

GLOBAL CHALLENGES: THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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

Threat Summary

	<p>Environment. Great Lakes tanking, US behind Ecuador, Cattle need to go, Nigeria E-Waste. Inter-State Conflict. Spratley's on the front burner, Malaysia concerned. Iraq's "decisive battle." Proliferation. Nuclear fuel bank growing as an international public demand (US stupid/duplicitous).</p>
	<p>Poverty. 25,000 children die daily—shame on all of us! 4M die in Zimbabwe alone. Infectious Disease. Bush wants to double funding for aids while ignoring all other threats. Civil War. Kenya degenerates; threatens Somalia, Uganda, Sudan, and Congo. Serbia, Thailand. Genocide. Rwanda shames France, ICTR a disgrace (tried 35 people in 10 years) Transnational Crime. Mexico, not Iraq, is the greatest threat to US security.</p>
	<p>Other Atrocities. Child slavery gang in UK. Prostitution and drugs. Malaysia condemns Israel. Terrorism. Colombia's rebels are irregulars, not terrorists. Suicide bombers sensible</p>

Policy Summary

	<p>Diplomacy. Condi Rice remains an irrelevant twit. China, India, Brazil ignored by idiot old minds. Security. US spy satellite with nuclear power package on way to Earth. US-UK way behind on SW. Society. US democracy is dead. US Government may be a criminal enterprise at the top. Bad, bad! Water. Water is at least as important as climate change and global warming. No one get this yet.</p>
	<p>Economy. China and India emerging as clever thinkers, planners, and partners. Education. Cost out of control. Education needs to be free. Energy. OPEC to US: Fuck Off. Renewable energy has huge potential, small audience. Health. Diabetes (and obesity) killing US population. Immigration. Mexico deports more than US each year. US government does not protect us at all.</p>
	<p>Agriculture. Global Crop Diversity Truist (Norway) is very smart. US ethanol is very stupid. Family. US women love abortion, do not see the strategic loss of white population survival. Justice. US continues to use marijuana as means of increasing slave labor in prisons. This is IDIOCY.</p>

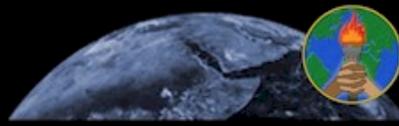
Major Player Summary

	<p>Brazil. Amazon destruction soars, homicide rate rises. China. China penetrates key US databases. Coal shortage. Passing US in science & technology. India. Taking lead in remote sensing (as Lockheed satellites for US continue to crash and burn). Indonesia. Indonesia (and Malaysia) continue to be among the most responsible Islamic nations. Iran. India-Iran pipeline offset to Russia, Turkey, burying US idiocy in the region. Russia. Space funding up 13%; combined with Chinese ability to destroy space assets: good-bye US! Venezuela. Venezuela concerned over Colombian-US invasion. Newsflash: CIA/Dodd are inept. Wild Cards. South Africa power (electrical) crisis. Turkey coup put down. Pakistan, Pakistan.</p>
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World Crises - monthly assessment by [International Crisis Group](#) - 01 December 2007

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

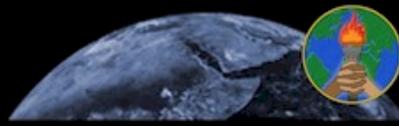
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Threats see *daily* items with *links to full stories* on the web at **PDB-Threats**

