b>social</b> issues".</i></p>
<p><b>Immigration</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i><b>Education for illegal immigrants splits state</b> -- "[North Carolina] <b>Community</b></i></li> </ul>

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*College System announcement made nearly three weeks ago forces each of the 58 campuses to keep an open-door policy regardless of **immigration status**".*

***Businesses will fight immigration legislation** -- a euphemism for *laissez faire expediency*, Virginia Employers for Sensible Immigration Policy, puts legislators between a rock and an angry electorate.*

**Justice**

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- ***Justice Dept: back off on CIA tapes** -- Justice tells the **District Court** not to ask questions; demanding information about the **destroyed tapes** "could potentially complicate the ongoing efforts to arrive at a full factual understanding of the matter." [Comment: The executive branch again asserts it is closer to God.]*

**Security**

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- ***California town up in arms over Blackwater training camp** -- "concerns had also been raised that Blackwater may somehow become involved in policing the nearby **US-Mexico border**".*

***Companies battle to stay ahead of cyber crooks** -- "criminals can **rent** ready-made international networks of **remotely controlled computers** to send out millions of **phishing** messages, and buy **custom-written viruses** designed to steal **credit card data**".*

*10,000 **stopped in terror searches** -- **British Transport Police** have stopped 9,994 people at **train stations** across **Scotland** since July 1 up to Friday December 14; 12% were from **ethnic minorities** but all searches were **random**. *Fixation with terrorism 'exposes Britain to other security risks'* -- "the national security effort focuses too heavily on terrorism at the expense of fighting **organised crime**, **securing energy supplies** and tackling **other international threats** ..."*

***Bulgaria establishes its own 'FBI'** -- "the **right-wing opposition** has also lashed out at the agency as "pointless," accusing the government of trying to revive the notorious **Communist-era secret services**, Darzhavna Sigurnost ..."*

***German security agency demands more powers** -- **Germany's Federal Criminal Office (BKA)**.*

***Misreading the Iran Report** -- Henry **Kissinger** weighs in: "When **intelligence personnel** expect their work to become the subject of **public debate**, they are tempted into the roles of **surrogate policymakers and advocates**".*

**Society**

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↓ ***US**: "The potential of our economy to underwrite a society of broad **prosperity** is being sacrificed to financial **speculation**.... The winnings are going to a narrow **elite**, jeopardizing not only our broad prosperity but our **solvency**" -- *A grim diagnosis for the U.S., and a prescription.**

**Water**

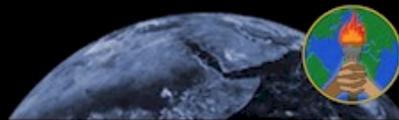
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↓ *"**Saudi Arabia** will proceed gradually with its long-term plan to **privatise** the kingdom's **water production** and **sewage treatment** system ..." -- *KSA pursues gradual water privatisation.**

*A week after the seven **Colorado River states** reach a **water agreement**, **Florida**, **Alabama** and **Georgia** continue to fight over waters from the **Chattahoochee** and **Apalachicola** rivers -- *Governors of US southern states to resolve water rights row.**

*The **US Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies** says **climate change** will exacerbate current **water shortages** and **violent events** such as **flooding** -- *Report examines impact of Climate Change on drinking water supplies.**

***Water discord should be solved for better ties** -- "... deep concerns regarding the construction of **dams** and **reservoirs** in **India** that would deprive **Bangladesh** of **crucial water resources** ...".*



Disaster: "the total area of **glaciers** in the **Tibetan Plateau** is expected to shrink by **80%** by the year **2030**" -- **Water shortage predicted for Indian subcontinent as Himalayan ice fields shrink.**

"The **Asian Development Bank** says rapid **population** growth, **urbanization** and **industrialization** in the region - as well as **climate change** - will test the region's **water management** skills" -- **ADB: Asian Governments Need to Improve Water Management to Avoid Crisis.**

**Challengers**

**Brazil**

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• **Brazil, Argentina launch space rocket** -- "The **VS30 rocket**, which carried **experiments** from both countries, blasted off from Brazil's **Barreira do Inferno launch center** in northern **Rio Grande do Norte** state ..."

**Brazil mulls uranium exports as mining set to grow** -- "[IAEA] suggested last week that Brazil could have a more **ambitious nuclear program** since it has the **enrichment technology** and the **raw material** for nuclear fuel".

see: **Wild Cards** (*Banco del Sur*)

**China**

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↑ **China agrees to post U.S. Safety Officials in its food factories** -- "this agreement will provide an opportunity to have our people here on a **continuous** basis with expertise so that we can work with our Chinese colleagues in helping to develop **good practices**".

See: **Economy**

**India**

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• **Nepalese army chief seeks resumption of supply of arms** -- "India had suspended **arms supplies** to **Nepal** earlier this year on the request of the new government which included the **Maoist** party, following the popular upsurge against the monarchy".

'**Bhutan jails 30 Maoists**' -- "... on the allegation that they were Maoists planning to launch an armed **insurgency movement** like in **Nepal** ..."

