

GLOBAL CHALLENGES: THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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

Threat Summary

	<p>Environment. Baltic Sea chemical waste. Offroad engine emissions. Green energy, African seeds. Inter-State Conflict. Taliban rise aided by poverty. Eritrea slams UN. Taiwan provokes on Spratleys. Proliferation. Egypt seeks nuclear consultants. Editor: still no global strategy for safe nuclear energy.</p>
	<p>Poverty. UN targets corruption as a root cause. Rural agriculture neglected. Simple technology helps. Infectious Disease. US unprepared for flu outbreak, Tamiflu-resistant flu, NATO joins monitoring net. Civil War. Chad, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Somalia, Philippines, Kosovo, Lebanon featured this week. Genocide. Kenya escalating from rebel outrage to active tribal genocide incited by hidden hands. Transnational Crime. Guinea-Bissau as first African narco-state. Drug violence killing thousands.</p>
	<p>Other Atrocities. UN on human trafficking. Child exploitation huge. Mexico, Guatemala, Egypt. Terrorism. Turkey scores on Al Qaeda. Algeria leverages Radio Qur'an. Jihad is Asia spreading fast.</p>

Policy Summary

	<p>Diplomacy. Elections do not create democracy. Editor: US continues to love 42 of 44 dictators. Security. US completely unprepared for catastrophic homeland threats; bomb gets past airport security. Society. Suicides by US soldiers over 2000 in 2006, up from 375 in 2002. Editor: close to 4,000 now. Water. Water quality & quantity the heart of any strategy to save, relieve, and empower all Africa.</p>
	<p>Economy. Undredged US ports will further undermine US as fewer modern ships will be able to enter. Education. United Kingdom loses ground: patriotism should not be taught, drop-outs welcome Energy. Wind farm technicians needed. Discarded wood creates motor fuel. Strategic energy projects. Health. 26% of US adults suffer from mental disorders. Cure for acute radiation injury. Immigration. South Africa undermined by Zimbabwean refugees. UK deporting and holding more.</p>
	<p>Agriculture. US increasing food insecurity (and wasting water) on fuel and meat from corn, soybeans. Family. Abstinence-only from the extreme right in America, seeking to roll back reproductive choices. Justice. No major stories. Editor: Gary Hart on Cheney impeachment in Washington Post ignored.</p>

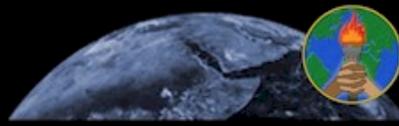
Major Player Summary

	<p>Brazil. Police strike, slum raids and deaths, Amazon destruction continues apace, French nuclear sub. China. Beats West in Africa, engages resources in war zones. US beginning to fear China's military. India. Kidney harvesting and theft. Water shortage acute. Communists recruit landless. Gwadar port. Indonesia. Military attacks a police post. Could play key role in resolving Burma/Myanmar. Iran. Frail economy, heating crisis. UK Lord urges engagement. Egypt toward restoring full relations. Russia. Peacekeepers in Sudan for five to six years. Putin opponent denied ballot spot. Venezuela. Creating regional military coalition. Honduras, Ecuador. Editor: China as Prime Buyer. Wild Cards. Head scarf ban issues in Turkey. Gadaffi on need for African Defense Coalition</p>
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World Crises - monthly assessment by [International Crisis Group](#) - 01 February 2008

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

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Threats see daily items with links to full stories on the web at [PDB-Threats](#)

Poverty
[news list|forecast](#)

↓ **Rural Neglect to Blame for Conflict in Kenya, Darfur** -- Progress towards the **Millennium Development Goals** in **Africa** remains "*uneven and disappointing*". (The most compelling recent evidence of **agriculture-led poverty reduction** comes from **Asia**.)

U.N graft meeting targets plundering leaders -- "*corruption is a communicable disease, within and across countries. In some places, like a pandemic, it is out of control*".

World Bank's Zoellick turns to African agriculture -- "*Africa's agriculture has long been neglected by international agencies like the World Bank, which have focused on pressing health and education problems*". [An informative item]

Brain Drain - Major Concern in Africa -- "*... the so-called brain drain costs the continent an estimated US \$4 billion per year in what has been pronounced as a slow death for Africa.*"

Even simple tech helps reduce poverty -- "*the [World Bank's 2008 report 'Technology Diffusion'] urges governments to strengthen domestic technology dissemination channels as a high priority. These include transport infrastructure and the capacity of applied research and development agencies ...*".

