

**GLOBAL CHALLENGES: THE WEEK IN REVIEW**

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

**Threat Summary**

	<p><b>Environment.</b> Deforestation in Brazil explodes; see Water for two disasters in the making.  <b>Inter-State Conflict.</b> Winning militarily in Iraq (<a href="#">rest of USG fails</a>), losing in Afghanistan  <b>Proliferation.</b> Pakistani nuclear staff goes missing.+</p>
	<p><b>Poverty.</b> IMF &amp; World Bank have undermined human rights world-wide. 3% of aid for farming.  <b>Infectious Disease.</b> 50% of anti-malaria medication in SEA is fake, from China. Yellow fever is back.  <b>Civil War.</b> Somalia, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Sudan, Myanmar, Kosovo, Kenya, Chad, East Timor.  <b>Genocide.</b> Darfur continues, as do 15+ other long-term genocides. Not in the news this week.  <b>Transnational Crime.</b> Euro one billion being laundered into USA each year. UK strikes hard.</p>
	<p><b>Other Atrocities.</b> UK special: African babies sold into slavery for \$10K. UN first on trafficking.  <b>Terrorism.</b> US extremists doing great deal of damage across USA in name of abortion/Earth.</p>

**Policy Summary**

	<p><b>Diplomacy.</b> Ahmadinejad condemns WWII legacy structure. US Navy expanding across Africa.  <b>Security.</b> Americans lose more civil liberties as Pentagon plans to shoot down toxic satellite.  <b>Society.</b> Crystal meth rocks in UK. Another US university massacre as sheep fail to “rush &amp; crush.”  <b>Water.</b> Do not break-down in water. Bacteria, borders, Lake Mead drying up—all bad, no policy.</p>
	<p><b>Economy.</b> Mortgage crisis spreads into prime, vehicles. Politicians not being held accountable.  <b>Education.</b> Voter’s guide—along with observation that 91% of funding comes from state &amp; local.  <b>Energy.</b> \$10 billion pledged by investors in US. US sees green nuclear. Cellulosic ethanol vs. corn.  <b>Health.</b> Obesity must be treated as with climate change. Marijuana down-grade—release the millions?  <b>Immigration.</b> Asians in UK lay claim to 40-50 seats in Parliament. Mexico wants doors in the wall.</p>
	<p><b>Agriculture.</b> UK concealing locations of GM crops from EUR. Brazil authorized.  <b>Family.</b> New Jersey gay unions say civil unions do not offer legal protections of marriage.  <b>Justice.</b> In both the UK and the US, “justice” takes a back-seat to libertine totalitarianism.</p>

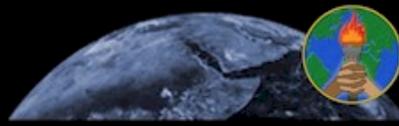
**Major Player Summary**

	<p><b>Brazil.</b> Brazil and France cut big arms deal—US continues to lose ground in South America.  <b>China.</b> Panchen Lama to become youngest Chinese minister, a prisoner since the age of six.  <b>India.</b> Multinational naval cooperation called for in Indian Ocean. Nuclear deal with Russia.  <b>Indonesia.</b> Valentine Day celebrations ruled illegal. 30-year old armament platforms grounded.  <b>Iran.</b> Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) likely to welcome Iran, Tajikistan opines.  <b>Russia.</b> Armed forces more mobile and ready. Liberalization of economy? Nuclear threat to Ukraine.  <b>Venezuela.</b> Threatens to half oil sales to US. Could seize Nestle assets. Paramilitary under cover.  <b>Wild Cards.</b> South African emergency from power outages. Sunni-Shi’ite World War is ON.</p>
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**World Crises - monthly assessment by [International Crisis Group](#) - 01 February 2008**

↗	<b>Alert:</b> Chad, Kenya, Lebanon, Pakistan
↓	<b>Deteriorated:</b> Chad, Kenya, Lebanon, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Yemen, Zimbabwe
↑	<b>Improved:</b> DR Congo
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Unchanged:</b> 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</li> </ul>

