

**GLOBAL CHALLENGES: THE WEEK IN REVIEW**

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

**Threat Summary**

	<b>Environment.</b> Chevron externalized \$7-16 billion in damage to Ecuador. Soil science moves ahead.
	<b>Inter-State Conflict.</b> Editor: déjà vu from Viet-Nam: “we’re winning, stay the course, not so many.”
	<b>Proliferation.</b> Dick Cheney fought it, but Chemical Weapons Convention now seen as a success.
	<b>Poverty.</b> Biblical catastrophe in the making at nexus of water, energy, and food, all in short supply.
	<b>Infectious Disease.</b> Computer models help study and forecast pandemics.
	<b>Civil War.</b> Mugabe concedes in Zimbabwe. Bangladesh 2 <sup>nd</sup> -largest Moslem country. Nepal curfew.
	<b>Genocide.</b> Tibet makes headlines around world, Olympic torch blocked from reaching Beijing.
	<b>Transnational Crime.</b> Mexican drug lords move into human smuggling. Editor: US border is not.
	<b>Other Atrocities.</b> Human trafficking and human atrocities more and more visible to the world.
	<b>Terrorism.</b> US IC hypes terrorism, ignores other high-level threats. <b>\$60+ B</b> for the <b>4% they can steal.</b>

**Policy Summary**

	<b>Diplomacy.</b> Tony Blair tries God, peace lobby not impressed. Editor: Blair complicit in Iraq lies.
	<b>Economy.</b> Retailers hurting, customers not shopping. US firms increase price/profit to match imports.
	<b>Security.</b> Crime in Caribbean, military waste money on cyborg insects, GAO blasts weapons budget.
	<b>Society.</b> Saudi king launches war on his own people. US Christians want a <i>good</i> president.
	<b>Water.</b> 9,100 liters of water to produce one litre of biodiesel. <a href="#">Israel denies long-term water theft.</a>
	<b>Agriculture.</b> Indonesia masters Rice Intensification. Killer wheat fungus leaps across Red Sea.
	<b>Education.</b> UK teachers strike. Student loan “nodoc” scandal. Race to the bottom in Arizona.
	<b>Energy.</b> Beating up Energy executives (even if they are guilty as sin) is not an energy policy.
	<b>Health.</b> Firefighting used to be privatized; it did not work. Public Health must become a public good.
	<b>Immigration.</b> San Francisco embraces illegal immigrants. Editor: meanwhile, <a href="#">Absolute redraws map.</a>
	<b>Family.</b> Editor: Children are opting out of rote memorization while drugs are billed as the answer.
	<b>Justice.</b> United Nations: the criminal justice system not caught up with social science—crisis looms.

**Major Player Summary**

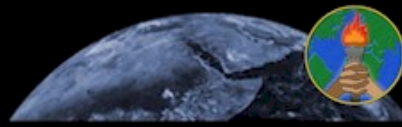
	<b>Brazil.</b> Methane harvest from municipal dump, could be a quarter of the company’s revenue.
	<b>China.</b> Unconventional long-term spy caught in US, network of quasi-legal observers in good health.
	<b>India.</b> Railway expansion into Kashmir. Central Reserve Police Force learning counter-insurgency.
	<b>Indonesia.</b> Could consider Muslim troops for southern Afghanistan, along with Malaysia.
	<b>Iran.</b> US Secretary of Defense continues to place onus for resolution on US Department of State.
	<b>Russia.</b> Putin bids supply route from NATO to Afghanistan. Painful loss of graft for Pakistan.
	<b>Venezuela.</b> Cement industry nationalized. \$300M offered to Colombian rebels denied.
	<b>Wild Cards.</b> Cultural and political fault lines undermine US progress in Pakistan.

**World Crises - monthly assessment by [International Crisis Group](#) - 01 March 2008**

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

**ISSUE** This marks an issue that is presently without a wise or obvious solution.

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

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

↓ Week-by-week isolated incidents of unrest are building into a broader picture of biblical proportions ...

In *Africa*, **food protests** and **riots** have already been seen in **Cameroon, Cote D'Ivoire, Mauritania, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Egypt** and elsewhere governments struggle to head off price increases of up to 300% in staples such as **rice** -- *Hike in world prices sparks deadly riots in Africa.*

*Four killed as Haitians riot over prices* -- "**food prices in Haiti, the poorest country in the Americas, have soared in recent months** ...."