Infectious Disease
[news list|forecast](#)

↓ **WHO reports Tamiflu-resistant flu in U.S., Canada** -- the main seasonal **flu virus** in the **US, Canada** and parts of **Europe** shows higher **resistance** to the **antiviral drug Tamiflu**, raising questions about its potential effectiveness in a **H5N1 pandemic**.

U.S. Flu Outbreak Plan Criticized -- "*... plans for dealing with pandemic flu do not adequately account for the overwhelming strain an outbreak would place on hospitals and public health systems ...*"

NATO begins pandemic monitoring -- NATO is the world's first military organisation to join the **Global Public Health Intelligence Network**, finally a recognition that there are bigger killers out there than "**terrorism**".

Environment
[news list|forecast](#)

• **Chemical Weapon Time Bomb Ticks in the Baltic Sea** -- "*for almost 50 years chemical weapons from two World Wars have been lying at the bottom of the Baltic Sea*".

States Petition EPA to Control Climate Gases from Nonroad Engines -- "*millions of industrial machines in mines, on farms, and construction sites spew massive quantities of unregulated greenhouse gas pollution*".

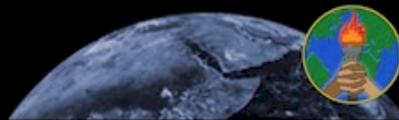
Bush to commit \$2 billion to climate change fund -- "*... a voluntary approach adds up to lots of rhetoric and little actual change,*" said the *National Wildlife Federation*.

Global warming crop harm predicted in Africa, Asia -- "*we were surprised by how much and how soon these regions could suffer if we don't adapt*" -- warming could bring as much as a 30% loss in yields from traditional **staple crops** in **Southern Africa** and **South Asia**.

Economy, Planet in Trouble: Green Energy to the Rescue? -- "*2007 was a record year for renewable energy in the US. Almost 6,000 megawatts of new renewable energy came on line in 2007, infusing over \$20 billion of investment into our economy. And along with this investment came jobs*".

African seed collection first to arrive in Norway on route to Arctic seed vault -- "*cowpea and dozens of other crops, like cassava, yams, and millets, are known as 'orphan' crops, because they receive less attention than they deserve relative to their*"

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

value and importance".

↓ *Six years after invasion, **Taliban** is on the rise* -- "the Taliban were able to demonstrate in the Serena attack that they could target Westerners virtually anywhere and anytime, even deep in **Kabul**". *Oxfam Urges 'Change of Direction' in Afghanistan* -- "... **poverty** is driving ordinary Afghans into the arms of **insurgents and drug gangs**". *Afghan leaders accuse **British** of secret plan for training Taleban* -- "... part of a controversial British plan to use bands of reconciled Taleban, called **Community Defence Volunteers**, to fight the remaining **insurgents**".

Eritrea slams UN -- Eritrea says the **UNSC** failed to tackle the **root cause** of the problem - the continued presence of **Ethiopian** troops on land ruled by a UN-appointed border panel as **Eritrean territory**.

MSF confirms three employees killed in Somalia blast -- *Medecins Sans Frontieres* workers have been killed in **Somalia** in a blast probably caused by a **land-mine**.

see: **Civil War**

Taiwan leader lands on disputed Spratlys -- the **Philippines** calls it "irresponsible political posturing".

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

CHAD

↓ *Key facts about Chad [Factbox]*

Chad rebels 'heading for capital' -- "Armed forces have gone to intercept a column of 300 rebel vehicles, advancing along the main road to the capital". **France**, as the former **colonizing power** and still with interests in **Chad**, took a position: *France eyes "neutral" military role in Chad conflict* -- "I would not use the word '**neutral**.' We support the party in power, we support legality." France sent more troops to join its 1250 already there -- other **EU** troops (**EUFOR**) ready to leave on another mission have been put on hold due to the fighting -- *E.U. Deployment To Chad Delayed*. The battle for **N'Djamena** continued [Roundup report]: *Chad rebels enter N'Djamena, fight to control city*. Reports of a rebel victory -- *Chad rebels seize capital after heavy fighting: military source* -- were then reversed -- *Chad rebels 'pushed from capital'*; "the rebels say they have made a **strategic withdrawal** to the eastern edge of **N'Djamena** ...".