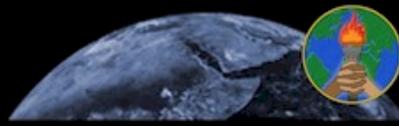
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**Threats** see *daily items with links to full stories on the web at* [PDB-Threats](#)

<p><b>Poverty</b>  <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The United Nations International Fund for Agricultural Development stresses the need for greater <i>aid</i> investment in <i>farming</i>; "currently, only <u>3%</u> of all international aid is directed toward farming" -- <i>U.N. Calls For Increased Agriculture Investment For Rural Poor</i>.</li> <li>"...the <i>structural adjustment</i> programs of the <i>IMF</i> and <i>World Bank</i> have led to an undermining of respect for most types of <i>human rights</i> in the <i>developing world</i>" -- <i>Book links economic policy, human rights [book review]</i>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Infectious Disease</b>  <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<p>↓ <i>Malaria</i>: It kills <u>900,000</u> a year in <i>Africa</i> alone; "we applaud the scientific work, but the big question is how best to <i>deploy</i> those resources; how they will <i>impact usefully</i> on real people here in the real world" -- <i>Trial and error - the war on malaria</i>.</p> <p>"Each year [world-wide], an estimated <u>200,000</u> people contract <i>yellow fever</i> and of those, about <u>30,000</u> die" -- <i>Paraguay declares state of emergency over yellow fever</i>.</p> <p>An undercover investigation found <u>50%</u> of an <i>anti-malaria medication</i> in <i>SE Asia</i> to be <i>fake</i>; forensic work eventually led to criminals in southern <i>China</i> -- <i>Chinese Gang Peddling Fake Anti-malaria Pills Busted</i>.</p>
<p><b>Environment</b>  <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<p>↓ Illegal trade in <i>jungle timbers</i> is big (criminal) business: <i>Brazil's deforestation laws a flop</i> -- "... <i>satellite images</i> revealed that deforestation had exploded late last year in areas that regulators thought were under control".</p> <p>see: <b>Water</b> (Chemicals in our waters are affecting humans and aquatic life in unanticipated ways)</p> <p>see: <b>Water</b> (Lake Mead could be dry by 2021)</p>
<p><b>Inter-State Conflict</b>  <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Attacks in Baghdad fall 80 percent: Iraq military</i> -- "Lt-Gen Abboud <i>Qanbar</i> said the success of a year-long clampdown named '<i>Operation Imposing Law</i>' had reined in the savage violence between majority <i>Shi'ites</i> and minority <i>Sunni</i> Arabs dominant under Saddam Hussein."</li> <li><i>Defeat a "real possibility" in Afghanistan</i> -- "Breaking up the <i>Taliban</i> by winning over the <i>moderates</i> is a far better route to success than <i>bombing</i> and <i>body counts</i>" .[Comment: Throughout history "outsiders" have always eventually had to <i>retreat</i> from Afghanistan.]</li> </ul>
<p><b>Civil War</b>  <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<p>↓ [Note: 'Civil War' here includes <i>intra-state instability</i>.]</p> <p><i>Somalia</i> is still far from <i>secure</i>: <i>Somali leader unhurt in mortar attack on residence</i> - - "<i>Al-Shabab</i>, which is linked to <i>al Qaeda</i>, was responsible for this attack targeting the president".</p> <p><i>Zimbabwe ruling party expels Mugabe challenger</i> -- "It's about his <i>attitude</i> to the party and to the president, which he has shown and he is being expelled for that."</p> <p><i>Ugandan LRA rebels 'on the move'</i> -- Hundreds of <i>Ugandan</i> rebels have left an <i>assembly point</i> on the border with <i>Sudan</i> and the <i>DR Congo</i> heading towards the <i>Central African Republic</i>.</p> <p><i>Activists flee Myanmar crackdown to Thailand</i> -- "They will not stop," said one 36-year-old former <i>political prisoner</i> who arrived in the Thai border town of Mae Sot on January 1 after three months in hiding in Yangon.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>KOSOVO</b></p> <p><i>"Independent Kosovo: Day One"</i> -- "<i>Kosovo Albanians</i> need the respectability that a smooth transition will gain their nascent state ... Simply put, such a script could be:</p>