<p>Poverty news list forecast</p>	<p>↓ 26,000 children under five die daily -- ...around the world, mostly from preventable causes..</p> <p>"<i>Sierra Leone had the highest child mortality rate, with <u>270 deaths per 1,000 births</u>" -- <i>Leader in Child Mortality.</i></i></p> <p>Children starve as Zimbabwe's grain goes to make luxury dog food – The state-run grain company in Zimbabwe is making <i>Doggy's Delight</i> while up to <u>four million</u> of the country's people starve.</p>
<p>Infectious Disease news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bush wants twice the funding for AIDS -- "the five-year, <u>\$30 billion</u> proposal would provide treatment for about <u>2.5 million</u> people infected with the disease and <u>preventive measures</u> for about <u>12 million</u> others."
<p>Environment news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USA Slips Behind Ecuador in Environmental Ranking -- "... indicators of pollution control and natural resource management released today at the World Economic Forum puts the United States in <u>39th place</u>, behind Ecuador and Albania". • Great Lakes' Lower Water Levels Propel a Cascade of Hardships -- "scientists say Great Lakes levels are on an <u>overall downward trend</u>, which is likely to continue as a result of reduced ice cover, increased evaporation, and warmer air and water temperatures". • Nigeria: As E-Waste Dump, Lagos Imperils People -- "with no facilities to recycle e-wastes, they are indiscriminately discarded around the city. Some of them end up in dumpsites where they are burnt". • German farmers cultivate ways to fight global warming -- although seen as a victim rather than a cause, agriculture is responsible for <u>10%</u> of greenhouse emissions, half of which comes from cattle raising.
<p>Inter-State Conflict news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a battle that will be "<u>decisive</u>" in many ways, Iraq's military is about to confront what is considered the last major concentration of "foreign fighters" and al-Qaeda loyalists in Iraq -- Government Ready For 'Decisive' Battle With Al-Qaeda. • Malaysian PM warns against military buildup in Spratlys -- following reports Taiwan had sent a military aircraft to the disputed island chain ... "If this is not well managed, we will be facing a very serious problem in Southeast Asia and in the South China Sea," Badawi said. • Polisario losing patience over Morocco's non-cooperation on Western Sahara [Good backgrounder on Western Sahara.]
<p>Civil War news list forecast</p>	<p>↓ The blood-bath everyone* missed ... Kenya continues to hack itself apart in violence that will not be erased for generations. Signs in Kenya That Killings Were Planned -- "You don't see these issues in Kenya as obviously as you see them, say, in Somalia, but underneath, it's there". Reports of Bodies Piled In Morgue Spur Anger, Grief -- , even in death ... Bantu speaking Kisii dead are not being buried by the area's dominant Nilotic Luo and Kalenjin people. DAVOS-UN aid chief warns of irreversible spiral in Kenya -- "Beyond the immediate tragedy in Kenya, the violence threatens the entire region as Kenya is a hub for aid efforts to Somalia, northern Uganda, southern Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo ...". Ethnic Violence in Rift Valley Tears Kenya Apart -- <u>not genocide, but</u> ... "Nakuru, the biggest town in the beautiful Rift Valley, is the scene of a mass migration now moving in two directions. <u>Luos are headed west, Kikuyus are headed east</u> ..." *[Comment: Kenya was not on the Watch-list of even International Crisis Group, the leading</p>

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organization in early alerts.]

Russia raises its financial and political investment in **Serbia** - "*Serbia will become a key hub in the prospective network of Russian energy supplies to southern Europe*" - *- Serbia Signs Controversial Energy Deal with Russia.*

Who's Bombing Burma? -- "*The junta blames insurgents and shadowy foreigners for several blasts, but analysts suspect the military itself.*"

'Staggering' toll in war-torn DRC -- "*Democratic Republic of Congo's 1998o 2003 war and its aftermath had caused more deaths than any other conflict since World War 2.*" *Peace deal signed in DRC to end years of fighting [Chronology]* -- a chronology of the conflict in the DRC in the last 10 years.

The orderly return to *civilian rule* in **Thailand** by general election has returned power to the same popularly-backed, corrupt *power cliche* the *generals* overthrew; *Class Struggle in Thailand [Analysis]* -- "*What will happen next is a series of mini-crises, as the army and the middle class struggle to come to terms with the fact that they have lost control of the country.*"

JEM's Vision for a New Sudan -- a useful paper by the Chairman of **Sudan's Justice and Equality Movement** (JEM) Legislative Council, one of Sudan's major southern rebel groups. *Darfur camps flooded with weapons claims Amnesty International* -- "*armed groups continue to use the camps to recruit fighters – including children.... Some camps, such as Kalma, have members of as many as 29 different ethnic groups.*"

Genocide
[news list|forecast](#)

- Cold comfort ... *France Denies 'Military Responsibility' for 1994 Rwanda Genocide* -- "*he said France was at fault for not understanding what was happening in Rwanda, but that French soldiers did not take part in the genocide ...*"
End of genocide tribunal stirs emotions in Rwanda -- "*if for 10 years the ICTR has tried 35 people, how do you expect them to try over 25 cases in one single year?*"

Other Atrocities
[news list|forecast](#)

- *British police crack child slave gang* -- "... a major operation, which trafficked young Eastern European children into Britain to steal, beg, pick pockets and target consumers at cash point machines on the streets of London".
14 trafficked women rescued in Lucena [Philippines]
ETimor police arrest 72 for prostitution, drugs -- "... most of them were women involved in prostitution and illegal drugs and are from Indonesia, China, Thailand and the Philippines".
Malaysia condemns Israel's blockade of Gaza -- "*the blockade has exacerbated the already worsening humanitarian crisis in the area and this will cause a humanitarian catastrophe.*"