KENYA

"What is alarming about the last few days is that there are evidently **hidden hands organising** it now" -- . *Ugandans attacked in Kenya violence*. Genocide or not, results were the same: *Tribe all but vanishes from Kenyan City* -- "if we find any **Kikuyus**, we're going to slaughter them or burn them aliveBut there is none in the houses around here". *Kenya's turmoil is gang opportunity* -- "one **gang recruiter** in Nairobi said she receives about 30 calls daily from people seeking membership, and **politicians** -- including a government minister -- are offering money for **weapons** to fuel the furor ..." Also: *Gangs clash ahead of talks to end Kenya crisis*.

see: **Genocide** (*Kenya Violence Called Ethnic Cleansing*)

Life in **Zimbabwe** becomes increasingly unbearable: *No water for firefighters in Zimbabwe* -- "Fires caused by candles during Zimbabwe's frequent **power outages** have destroyed homes because firefighters have also been unable to find water ..."

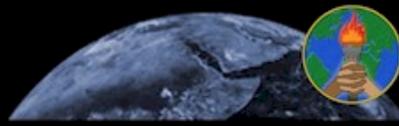
Niger rebels vow offensive against uranium industry -- "We are going to attack the uranium mines, including those belonging to Areva, halt the operation of the plants

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or the opening up of new sites, and target the road shipments to the sea," says **Tuareg** leader Rhissa Ag Boula.

Somalia is worst humanitarian crisis: UN official -- "high levels of malnutrition and the difficulties of **delivering aid** make Somalia the world's most pressing humanitarian crisis..." Also: **MSF [Medecins Sans Frontieres] pulls foreign staff from Somalia after 2 killed.**

see: **Inter-State Conflict**

In the **Philippines** a years old conflict with daily deaths stalls again in sight of a final settlement: **AFP deploys more troops in key areas of Mindanao** -- "the massing of **secessionist forces** as well as that of the **rebels** came about following an **impasse** of the Kuala Lumpur-sponsored [Malaysian] **peace talks** between the government and the MILF last December."

Bushite arch-conservatives including John **Bolton** argue that **EU and US** support for **Kosovo unilateral independence** is "naive in the extreme" and "sets a dangerous and destabilizing precedent for other ethnic and sub-national conflicts" -- **Opposition growing to Kosovo independence.**

Key players in Lebanon's political crisis [Factbox]

Genocide
 news list|forecast

- **Kenya Violence Called Ethnic Cleansing** -- "the aim originally was not to kill, it was to cleanse, it was to push them out of the region".

Other Atrocities
 news list|forecast

- **UN to host first conference on human trafficking** -- "it's almost certainly one of the fastest growing crimes in our globalised world" -- the **FIRST** international conference on **human trafficking** will be held in Vienna 13-15 Feb 2008.

Child exploitation moves 27.000 millions of euros a year -- "it is world's third criminal business after **drug and arms trafficking**. 1.2 millions of children a year are human trafficking victims in the world and 20,000 are estimated to be in Spain".

Moves to tackle child smuggling to Saudi Arabia -- "the Saudi authorities say on average they arrest 10 smuggled children a day".

Mexico Launches Search For 'Dirty War' Evidence -- rights groups say over 470 people disappeared from **Atoyac de Alvarez** and are presumed dead, more than disappeared from any other city in Mexico, which had over 1,200 disappearances nationwide.

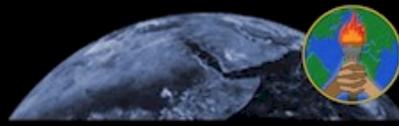
Death of a Guatemalan bishop [Book review] -- In 1998 Bishops Juan **Gerardi** was brutally **killed** shortly after presenting the Church's 1,400-page **report** on the violence that had accompanied the civil war, naming names and giving times and dates.

Colombia's top cop seeks extradition -- "a **police colonel** sacked for abetting one of Colombia's most-wanted **drug traffickers** should be **extradited to the United States** as an example, the country's police chief told AP".