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'We disagree on the **status**, but we agree not to fight about it'." *Scenarios for Kosovo after independence [Factbox]* -- "... ending a long chapter in the bloody breakup of **Yugoslavia** but cementing a bitter **ethnic frontline** in the **Balkans**". *Profile of disputed Kosovo [Factbox]*

**KENYA**

'**Secret army**' preparing for war in **Kenya** -- "**elders** have organised thousands of men from the pro-opposition **Kalenjin tribe** into **militia units** ...". *Kenyans to review disputed poll* -- "**the independent panel**, including Kenyan and non-Kenyan experts, will investigate 'all aspects' of the disputed election". *Signs in Kenya of a land redrawn by ethnicity* -- "**Luos** have gone back to **Luo land**, **Kikuyus** to **Kikuyu land**, **Kambas** to **Kamba land** and **Kisiis** to **Kisii land**. Even some of the packed slums in the capital, **Nairobi**, have split along ethnic lines".

**CHAD**

*France says transported munitions to Chad army* -- "French media had reported that French forces flew **tank shells** from **Libya** to supply Chadian government **tanks** defending the **presidential palace** against a February 2-3 **rebel assault**". *Chad imposes state of emergency to combat rebels* -- "these are exceptional measures which I must take to assure the normal functioning of the state". *Chad army instils fear as emergency declared* -- "[many residents] complain **soldiers** are already taking advantage of a security crackdown to **loot homes**".

**EAST TIMOR**

*Australia beefs up garrison in Timor* -- "**an Australian warship** also arrived off the **Dili coast** [12 Feb 2008] to support the first of 200 **fast reaction troops** sent to reinforce **international security forces** ..."

*State of emergency extended in East Timor* -- "East Timor's **prosecutor-general** said earlier on Wednesday that he would issue **arrest warrants** for 18 people believed to be involved in **assassination** attempts on the **president** and **prime minister**".

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

• [nothing significant to summarize -- see *News List*]

**Other Atrocities**  
[news list|forecast](#)

↓ *African babies being sold into slavery in UK for up to \$10,000* -- "an estimated 500 African children a year — many of them babies — are being trafficked into the UK where they end up working as virtual slaves [for ethnic African families] ..."

*UN seeks human trafficking action* -- the **FIRST international United Nations conference** on the growing problem of **human trafficking** starts tomorrow in Vienna -- "the hidden crime of globalisation".

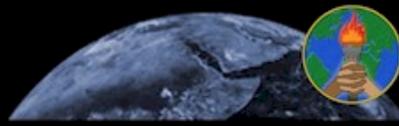
*UNAMID Troops' obligation to apprehend ICC suspects in Darfur* -- the legal basis of future **War Crimes prosecutions** in **Sudan**.

*Castro denies Cubans tortured prisoners* -- **McCain** has said that while he was held in **Hanoi**, a **Cuban** agent came to show his **Vietnamese** captors "**some new interrogation techniques**". *Vietnam denies McCain Cuban torture claim* "no Cubans ever came to the **prison** while the **US pilots** were there".

*Sanctions on child soldier recruiters debated at UN, some accused question report's fairness* -- **deep vested national interests** block any significant **consensus** on action against recruitment of child soldiers.

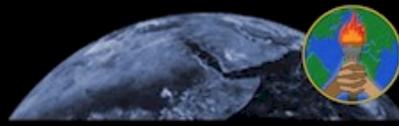
*Ex-Congo warlord Ngudjolo appears in Hague court* -- "Ngudjolo ... was the head of the **Front of Nationalists and Integrationists (FPI) militia** during a conflict in northeast **Ituri Province** that grew out of Congo's 1998-2003 war".