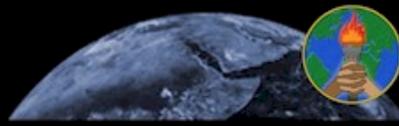
Proliferation
[news list|forecast](#)

- The number of sensible voices calling for an *international nuclear fuel bank* continues to grow: "*the premise behind an international fuel bank is that it will encourage countries who are building nuclear reactors to forgo uranium-enrichment technology ...*" -- *Nuclear fuel: keeping it civil.*

Terrorism
[news list|forecast](#)

- *Ecuador designates Colombian rebels as "irregulars"* -- "*our nation's position is to consider them as irregulars, not to declare them terrorists.*"
International security agencies operation results in Real IRA chief's brother's arrest in Lithuania "... as he allegedly attempted to buy arms".
Preventing nuclear terrorism worldwide -- "*a system of comprehensive measures is the only way to save the world from a nuclear holocaust.*"

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Papers Paint New Portrait of Iraq's Foreign Insurgents -- more foreigners than thought, more North Africans than thought - a fact-filled find in Iraq.

Based on data from **Palestine: Suicide bombers are not unstable: researchers** -- ... not psychologically unstable ... often motivated by personal **vengeance** rather than by **religious passions**.... organizers don't want unstable people to jeopardize their missions ...

Islamic Radicals and the "Che Guevara Effect"-- *Al Qaeda's* strategy is similar to Che's "**foco**" strategy ... and may fail for the same reasons: resentment of the "foreigners" trying to run the **Jihad**, men who are often contemptuous of local custom.

al Qaeda receives questions it has invited for its first virtual **forum: Sympathizers seek answers from al-Qaida** -- "Why hasn't al-Qaida attacked the U.S. again, why isn't it attacking the **Israelis** and when will it be more active in **Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Syria**?"

U.S. puts Kurds on terror list [Analysis] -- **U.S. National Counter-Terrorism Center** proscribes a **Kurdish** group as a terrorist organization ... but it's the wrong Kurdish group.

Transnational Crime
 news list|forecast

- *Key Mexican drug hitman arrested near U.S. border* -- "he is considered one of the most dangerous hitmen of the **Arellano Felix cartel**".

Mexico hits drug gangs with full fury of war -- "... a sustained federal intervention in states where for decades **corrupt** municipal **police** officers and drug gangs have worked together in relative peace ..."

U.S. faces 'grave threat' in drug fight -- "What we face is more of a challenge than **law enforcement** can be expected to cope with".

Anti-Narcotics Agency to be established in Turkmenistan -- Turkmenistan has upgraded its **National Committee For Struggle Against Narcotics** to 'State Service for Struggle against Narcotics'.

Policy

see **daily items with links to full stories on the web at PDB-Policy**

Agriculture
 news list|forecast

- *Converting corn and soybeans into fuels is contributing to higher food prices* -- "The US, in a misguided effort to reduce its oil insecurity by converting grain into fuel for cars, is generating **global food insecurity on a scale never seen before**". [And increased grain in **meat production** is another cause.]

Agriculture as economic stimulus -- At a time when even the **White House** is set to cut **subsidies** to Park Avenue farmers, some say the **Farm Bill** is the best way to implement the newly flagged "**stimulus package**".

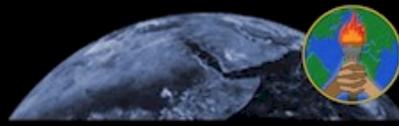
NAFTA Opens Doors for US-Mexico Agriculture Trade -- "... considerable **protest** from farmers across **Mexico**, who claim that the free entry of relatively cheap US exports would ruin millions of **rural farmers** ..."

Thousands of crop varieties from 4 corners of the world depart for Arctic seed vault - "The vault was built by the **Norwegian** government as a service to the global community **Global Crop Diversity Trust**, will fund its operation"

Diplomacy
 news list|forecast

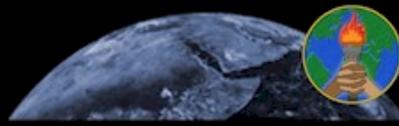
- *One practical way to improve the state of the world: turn G8 into G14* -- "As power shifts from the old west, it is absurd that the world's economic top table has a seat for **Italy** but no place for **China** ".