Peru's dirty war preceded Fujimori: trial witness -- "... the strategy used against the leftist **Shining Path** and **Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement** came directly from teachings and manuals of the **School of the Americas**".

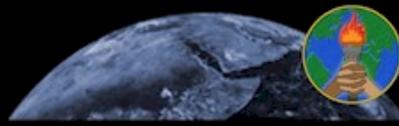
French jail terms for Chad charity workers -- a **French** court confirms **Chad's** findings on **child kidnapping**.

Egypt detains Al-Jazeera journalist -- "... she was sentenced to six months in jail in May [2007] over a **film** that highlighted **torture** in Egyptian **police stations** ..."



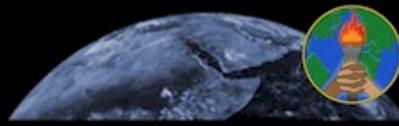
	<p>see: India (<i>Indian surgeon 'who stole 500 kidneys' hunted</i>)</p>
<p>Proliferation news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egypt seeks nuclear consultants -- Egypt's first nuclear reactor is estimated to be worth between \$1.5B and \$1.8B. Among consultants that seem to want to be involved are Australia's WorleyParsons and Britain's Arup.
<p>Terrorism news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turkish police disrupt major al-Qaeda network -- "in one of the largest raids on an al-Qaeda-affiliated group in Turkey, four suspected militants and a policeman were killed during a <u>13-hour gunfight</u> on [24 Jan 2008]". • Radio Qur'an aids in Algeria's fight against terrorism -- "<u>Islamic scholars from Algeria and Gulf countries have appeared on Radio Qur'an to undermine the doctrinal bases used by al-Qaeda to justify its suicide operations in North Africa</u>". • Algeria says smaller rebel cells test terror hunt -- "pressure from Algerian security forces is scattering Islamist armed groups into <u>smaller, harder to detect cells increasingly reliant on suicide bombings by drugged youths ...</u>" • Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb's dilemma -- "in light of the recent <u>defections</u>, it is possible that a split-off of the Algerian terror group might occur between those who want to stick with Al-Qaida's objectives and those who are <u>focusing solely on Algeria</u>". • Blast kills 2 in Algeria as officers foil attack on police station -- "The explosion was the latest in a wave of attacks signaling that Islamic fighters are regrouping in Algeria ..." • Islamic terror leader seized in Kyrgyzstan -- "Yuldashev was a leader within the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, or IMU, and is accused of involvement in attacks on Kyrgyz and Tajik border posts in May 2006 ..." • Jihad in Asia [Analysis] -- a German security expert documents the fact that the modern wave of Islamist terrorism originating in Afghanistan has spread EAST as well as west -- to China and Central Asia..
<p>Transnational Crime news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five men found murdered in a quarry in Costa Rica -- "Costa Rica ... is experiencing a <u>sharp rise in drug violence</u>, especially in southern and coastal areas, as South American cocaine trafficking rises". • Colombian drug lord found dead in Venezuela -- Varela led a war with rival traffickers that killed more than <u>1,000 people</u> in recent years, and the underworld is awash with tales of brutality that made him a household name in Colombia. • Dominican Navy says drugs are airdropped on the country daily -- "... the country is victim of a daily airdrop of drugs from South America, and that the Armed Forces lack the tools to confront that situation". • Drugs seized off Liberian coast -- "The Blue Atlantic and its nine Ghanaian crew members were detained by the French navy vessel <i>Tonnerre</i> on Wednesday, 520km south-west of the Liberian capital <i>Monrovia</i> ..." • Guinea-Bissau: One step from becoming first African "Narco-State" -- "Conditions in this small former Portuguese colony in West Africa are <u>optimal</u>. There is minimal surveillance, not a single prison worthy of the name, a weak state and officials susceptible to bribery and corruption".
<p>Policy see daily items with links to full stories on the web at PDB-Policy</p>	
<p>Agriculture news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <u>scale never seen before</u>". [Comment: Increased grain in meat production is another cause.] <p>see: Poverty (<i>World Bank's Zoellick turns to African agriculture</i>)</p>