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	<p><b>Colombia:</b> <i>"The rebel tells that the security guards have even come to kill his companions and make it happen in many cases by <b>drug overdose or hanging</b>" -- <b>Concentration camps and torture.</b></i></p> <p><b>Pinochet officers to be tried in absentia</b> -- "... over the <b>disappearance</b> of four French or French-Chilean nationals in <b>Chile</b> during the rule of dictator Augusto Pinochet ..."</p>
<p><b>Proliferation</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Pakistan nuclear staff go missing</b> -- [a fright for some, but it is unlikely the "technicians" have "<b>nuclear</b>" <b>knowhow</b> as such.]</li> </ul>
<p><b>Terrorism</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ambiguities arise in Spain's alleged terror plot</b> -- "More than two weeks later, however, the story seems ambiguous. Investigators found only a trace of <b>explosives</b>. No plot was detected in <b>France</b> .... Leaders of the <b>Pakistani</b> community in Barcelona say they were unfairly targeted" ..</li> <li>• <b>German fears over al Qaeda activity</b> -- "al Qaeda has identified Germany as <u>one of the weakest links in Afghanistan</u>".</li> <li>• <b>Three arrested for plot to kill Mohamed cartoonist</b> -- "Two <b>Tunisians</b> and a Danish man were arrested before dawn in Aarhus, <b>Denmark's</b> second city and the home of the newspaper".</li> <li>• <b>Australia's biggest terrorism trial starts</b> -- "... with 12 <b>Muslim men</b> charged with being members of an unnamed <b>terrorist organization</b> planning violent <b>jihad</b> to force Australia to withdraw its troops from <b>Iraq</b>".</li> <li>• <b>U.S. agencies warn of female suicide bombers</b> -- "... female suicide bombers may have an advantage over their male counterparts in accessing targets.... [also] women can hide <b>explosives</b> in <b>prosthetic devices</b> that mimic the look of <b>pregnancy</b>".</li> <li>• <b>Profile of the female suicide terrorist</b> -- "In <u>1991</u> a female suicide bomber killed herself and former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv <b>Gandhi</b>. Since then similar bombings have occurred in <b>Turkey, Pakistan, Israel, Uzbekistan, and Iraq</b>".</li> <li>• <b>Local intelligence key to defeat al-Qaida</b> -- "Army Brig. Gen. Raymond <b>Thomas</b>, deputy commander of Multi-National Division-North says <b>human intelligence</b> from Iraqi soldiers and police along with local Iraqis is playing a crucial factor in Mosul ..."</li> <li>• <b>Damage from U.S. extremists a concern</b> -- "... <b>domestic extremists</b> who commit violence in the name of their <b>cause</b> -- <b>abortion</b> or the <b>environment</b>, for example -- account for most of the damage from such incidents in this country".</li> </ul>
<p><b>Transnational Crime</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Huge drug euro laundering scheme found</b> -- "... the total coming through <b>U.S. airports</b> could reach <u>1 billion Euros a year</u>, or about <u>\$1.4 billion</u> at current exchange rates."</li> <li>• <b>UK: Dawn raids smash £100 million cocaine empire</b> -- "the gang included <b>British, Israeli, Iraqi, Egyptian and Irish</b> nationals ..."; up to <u>£4 million a week</u> was generated by <b>drug dealing</b>.</li> <li>• <b>U.S. freezes assets of Colombian militia boss</b> -- "he is accused of breaking the deal by <u>directing drug-running operations from his jail cell</u>".</li> <li>• <b>Terrorism and drug business: drug smuggling as main source of PKK terrorism</b> -- "it did not take too long for the <b>PKK</b> militants to notice how a 'lucky position' they had to control <b>drug trafficking</b> <u>between the East and the West</u>".</li> </ul>
<p><b>Policy</b> <span style="float: right;">see <b>daily</b> items with <b>links to full stories</b> on the web at <b>PDB-Policy</b></span></p>	
<p><b>Agriculture</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>British GM crops may be held in secret, ministry says</b> -- "the locations where <b>GM</b></li> </ul>

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news list|forecast

crops are planted must be published under **European laws**, but Britain's environment ministry said it is considering requests to keep some details private".