'An idea whose time has come': Brown backs UN security council seat for India -- "**Britain** has endorsed the claims of **India, Germany, Japan, Brazil and one African**



	<p>state to join the existing permanent five of Britain, the US, China, France and Russia. But <u>China, the US and Russia are resistant to reform</u>". [Comment: This all verges on pointless pap because the Big-5 want to exclusively retain the veto power, the single greatest cause of global incompetency, a perfidy beyond any justification.]</p>
<p>Economy news listforecast</p>	<p>↓ Suddeny, Doha may be possible: <i>World economy fears prompt trade deal push</i> -- "... trade ministers are aware of the fresh blow to confidence -- and growth -- that failure to deliver a Doha deal could entail".</p> <p><i>Can India and China save the world's economy?</i> -- "we expect China and India to <u>support regional growth</u> in the event of a significant slowdown in the US".</p> <p><i>The U.S. Economy Faces the Guillotine</i> -- "one thing that is certain is that the United States is <u>now dependent on the kindness of foreigners</u>, instead of the other way around".</p> <p><i>The Supplicant-in-Chief</i> -- "As America goes begging for foreign bailouts, get ready for the president's new role".</p> <p><i>Mortgage crisis has cities in ruin</i> -- a grim report from Trenton (NJ) of the new urban blight wrought by Wall Street.</p> <p>The president wants to keep the phony boom alive - in the worst possible way, by providing more "stimulus" to consumers... by <u>helping them spend even more money they haven't got on things they don't really need</u> -- <i>Asians were Saving More than Enough for the Whole World</i></p>
<p>Education news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A quick look at types of student loans and repayment options emphasises the prohibitive cost of education for many -- <i>U.S. lending helping hand on student loans</i>. <i>Listening mother teaches their kids the most: study</i> -- "we saw that this simple act of listening by mom made a difference in the <u>quality of the child's explanations and how well they could solve more difficult problems later on</u>".
<p>Energy news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the guys who brought you no-doc loans... paper oil prices: "<i>The price of oil is high because of speculation. We have to segregate the physical market from the paper market" says Saudi Arabia -- OPEC may dismiss U.S. call for more production</i> <p><i>Renewable energy's potential</i> -- "The problem, then, lies not so much in the availability of renewable resources, or the technology to harness them, but the cost of doing so." [A good brief update]</p>
<p>Family news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • America's single most divisive issue: "35 years after Roe v. Wade solidified American womens' right to abortion, reproductive rights remain in limbo" -- 10 reasons why the fight for reproductive justice is still essential.
<p>Health news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor Department says upcoming revisions of Family-Medical Leave Act won't be sweeping -- the Family-Medical Leave Act, which grants up to 12 weeks unpaid leave a year to employees in larger worksites for "serious health condition", will not be liberalised in its current review. <p>"About <u>one out of every five health-care dollars</u> in the United States is spent caring for someone with diagnosed diabetes" - education and early detection would help the cost and fatality rates -- <i>Diabetes' Health Toll Hits \$174 Billion Annually</i>.</p> <p><i>More hitting cost [lifetime] limit on health benefits</i> -- the predicament of those who burst through lifetime insurance caps is largely ignored when the focus is on improving access to insurance at a time when a record 47 million people lack any coverage.</p>

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Immigration
[news list|forecast](#)

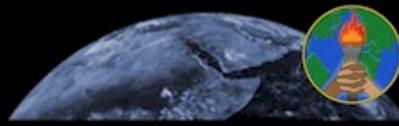
- *Where the candidates stand on immigration* -- a thumbnail of eight Presidential contenders' policy on immigration.
Border Patrol expands to U.S. interior -- "The arrests — some 800 miles from the Mexican border — represented a new and dramatic shift in U.S. *immigration enforcement strategy*".
Immigration database to mine 9 federal sources -- "Investigators previously searched 10 to 15 *databases manually* for people who met "*suspicious criteria*," a process that could take as long as three days per person".
Immigration Reform? Let's Try Mexico's Immigration Law! -- **Mexico** annually deports more *illegal aliens* than the **United States**.

Justice
[news list|forecast](#)

- "[Attorney General] **Mukasey** renewed his personal concern that the potential release of so many prisoners -- up to 1,600 in March alone -- could cause violent crime to spike in cities across the country" -- *Mukasey may try to derail early releases*.
"739,000 -- That's the number of **American** citizens arrested in 2006 for possessing small amounts of pot. The figure is the highest annual total ever recorded, nearly double the number of citizens busted for pot fifteen years ago" -- *Caught with a bag of weed? it could cost you more than you think*.