*Government calls in troops to deliver rice* -- "*the Philippines drafted in troops [03 Apr 2008] to deliver rice to poor neighbourhoods in the capital Manila, amid worries about shortages and possible unrest sparked by soaring prices for the diet staple*". Also: *Philippine rice hoarders face possible jail for life* -- "evidence was being gathered against **unscrupulous traders, who would be charged with "economic sabotage", which is punishable by life imprisonment** ... "

The "world situation" is just a sum of individual cases, each a restatement of the only issue in town -- the **food - energy - water nexus**...

*Water, wheat, and oil are in short supply* -- "**underground water levels in Saudi Arabia are dropping by at least 16 feet a year in areas of "heavy" cultivation**".

*World Bank: Zoellick calls for coordinated effort to cope with rising food prices* -- "**Zoellick's international 'New Deal' would combine food aid with a global trade agreement to lower tariffs and help farmers in developing countries gain access to markets**". [Comment: One sub-text here is that the "efficiencies" of "**globalization**" has all but destroyed local **agricultural economies** in poorer countries.]

see: **India** (*India limits rice exports to boost local stocks*)

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

• [US] *New model allows prediction of pandemics* -- "**These virtual citizens move around much as their counterparts do, allowing researchers to track through time and space the potential progression of infectious diseases such as pandemic influenza.**"

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

• -- "... **the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has significantly underestimated the technological challenges of reducing CO2 emissions**" says a heavyweight expert panel.

*Report says Chevron owes billions for Ecuadorean pollution* -- "**an independent environmental expert told a court in Ecuador that the oil company Chevron should pay \$7 billion to \$16 billion in compensation for environmental damage in the country**".

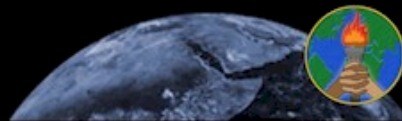
A team from **Newcastle University [UK]** aims to design soils that -- [briefly ] -- would allow an extensive ecosystem to transform **carbon dioxide** into inert **chalky soil** -- *What lies beneath.*

*What is the Kyoto Protocol?* [Factbox]

*Bangkok climate talks end in agreement* -- Despite the headline, "**UN-sponsored climate change talks wound up [04 Apr 2008] with a work programme for the Bali Action Plan after a heated debate between developing and developed countries on the schedule** ..."

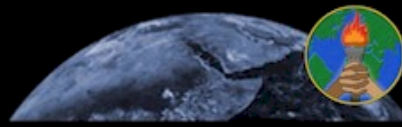
*Carbon Dioxide emission reduction assumptions overly optimistic, study says*

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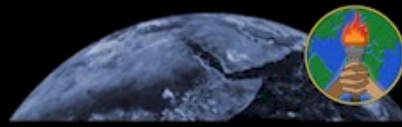
	<p><b>Climate change</b> is now officially a <b>human rights issue</b>, as the <b>UN Human Rights Council</b> on [28Mar 2008] passed a resolution on the subject: <i>"It is time to highlight the human face of climate change"</i> -- <a href="#">Climate change now a UN human rights issue</a>.  <i>see: Brazil ('Green' trash dump in Brazil on a road to revenue)</i></p>
<p><b>Inter-State Conflict</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [nothing significant to summarize -- see <i>News List</i>]</li> </ul>
<p><b>Civil War</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<p>↓ <i>Note: 'Civil War' here includes <b>internal instability</b>.</i></p> <p><a href="#">Mugabe concedes defeat - report</a> -- "Mugabe has conceded to his closest advisers, the army, police and intelligence chiefs. He has also told his family and personal advisers that he has lost the <b>election</b>". [Comment: But the <b>Zimbabwe</b> election issue is far from resolved, with a <b>run-off election</b> now one possible outcome.]</p> <p>A backgrounder: <a href="#">Dhaka's military rulers</a> -- "World's <u>second largest Moslem populated country</u> <b>Bangladesh's</b> capital Dhaka is under <b>military backed government</b> since [11 January 2007]".</p> <p><a href="#">Curfew in western Nepal town after pre-election violence</a> -- "the violence erupted between supporters of Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala's <b>Nepali Congress Party</b> and the <b>Maoist former rebels</b> in the town of Dadeldhura ..."</p>
<p><b>Genocide</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [nothing significant to summarize -- see <i>News List</i>]</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other Atrocities</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<p>↓ <b>MALAYSIA: <a href="#">Immigration Department saves 16 trafficked women</a></b> -- "the Immigration Department has rescued 16 foreign women, believed to be the <u>first</u> batch of human trafficking victims saved since the <b>Anti Trafficking in Persons Act</b> was gazetted in January [2008]".</p> <p><a href="#">Mine Ban Treaty facing its acid test</a> -- "Among the treaty's member states that were expected to <u>miss</u> the 2009 deadline are <b>Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chad, Denmark, Ecuador, Jordan, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Niger, Peru, Senegal, Thailand, UK (Falklands), Venezuela, Yemen and Zimbabwe</b>".</p> <p>"A <b>Sri Lankan</b> human rights group [01 Apr 2008] named members of the <b>security forces and police</b> allegedly responsible for a <b>massacre</b> of 17 employees of a <b>French charity</b>" -- <a href="#">Lanka forces accused of massacre</a>.</p> <p><b>COLOMBIA: <a href="#">Paramilitarism alive and well</a></b> -- "... more than 50 people and organisations have been named in written threats distributed by a group calling themselves the '<b>Black Eagles</b>' ..."</p> <p><b>PERU: <a href="#">Fujimori rewarded Death Squad</a></b> -- "... Fujimori personally encouraged and rewarded the leaders of a <b>secret army intelligence service squad</b> for the <b>kidnap and murder</b> of 25 civilians in 1991 and 1992, according to secret military documents".</p>
<p><b>Proliferation</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Cheney opposed Chemical Weapons Convention</a> -- contrary to Mr Cheney's predictions, the Chemical Weapons Convention is now judged by most to have been a <u>success</u>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Terrorism</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<p>↓ <a href="#">Intelligence officers call al Qaeda nuclear threat real</a> -- "We should not, however, assume that the <b>technology</b> of a nuclear weapon is beyond the capability of a terrorist group".</p> <p><a href="#">Al Qaeda recruiting "western" fighters: CIA boss</a> -- "They are bringing operatives into that region for training -- operatives that <u>wouldn't attract your attention if they were going through the customs line at Dulles</u> ..."</p>