**Brazil authorises GM crops** -- one of the varieties authorised, **Monsanto's pest-resistant corn MON 810**, was banned by **France** a week ago.

see: **Poverty (U.N. Calls For Increased Agriculture Investment For Rural Poor)**

**Diplomacy**

news list|forecast

• **U.S. Navy gives Gambia maritime security** -- "... the installation was part of a plan that would see 15 African nations get similar [**Maritime Domain Awareness**] systems by the end of March".

**Ahmadinejad: UN structure WWII legacy** -- "as this structure is based on **injustice** and **discrimination**, the **UN and Security Council** are not able to address the main problems of the world ..."

**Economy**

news list|forecast

↓ **It's an election, not a revolution** -- "**democracy** is not nearly as good at holding **politicians accountable** for their **economic promises** or translating the preferences of intellectuals into **public policy**". [Same trough: different pigs?]

**Bush signs economic stimulus package** -- called **stimulus** by the Administration, called a disastrous misunderstanding of **underlying economic problems** by others.

**Mortgage crisis spreads past subprime loans** -- "the rise in **prime delinquencies**, while less severe than the one in the subprime market, nonetheless poses a threat to the battered **housing market** and **weakening economy** ..."

**Education**

news list|forecast

• **A voter's guide to education** -- "Most **education policy**, as well as roughly 91% of the funding, comes from the **state and local level**.... Here are four **K-12 issues** in which the next President could make a difference ..."

**Energy**

news list|forecast

• **Investors pledge \$10 billion for renewable energy** -- "U.S. **institutional investors** [such as California Public Employees' Retirement System] pledged at a **U.N. summit** on [14 Feb 2008] to invest \$10 billion over two years in technologies that aim to reduce **greenhouse gas emissions** ..."

**Ethanol revolution links agriculture, energy sectors in new model** -- **corn** and **oil** are linked as never before: but "**Cellulosic ethanol** - derived from **grasses, waste materials and agricultural residues** - has potential to be more efficient than ethanol from corn grain".

**U.S. on offensive to secure energy supplies** -- "... **U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice** said Wednesday that she will appoint a **special envoy for energy issues** to deal with countries that use their **oil and gas for political means**".

**In the US, nuclear power is becoming the new green** -- [Already 20% of **US electricity** is nuclear; **nuclear waste** is an intractable problem but so is coal's **emission** problem and **clean coal** remains as much a fantasy as **clean nuclear**.]

**Kazakhstan announces new energy directions** -- "... Kazakhstan seeks to assert itself as strongly as possible as a **pro-active player in Central Eurasian energy** ..."

**Putin: NATO energy policy unfriendly** -- "He was particularly referring to recent **US efforts to develop energy pipelines from ex-Soviet Central Asia and the Caspian region, bypassing Russia**."

**China wants in IPI pipeline as India holds out over Pakistan dispute** -- China seems to guarantee **Iran** will have a market for its **gas**, despite **US** objections.

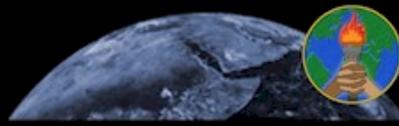
**Energy policy is foreign policy** -- **UPI** looks at some aspects of the new reality -- **Energy policy IS Foreign policy**.