Security
[news list|forecast](#)

- *The World's Top Spy Agencies* -- thumbnails of **Foreign Intelligence Service, Ministry of State Security, Research and Analysis Wing, Inter-Services Intelligence, Secret Intelligence Service (MI6), The Mossad**.
 Friendly fire: "*The satellite, which no longer can be controlled, could contain hazardous materials, and it is unknown where on the planet it might come down ...*" - *Disabled Spy Satellite threatens Earth*.
 Subsequent upon growing reports of *cyber-attacks ... Bush Order Expands Network Monitoring* -- "*the directive, whose content is classified, authorizes the intelligence agencies, in particular the National Security Agency, to monitor the computer networks of all federal agencies ...*"
New cybersecurity specs target power grid "... mandate that *energy companies* report 'security incidents' and set up *emergency recovery plans ...*".
 The cyber attack on **Estonia** last year, blamed by "everyone" on Russia and almost prompting a NATO Article 5 military counter attack, has been traced to an *Estonian 20-year old* -- *We Traced the Cyberwar -- It's Coming From Inside the Country!*.
 In the **UK**, following a humiliating series of incidents involving incompetent *data handling*: "*Civil servants have been banned from taking laptops with unencrypted personal data out of their offices*" -- *Laptop ban for civil servants after data loss*.
"The Defense Department's process for evaluating products to ensure they meet the agency's information technology security requirements is broken" -- *DOD must fix product security evaluation process, officials say*.
Homeland Security Department releases NRF -- the new *DHS doctrine* for **disaster response**, the *National Response Framework*.
ISA releases cyber security standard and report -- **ANSI/ISA-99.00.01-2007** hits the streets.
 The **GAO** may have prophesied an *Achillean* weakness in *Future Combat Systems*, the **US Army's** suite of next generation systems: "*The risk is that the software may*

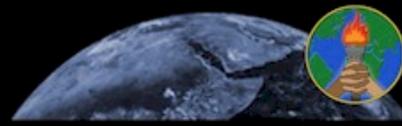


	<p>not be developed by the time the combat vehicles and weapons are ready, the GAO cautions" -- <i>The Complex Crux of Wireless Warfare</i>.</p>
<p>Society news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>America is a Democracy?</i> -- Some discourse on the move to petition for a Constitutional Convention under <i>Article V</i> of the US Constitution. [Comment: Relates particularly to <i>oligarchies</i> and <i>plutocracies</i>.] • <i>Mexicans ride women-only bus to detour sex harassment</i> -- "... part of an experimental program aimed at protecting female passengers who are frequently exposed to sexual harassment on public transportation ..."
<p>Water news list forecast</p>	<p>↓ <i>Calif. Farmers Want to Sell Water</i> – [What is wrong with this picture ...] farmer s propose to sell on public-subsidized water to the public for profit; the public gets water; and food prices rise.</p> <p>The UN Secretary General at the World Economic Forum says the world's response to a UN water sustainability initiative is "a drop in the bucket" -- "What we did for climate change last year, we want to do for water..." -- <i>Ban warns business on looming water crisis</i>.</p> <p>"Every litre of petrol requires up to <u>2.5litres of water</u> to produce it. On average, crops grown for their bio-energy need at least <u>1000 litres of water</u> to make one litre of biofuel... [International Water Management Institute report]" -- <i>A world united on water</i>.</p>

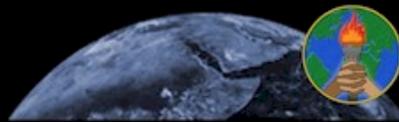
Challengers

<p>Brazil news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Brazil says Amazon destruction soars again</i> -- after a short hiatus: "We've <u>never before</u> detected such a high deforestation rate at this time of year". • <i>Brazil has record high homicide rate</i> -- "... at the beginning of the new millennium, the homicide rate rose to <u>28.5 people per 100,000</u> the rate has dropped since 2003"
<p>China news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>China offers plan to clean up its polluted lakes</i> -- a detailed "plan" to limit pollution by <u>2010</u> and return the lakes to original state by <u>2030</u>. • <i>China shuts 5% of coal-fired power plants on shortage</i> -- Coal stockpiles at the plants have dropped below the 'caution line' of <u>three days</u>' requirements. [Comment: Most shortages have been caused by the effect of inclement weather on transport but deeper problems may lurk behind this.] • <i>China has penetrated key U.S. databases: SANS director</i> -- "<u>they are already in and we have to find them</u>". • <i>see: Security (Bush Order Expands Network Monitoring)</i> • <i>Move Over US - China to be New Driver of World's Economy and Innovation</i> -- "the study's indicators predict that China will soon pass the United States in the critical ability to develop basic science and technology".
<p>India news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Big kidney racket busted in Gurgaon</i> -- "the kidney racket appeared to be a major one with inter-state and international links". • <i>India to share satellite data with SAARC countries</i> -- "India has more than half a dozen operational remote sensing satellites in orbit covering the entire SAARC region". [SAARC comprises Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka.] • <i>Ruling Congress slams left ally's "third front"</i> -- "Whenever secular forces were divided in the past, it helped the fundamentalist forces to occupy the political centre stage". [Comment: The Indian Left is threatening to try to form a Left-Coalition