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	<p>see: Environment (<i>African seed collection first to arrive in Norway on route to Arctic seed vault</i>)</p>
<p>Diplomacy news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the African Union? [Factbox] – the AU emerged from the Organisation of African Unity, which was founded in 1963 ... see: Wild Cards (Gadaffi says AU [African Union]cannot handle conflicts) Human Rights Watch says <i>elections</i> are not enough to make democracy: <i>Human Rights Watch: Thai democracy a sham</i> -- "they don't press governments on the key human rights issues that make democracy function - a free press, peaceful assembly, and a functioning civil society that can really challenge power". 'To impose democracy from outside is inherently undemocratic' -- Ethiopia's prime minister says in a rare interview that western policy in the region is <u>ill-informed</u> and at times <u>arrogant</u>.
<p>Economy news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US Infrastructure: U.S. may not be ready for Panama Canal's expansion -- an upsized Panama Canal and larger vessels in transit will mean <u>fewer ships</u> can enter US un-dredged ports.
<p>Education news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK: Patriotism 'should not be taught at school -- " ... <i>patriotism should be taught only as 'a controversial issue'</i> ". UK: Schooling to age 18 'will damage economy' -- under the <i>Education and Skills Bill</i> UK youth will be obliged to remain in <u>school or trade training</u> until their 18th birthday, but critics point to <u>compliance and enforcement costs</u>.
<p>Energy news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controversy ... Solar Energy a Waste! California Should Go Nuclear, Says Former Greenpeace Leader -- "<i>there is no possibility that California can meet its objectives [for emission reduction] without new nuclear ... to supply the electricity</i>" says Patrick Moore, co-founder of Greenpeace. Wind Farms Need Techs to Keep Running -- "...specialized group of technicians that combine working knowledge of mechanics, hydraulics, computers and meteorology with the willingness to climb 200 feet in the air in all kinds of weather". Cellulosic Ethanol Plant Open in Wyoming -- "<i>it is now possible to economically convert discarded wood into a clean burning, sustainable alternate motor fuel</i>". Strategic energy delivery projects now abound world-wide, many involve Central Asia: Turkmenistan to export gas to South Asia -- "<i>the Turkmen president said the two sides are expected to start cooperating on economic issues, including the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India gas export pipeline project, known as Trans-Afghan project</i>".
<p>Family news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The abstinence-only lie -- "<i>the rise of abstinence-only education is part and parcel of a right-wing family values backlash that has attempted to roll back reproductive health choices for women</i>".
<p>Health news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Illness in America -- "<i>in any given year 26 percent of American adults suffer from mental disorders ...</i>" Schwarzenegger to press universal health insurance -- the program [<i>now voted down</i>] would have relied on tobacco taxes and fees on employers and hospitals for revenue but opposition grew after concerns were expressed by the state's budget agency. Wonder drug found: no more deaths due to acute radiation injury -- "<i>the experimental drug, known as Nanovector Trojan Horses (NTH) is based on a single-walled carbon nanotubes, hollow cylinders of pure carbon that are about as wide as</i>

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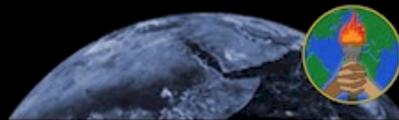


	<p>a strand of DNA."</p>
<p>Immigration news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Africa: <i>Police raid shelter for Zimbabwean refugees</i> -- "estimates of those who have gone south across the Limpopo [the border] <u>ange from one to three million</u>, but asylum is hard to obtain, many are exploited, and immigrants are blamed for the country's sky-high crime rate". • UK: <i>Compulsory ID cards for migrants in 2008</i> -- "this year we will deport more foreign prisoners than last year - and I am afraid we will build more detention centres to increase the numbers we remove". • <i>Divided views as US fence goes up</i> -- "... the US is a country that is <u>putting in place a border, but not yet a policy</u>".
<p>Justice news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [nothing significant to summarize -- see <i>News List</i>]
<p>Security news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoD [UK] to sell WiMax spectrum to buy ships -- "given budget constraints for the military in particular, the notion of investing a small amount in optimising their usage of existing spectrum, could mean they could sell enough of what is 'spare' ..." • 'Appalling Gap' Found in Homeland Defense Readiness -- "the U.S. military is not prepared to meet catastrophic threats at home, and it is suffering from an "appalling gap" in forces able to respond to chemical, biological and nuclear strikes on U.S. soil ..." Also: TSA tester slips mock bomb past airport security. • For the thoughtful ... Lessons from evolution applied to national security and other threats -- "Biological organisms have figured out millions of ways, over three and a half billion years of evolution, to keep themselves safe from a vast array of threats".
<p>Society news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suicides by US soldiers spike -- "according to the figures, more than <u>2,000</u> soldiers tried to take their own lives or injure themselves in <u>2006</u>, compared to about <u>375</u> in <u>2002</u>". • Clean elections no guarantee of strong democratic society, global study finds -- trappings of "democracy" are not enough -- "benefits offered by elections are often <u>undermined</u> by a lack of government accountability and the absence of strong anti-corruption mechanisms"; study of <u>55 countries</u>. • Tolerance leads to baby-eating ... When has multiculturalism worked? -- "...would eventually under a growing electorate of a Muslim population lead a Western nation to accept sharia and other barbaric practices such as infanticide..."
<p>Water news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water at the heart of Africa's development, says AfFDB [African Development Bank] president, -- improvement in water quality, necessarily hand-in-hand with sanitation, will lead to a quantum leap in health and social conditions. see: India (India's water shortage.)