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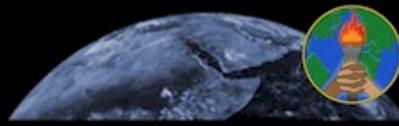
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	<p><i>Turkey to become key energy player with Iran: expert</i> -- "<u>Only Iran</u> can balance <b>Russia's</b> dominance in supplying natural gas to <b>European markets</b> and Iran can only carry its reserves to Europe through <b>Turkey</b> ...".</p>
<p><b>Family</b> news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Report finds problems with NJ gay unions</i> -- "the activists say civil unions, <u>in practice</u>, do not offer the <b>legal protections</b> that <b>marriage</b> does. The commission largely agreed with them".</li> </ul>
<p><b>Health</b> news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Obesity 'is challenge for world</i> -- "Obesity must be treated in the same way as <b>climate change</b> if the world is to avoid a <b>global health disaster</b> ..." [Comment: The 1960's solution 'Eat the Rich!' again suggests itself:]</li> <li>• <i>F.D.A. broke its rules by not inspecting Chinese plant with problem drug</i> -- "... violated its own policies when it approved for sale a crucial <b>blood-thinning drug</b> without first inspecting a Chinese plant ..."</li> <li>• <i>Bush proposes linking the Medicare drug premium to beneficiaries' income</i> -- [Baulking at anything resembling <b>Universal health-care</b>, the Administration continues to fiddle around the edges.]</li> <li>• <i>US doctors group backs marijuana for medical uses</i> -- the <b>American College of Physicians</b> urges the U.S. government to <u>roll back</u> a <b>prohibition</b> on using it to treat patients and to support studies into its medical applications.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Immigration</b> news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>A Mexican view of U.S. immigration debate</i> -- interview with former <b>Mexican Foreign Minister Jorge Castañeda</b>; <b>legalization</b> and <b>temporary worker program</b> are two interconnected necessities; if you build a <b>wall</b>, it <u>should have doors</u>.</li> <li>• <i>'Britain cannot upset Asian community on immigration'</i> -- "we can elect 40 to 50 members of <b>parliament</b> from several <b>inner cities</b>... They cannot afford to go wrong".</li> </ul>
<p><b>Justice</b> news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>These catch-all terror laws are killing off British justice</i> -- "...the <b>Court of Appeal</b> handed down two trenchant verdicts in an attempt to inject common sense into nonsensical terror laws. One implicitly demanded an <b>apology</b> and <b>compensation</b> ...".</li> <li>• <i>Justice official defends rough CIA interrogations</i> -- "to say that this is not severe physical suffering -- is not <b>torture</b> -- is absurd. And to invoke the defense that what the <b>Spanish Inquisition</b> did was worse and that we use a more benign, non-torture form of <b>waterboarding</b> . . . is <b>obscene</b>" says a critic.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Security</b> news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Pentagon plans to shoot down disabled satellite</i> -- "... the <b>satellite</b> could release much of the more than 1,000 pounds (454 kg) of <b>hydrazine</b> fuel as a <b>toxic gas</b> ..." But the <b>Russian defence ministry</b> says "the decision to destroy the American satellite does not look harmless as they try to claim" -- <i>US spy satellite plan 'a cover'</i>.</li> <li>• <i>Senate authorizes broad expansion of surveillance act</i> -- expansion of government <b>clandestine surveillance powers</b> and <b>immunity</b> for <b>disclosures</b> by <b>telecommunications enterprises</b>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Society</b> news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What's Changed Since Va. Tech Massacre?</i> -- [All about <b>response</b>, not <b>prevention</b>.]</li> <li>• <i>Arab TV broadcasters face curbs</i> -- "the only country to refuse to endorse the charter was <b>Qatar</b>, the home of leading satellite station <b>al-Jazeera</b>".</li> <li>• <i>Interracial couples still misunderstood by families, society</i> -- "in the <u>1967</u> Supreme Court case <i>Loving v. Virginia</i>, <b>antimiscegenation</b> laws were declared <b>unconstitutional</b>".</li> <li>• <i>Use of crystal meth drug growing fast</i> -- "use of the drug <b>Crystal meth</b> is growing fast in <b>Britain</b> and could become as widespread as <b>crack cocaine</b> in just four years."</li> <li>• It's all about <b>Skills</b>: <i>Number of senior citizens in workforce rapidly climbing, says</i></li> </ul>

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*new report* -- "*The U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging plans to hold a hearing in the spring on what the federal government can do to **engage** and **retain older workers***".

*RSF warns of dangers to **journalists*** -- "*the situation is bad in all the countries of Central Asia, according to **Reporters Without Borders***".