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	<p>government in its own right, a move almost certain to serve power to the Hindu fundamentalist <i>Bharatiya Janata Party</i> (BJP).]</p> <p><i>A future China-India détente</i> is possible if both countries "drop the unnecessary border row between them and to not step on each other's toes. Without these, there is no future for a strong India-China relationship".</p> <p>see: Diplomacy ('An idea whose time has come': Brown backs UN security council seat for India)</p> <p>More on the Tajik airbase at Ayni, a <u>strategic</u> issue of importance beyond the coverage it is getting: . Russia and India show interest in Tajik airbase.</p>
<p>Indonesia news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jihad may have ended in Poso, says think-tank -- "the JI administrative unit in Poso [Sulawesi ('Celebes')] appears to have been destroyed, at least temporarily" says International Crisis Group.
<p>Iran news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BP may build the contentious Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) gas pipeline: "the deal is by no means assured. India and Pakistan are still haggling over transit fees, and the United States opposes the deal because of Iran's involvement" -- Report: BP eyes IPI pipeline. <p><i>Iran eyes Nabucco pipeline</i> -- "the European Union has stressed the need for diversifying gas delivery routes [as an alternative to the Russian monopoly]. Nabucco [from the Caspian to Europe] is a possible way of energy cooperation between Iran and the EU".</p> <p>"The move by [Supreme Leader]Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was a major rebuke to the hardline president, whose popularity has plummeted amid rising food prices and deaths due to gas cuts during a particularly harsh winter" -- Iran leader under fire for gas shortages. [Comment: The gas shortages, partly a function of current Turkmen-Iranian quarrels, point to the growing strategic nature of energy politics, and also the fact that Iran is a constitutional republic not an Ahmadinejad dictatorship.]</p>
<p>Russia news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russia to raise space funding 13%, build new space center -- Russia, like China, has renewed interest in Space; "... the funding increase does <u>not</u> include military programs". <p><i>U.S. worried about Russia's Balkan energy grab</i> -- with a deal now signed with Serbia, Russia's South Stream energy pipeline is driving on into southern Europe like an armoured division, and there is little to stop it.</p>
<p>Venezuela news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colombian intelligence: Venezuela is providing ammunition to the FARC -- "Colombian sources do not know whether the provision of ammo is made under President Hugo Chávez's command or if it comes amidst corrupt practices by Venezuelan military and police officers". <p><i>Chavez says Colombia, U.S. plotting invasion</i> -- "I accuse the government of Colombia of plotting a conspiracy, acting as a pawn of the North American empire, of plotting a military provocation against Venezuela". [Comment: "Even the paranoid have enemies" – Henry Kissinger]</p>
<p>Wild Cards news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power cuts cripple Southern Africa -- "Energy experts have long warned of a <u>looming power crisis in the region</u>, part of a larger shortage of energy on the continent" [Comment: Giving impetus to South Africa's nuclear power ambitions.] Also: S Africa cuts power to neighbours -- "Zimbabwe and Mozambique are thought to be the worst affected countries".



Turkey: *Police target nationalist gangs after failed coup attempt* -- the suspects -- former *army officers, lawyers, journalists* and *religious leaders* -- from a nationalist organisation called **Ergenekon** are alleged to have planned *political murders* and *bomb* attacks.

PAKISTAN

'ISI played pivotal role in aborting world terrorism plots' -- "the strategy to support the *Afghans* against *Soviet* military intervention was evolved by several intelligence agencies, including the *CIA* and the *ISI*".

Troops advance with tanks for major assault: Clashes continue in S. Waziristan -- "for the first time the movement of battle tanks has been seen in the area".

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20080128w [107]

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↓ deteriorated

• steady

↑ improved

↗ ALERT