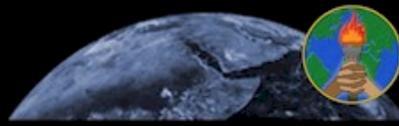
Challengers

<p>Brazil news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police strike sets "imminent danger" alert in Brazil – an upcoming police strike has made the government of Alagoas of northeastern Brazil to declare on [31 Jan 2008] a situation of "imminent danger" to public security in the state. • Rio Police Kill at Least 7 in Slum Raid -- "... were all bandits, all actively resisting". • Brazil unable to curb Amazon destruction: enviros -- "High commodity prices and increased land use elsewhere in Brazil are driving ranchers and farmers deeper into the Amazon ..." • Brazil goes after France's technology to build its first nuclear submarine -- "any
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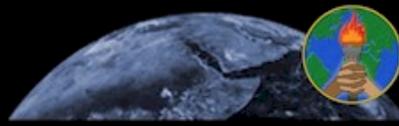


	<p>defense-related agreement that may eventually be signed with France must include the transfer of technology",</p>
<p>China news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China beats West in Africa [Analysis] -- Africa has a new friend: "<i>The EU, which had grown accustomed to getting what it wants from Africa, was fiercely rebuffed by the majority of African nations that refused the terms proposed by the European Commission.</i>" Also: Chinese go where western firms fear to tread -- "<i>this willingness to engage with regimes vilified in the west is one factor that has enabled the Chinese access to reserves that might otherwise have been unavailable</i>" • China's weapons exceed self-defence needs: US military -- "<i>the PLA appears engaged in a sustained effort to develop the capability to interdict, at long range, aircraft carrier and expeditionary strike groups that might deploy to the western Pacific</i>".
<p>India news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indian surgeon 'who stole 500 kidneys' hunted -- "<i>poor people, mostly illiterate labourers, were lured to a nondescript house and either bribed or forced into selling their kidneys for around £650</i>". Also: Kidney scam: Interpol issues warrants -- the kidney harvesting scam expands and now finds organized crime links. • CPI(ML) [Communists] out to grab political 'land' in state -- "<i>the party aims at attracting the disillusioned tribal communities, dalits [Outcastes] and other marginalised landless sections of society</i>". • India's water shortage -- "<i>we have depleted the ground water to such an extent that it is devastating the country</i>". • India, Bangladesh in border clash -- "<i>a heavy exchange of fire between Indian and Bangladeshi border guards lasting seven hours has killed a schoolboy and injured some soldiers ...</i>" • The North-East: Centre asks agencies to monitor 'Red Corridor' -- "<i>... the Centre [Federal government] has asked the intelligence agencies to closely monitor the growing network of the Maoists and their nexus with the militant outfits of the region</i>". • Gwadar creates Indo-Pak tension -- Gwadar, the deep-sea port on the Balochistan coast, 180 nautical miles from the Straits of Hormuz, built by China, gives new strategic leverage over vital shipping lanes, called elsewhere "<i>the world's energy jugular</i>".
<p>Indonesia news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mily commander apologizes for attack on police HQ -- "<i>two policemen were killed and three others injured in an attack by a group of soldiers of the Masohi Infantry Battalion 731, in Central Maluku District ...</i>" -- the clash was a "<i>misunderstanding</i>". [Comment: These misunderstandings between police and military are not uncommon.] • 'Jakarta could play a key role' -- International Crisis Group has suggested Indonesia would be ideal to host a multi-level approach to resolve the problem of Burma [Myanmar]..
<p>Iran news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A frail economy raises pressure on Iran's rulers -- "<i>the heating crisis in this oil-exporting nation is adding to Iranians' increasing awareness of the contrast between their growing influence abroad and frailty at home ...</i>" • West should back Iranians -- Baroness Gould of Potternewton, deputy speaker of the House of Lords, says the West is conscience-bound to close in on Iran's Mediaeval penal system [not play macro level games over uranium].