*Is **secularism anti-American?*** -- a sensible essay on '*secularism*' as an over-used and misused term -- secularism guarantees **freedom of religion**, something *religious extremists* do not.

**Water**  
 news list|forecast

- ***Chemicals in our waters are affecting humans and aquatic life in unanticipated ways*** -- "... of the 30,000 or so **chemicals** used commercially in the **United States and Canada**, about **400** resist breaking down in the environment and can accumulate in fish and wildlife".

A series by Yomiuri Shimbun – **Japan**:

*Water - the coming crisis: Stripping lawns saves 68 bil. liters of water*

*Water - the coming crisis: Food production takes hidden toll on water*

*Water - the coming crisis: Desertification, floods 2 sides of warming*

*Water - the coming crisis: How much water do you use each day?* -- "*The U.S. family used 62% for taking **baths and showers**. The **Kenyan** family used one-third of their water for **direct consumption** by mouth*".

***Border water shortage causes conflict*** -- "*the roots of the **Texas-Mexican water dispute** go back to the 1944 Mexican Water Treaty, which determined how water from the **Colorado, Tijuana and Rio Grande** drainage basins would be divided between Texas and Mexico*".

***Bacteria and nanofilters - the future of clean water technology*** -- "*by using **bioremediation** the **membranes** can be cleaned within the closed system, without removing the membranes*". [Effectively "self-cleaning" filters.]

***Lake Mead could be dry by 2021*** -- "*there is a 50% chance Lake Mead, a key source of water for millions of people in the **southwestern US**, will be dry by 2021 if **climate** changes as expected and future **water usage** is not curtailed ...*".

see: **India** (Two billion face water famine as **Himalayan glaciers** melt)

**Challengers**

**Brazil**  
 news list|forecast

- ***In jungle meet, Brazil, France seek big arms deal*** -- "*the deal would be part of a wider '**strategic alliance**'...*"

see: **Environment** (Brazil's deforestation laws a flop)

**China**  
 news list|forecast

- ***Panchen Lama to become youngest China minister - sources*** -- a prisoner of the Chinese since he was six ...

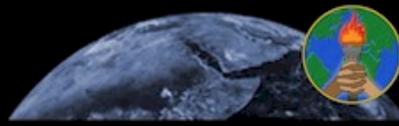
**India**  
 news list|forecast

- ***'Better cooperation among navies of Indian Ocean required'*** -- "a growing percentage of the world's large **merchant ships** and **bulk carrier ships** fly an **Asian** flag. This expansion in trade and economic growth dictates the need to ensure the **safety and security of the sea-lanes**".

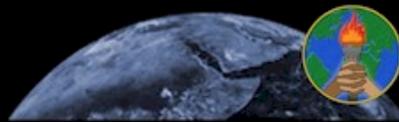
***Russia-India arms [part 1]*** -- "*perhaps it would be appropriate to say that the two countries are restoring old contacts. True, they did not sever these contacts in the 1990s, but their nature changed a great deal*".