**India says to have missile defence system in 3 yrs** Also: **India building 6,000km nuclear-capable missile.**

**Maoists attack CPI-M bus, two injured** -- this incident highlights a distinction between the **Communist Party of India-Marxist** (CPI-M) and **Maoist guerrillas.**

**17 IEDs found in Manipur** -- "more than 68 IEDs were destroyed last month." Also: **Maoists blow up rail tracks in east India's Bihar state**

**Jharkhand to raise new anti-Maoists force** -- "the force would be set up along the lines of the **Greyhound** group in **Andhra Pradesh** state that has **successfully** curbed **Maoist** violence ..."

**India's spy agency blunders draw ire** -- "... **failure to predict** what everyone else **seemed to expect** has prompted sharp criticism of the spy agency. Some people have even questioned its very usefulness".

**110 Maoists escape from Chhattisgarh jail** -- "... 299 inmates including 110 **Naxal activists** [**Maoists**] escaped from the **Dantewada** jail in **Chhattisgarh** after prison guards were overpowered in a planned action ...".

See: **Water, Other Atrocities**

**Indonesia**

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• **US Intelligence is tapping Indonesian phones** -- "this revised **Embassy** statement **did not repeat** the **denials** of the earlier statement ..."

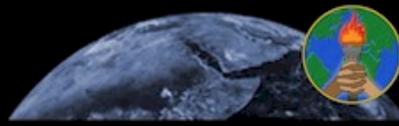
**Trial starts of top Indonesian Islamic militant** -- "**Abu Dujana**, self-confessed military leader of the **Jemaah Islamiah** (JI) regional militant group, faces the **death**

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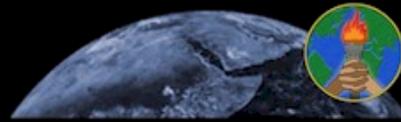
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↗ ALERT



	<p><i>penalty if found guilty under <b>anti-terrorism law</b>".</i></p>
<p><b>Iran</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From <i>Turkish Daily News</i>: <b>America is a threat, Iran is not!</b> -- "A kind of '<b>third world solidarity</b>' is apparently in effect this time under the heading '<b>double standards and injustice</b>'." [Comment: Every force has an equal and opposite reaction.]  <i>See: Security</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Russia</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>When will Russia run out of oil and gas?</b> -- in a worst-case scenario Russia's present <b>reserves</b> will be exhausted in around <u>22 years</u>.  <i>Defense Focus: Why buy Russian?</i> -- "Russia has displaced the <b>United States</b> as the <b>world's No. 1 arms exporter</b> not just because its weapons are <b>cheaper</b>, but because many of them are <u>very good</u>".  <i>Russia forms state nuclear giant to compete with overseas rivals</i> -- "... to compete directly with <b>Areva</b>, of <b>France</b>, and <b>Westinghouse</b> ..."  <b>US missile shield 'could spark Russian missile strike'</b>-- "... an <b>interceptor missile</b> by the United States could trigger a Russian missile strike because it could be <u>mistaken for a ballistic missile aimed at Russia</u>." [Comment: The <b>decision time</b> in such an event would be very short.]</li> </ul>
<p><b>Venezuela</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A <i>Massachusetts</i> charity run by <i>Joseph P. Kennedy II</i> has received the third annual <b>donation of heating oil</b> from Venezuela, worth about \$25 million -- <i>Charity receives donation from Venezuela</i>.  <b>Salvador President denies plans to severe ties with Venezuela</b> "... when asked about recent statements by a lawmaker and the Minister of Security and Justice <i>René Figueroa</i>".  An <b>anti-Chavez</b> strategy that includes importing more <b>Brazilian ethanol</b> -- <i>Reduce Chavez Oil, Help Latin Neighbors</i>.  <b>Why the constitutional reform in Venezuela went down and where to next!</b> -- ".... All of these issues raise the question of the level of <b>political consciousness</b> within the <b>Bolivarian process</b>".</li> </ul>
<p><b>Wild Cards</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Turkey Launches Air, Artillery Attacks on Northern Iraq</b> -- "In the past few weeks Turkish forces have also been distributing <b>leaflets</b> in areas where the <b>PKK</b> is believe to operate calling on the rebels to surrender". Also: <b>Top Turk general says US approved strikes in N.Iraq</b> -- "Turkey's army chief says the United States backed Turkish air raids on Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq with <b>intelligence and clearance to enter Iraqi airspace</b>".  <i>What are the big issues in South Africa?</i> [Reuters Factbox]  <b>Out of Disillusionment Brazil and South America Create Own IMF</b> -- "<b>Banco del Sur</b> was launched [09 Dec 2007] in Buenos Aires by <u>six</u> South American presidents.... the region's answer to the <b>World Bank</b> and the <b>IMF</b> as a source for <b>development funds</b>."  <b>Cuba to allow U.N. human rights monitoring</b> -- "... Cuba will sign the U.N. <b>International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights</b> and a similar pact on economic and social rights by March next year".  <b>Musharraf Lifts State of Emergency, Promises Fair Elections</b> -- "We would like to invite <u>any number of observers</u> to come and watch the fairness of these elections".</li> </ul>

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