	<p>Egypt's Mubarak meets top Iranian official as ties improve -- "the main reason for the <u>decades-long</u> animosity is Egypt's peace treaty with Israel. Cairo also gave sanctuary to the deposed Shah of Iran, a move that angered Tehran". Also: Iran says it is close to restoring ties with Egypt -- "... Iran and Egypt are close to restoring full diplomatic relations, after severing political ties nearly <u>three decades</u> ago".</p>
<p>Russia news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russian peacekeepers start rotation in Sudan -- "the first team of Russian peacekeepers arrived in Sudan in April 2006. They will stay in the country for <u>five or six years</u> with regular rotation of the peacekeeping contingent". • Kremlin Denies Ballot Spot to Putin Opponent -- [with Katherine Harris now too expensive, the Kremlin has few options in its onwards march of guided democracy].
<p>Venezuela news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honduras joined the Venezuela-led Petrocaribe energy initiative on [28 Jan 2008] -- Honduras joins Venezuela-led energy security alliance. <i>"Hugo Chavez called on Nicaragua, Bolivia and Cuba to 'put together a common defense strategy' and create a military coalition to counter the US hegemony in the region" -- Chavez urges anti-US military alliance. Also: "If [the United States] messes with one of us, they are messing with all of us, because we will respond as one" -- Venezuela, Nicaragua Propose Joint Military Force for Latin America. [Comment: This proposal was met almost unanimously by the proposed allies with some embarrassment and declarations that they were all nations of peace.]</i> • Venezuela Ensures Food Security -- "facilities for imported basic products and revival of companies and farmers' markets in several cities joined the measures adopted by the Venezuelan Executive to guarantee food for the population". • Chavez border crackdown hits Venezuelans -- "the anti-contraband campaign enforced by stepped-up vehicle searches has coincided with Chavez' political spat with Colombian President Alvaro Uribe and is designed to combat [food] shortages in Venezuela". • Revealed: Chávez role in cocaine trail to Europe -- "the Venezuelan government lets FARC operate freely because they share the same left-wing, Bolivarian ideals, and because FARC bribes their people". • Ecuador, Venezuela to Build \$5 Billion Oil Refinery -- "... the refinery will initially process <u>Ecuadorean crude</u>, but when supplies are depleted, <u>Venezuelan crude</u> will be used. The facility will have the capacity to refine <u>300,000 barrels of oil daily</u>". • Rights group: Venezuela is basically democratic -- "there still is <u>significant political competition</u>, and indeed the best evidence of that was the fact that Chávez just lost his referendum".
<p>Wild Cards news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uzbek-U.S. relations warming -- "at the turn of the century, the United States was the <u>No. 1 partner</u> for Uzbekistan. Now it can return into the region as just <u>one player among many</u> -- joining Russia, China and the EU". • The EU is demanding Turkey lift its headscarf ban; but many secular Turks demand it stays: In Turkey, a Step to Allow Head Scarves -- "an overwhelming majority of Turks support lifting the ban in universities, but support becomes shakier for extending those freedoms to primary schools and high schools". Also: Turks Protest Plan to End Scarf Ban. • Gadaffi says AU [African Union] cannot handle conflicts -- "addressing the closing ceremony of the AU summit in Ethiopia, Gadaffi said the Kenyan crisis could have been dealt with much more quickly if the continent had a common Defence".

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see: **Diplomacy** (*What is the African Union? [Factbox]*)

see: **Venezuela** (*Chavez urges anti-US military alliance*)

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