***Maoists unleash new terror in the 'heart of India'*** -- [brief overview of **Naxalite** actions.]

↓ deteriorated	• steady	↑ improved	↗ ALERT
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	<p><i><b>Russia, India edge closer to major nuclear deal</b></i> -- "... a multi-billion dollar nuclear deal to build <u>four more reactors in southern India</u> ...".</p> <p><i><b>Two billion face water famine as Himalayan glaciers melt</b></i> -- warming is being accelerated by the "<b>Asian brown cloud</b>", a pea soup of <b>dust</b> and <b>soot</b> from <b>coal</b> and <b>firewood</b>, threatening the lives of over <u>2 billion</u> who depend on the <b>Brahmaputra</b> and <b>Indus</b> river systems.</p>
<p><b>Indonesia</b> news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i><b>Indonesian Muslim authorities rule Valentine celebrations illegal</b></i> -- recent minor yet increasing actions against <b>foreign influences</b> in both Indonesia and <b>Malaysia</b> may indicate a <u>deeper beleaguered Muslim sentiment</u>.</li> <li>• <i><b>Ex-Garuda boss jailed over murder</b></i> -- "an Indonesian court has sentenced the former boss of the <b>national airline</b> to <u>one year</u> in jail for his part in the murder of a prominent <b>rights activist</b>".</li> <li>• <i><b>Indonesia grounds aging mily armaments</b></i> -- "... the Indonesian Defense Forces (TNI) will soon put to rest a number of its <b>obsolete main armaments</b>, including <b>planes, ships and helicopters</b> aged more than <u>30 years</u>".</li> </ul>
<p><b>Iran</b> news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i><b>Tajikistan considers that Iran could become full member of SCO gradually</b></i> -- "emphasizing the importance of <b>expansion</b> of cooperation of member nations of the <b>Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)</b> ... the Tajik side confirmed its readiness to discuss this issue with other member nations of SCO ..."</li> </ul>
<p><b>Russia</b> news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i><b>Medvedev unveils economic programme</b></i> -- "in a rare sign he [PM-apparent Dmitry Medvedev] might pursue a more <u>liberal agenda</u> than Mr <b>Putin</b>, he called for a reduction in the number of <b>state officials</b> on the boards of some of Russia's biggest corporations".</li> <li>• <i><b>Russian Armed Forces more mobile, combat ready - Putin</b></i> -- "... a new long-term program of military development until 2020 taking into account <b>modern challenges</b> and threats to Russia's <b>national interests</b>".</li> <li>• <i><b>Putin issues nuclear threat to Ukraine over plan to host US shield</b></i> -- "Moscow would <u>regrettably</u> be forced to <u>redirect its missiles</u> at its post-Soviet neighbour, he said, if Ukraine went ahead with its plan to join <b>NATO</b> and allowed <b>US infrastructure</b> on its territory".</li> </ul>
<p><b>Venezuela</b> news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i><b>Chavez threatens to halt Venezuela's oil sales to U.S.</b></i> -- "If you end up <b>freezing</b> [Venezuelan <b>assets</b>] and it harms us, we're going to harm you". <b>Chavez's big oil bluff</b> -- "peevied by <b>Exxon's</b> legal victory, Venezuela's President is threatening to end oil exports to the U.S.— a move that would probably backfire".</li> <li>• <i><b>Chávez reports plan to infiltrate paramilitary into Venezuela</b></i> -- "there are paramilitary in Caracas, but they are not wearing uniform or carrying rifles, but they are doing their job in <b>low-income neighborhoods</b>"</li> <li>• <i><b>Venezuela says it could seize Nestle, Parmalat assets, AFP says</b></i> -- Chavez said the country is facing an "<b>economic conspiracy</b>".</li> </ul>
<p><b>Wild Cards</b> news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i><b>Bomb kills 37 on last day of Pakistan vote campaign</b></i> -- "... took place in the town of Parachinar in the Kurram region on the <b>Afghan border</b> which has seen bloody sectarian clashes between majority <b>Sunni Muslim militants</b> and minority <b>Shi'ites</b> ..."</li> <li>• <i><b>100 miscreants surrender in Swat, presented before media</b></i> -- "the surrendered miscreants were later released on three personal <b>surety bonds</b> and Chairman Peace Committee. They pledged to work for the maintenance of <b>public order</b> in the district."</li> <li>• <i><b>Pakistani militants teaming up, officials say</b></i> -- "compared with previous insurgent</li> </ul>



groups, the *newcomers* are *well-armed, ideological and difficult to control, with fewer allegiances to local religious and tribal leaders and structures*".

*South Africa's power outages create national emergency* -- "... the country may have already entered it's *Peak Oil 'Long Emergency'*".

*Azerbaijan, stuck between US and Iran* -- "... the *Middle East* gets most of the ink. But it is here along the gloomy shores of the *Caspian Sea* that one of the most vital global contests -- for *energy, money and political dominion* -- is being waged between *East and West*."

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