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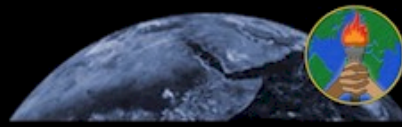


	<p><b><i>Leftist-atheist-Islamist nexus</i></b> [Comment: <i>Ideological marriages of convenience</i> abound throughout the world.]</p> <p>UK: "Extending <b>pre-charge detention</b> to <b>42 days</b> will help terrorists, not police. <b>Smarter tactics are needed</b>" -- <b>A PR coup for al-Qaida</b>.</p> <p><b>Jihadist posts anthrax-making instructions</b> -- "To produce a kilo of spores costs about <b>\$50</b> and a lethal doze is no more than <b>one-millionth of gram</b>, or no bigger than a speck of dust".</p>
<p><b>Transnational Crime</b>  <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mexican drug cartels move into human smuggling</b> -- "<i>Immigrants as commodities</i>".</li> </ul>
<p><b>Policy</b>      see <b>daily items with links to full stories on the web at PDB-Policy</b></p>	
<p><b>Agriculture</b>  <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<p>↓ <b>Indonesia solves rice problem with SRI</b> -- "Indonesia is progressing with <b>SRI [System of Rice Intensification]</b>, and how far ahead of the <b>Philippines</b> it is.... The Jesuit priest <b>Henri de Laulanie</b> in Madagascar invented SRI in 1983 ..."</p> <p>Since discovery in Uganda in 1999, a highly dangerous wheat disease has jumped the Red Sea and is on the march: <b>Killer wheat fungus a threat to global food security? [Ug99]</b> -- "the Ug99 strain of the killer wheat fungus (stem rust), which recently infected wheat farms in Western <b>Iran</b>, is a serious threat to global food security ..."</p>
<p><b>Diplomacy</b>  <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Tony Blair dies of shame</b> -- <b>Blair says God can save world – but peace lobby not impressed</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Army Chief in Pakistan wins honor from U.S.</b> "... the United States Army Command and General Staff College's <b>International Hall of Fame</b>".</li> <li>• <b>Egypt deplors display of anti-Islam movie</b>, Kuwait News Agency - Kuwait, 20080331. [30789]</li> </ul>
<p><b>Economy</b>  <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<p>↓ Big manufacturers like <b>GE</b> are <b>increasing prices</b> in response to higher price of <b>imported inputs</b>; robust prices that will increase <b>profitability</b> say some, "loony" and creating "inflationary cost structures" say others -- <b>U.S. producers flexing pricing power despite downturn [Analysis]</b>.</p> <p>That bastion of the US economy -- <b>retail therapy</b> -- is slowing: "... it seems the only thing retailers are moving out the doors these days is jobs" -- <b>U.S. retailers cut jobs as shoppers stop shopping</b>.</p>
<p><b>Education</b>  <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Congress frets over sluggish student loan market</b> -- with potential long-term bad effects, students have been caught up in the <b>undoc loan scandal</b>.</li> <li>• UK: <b>Teachers to strike for first time in 21 years</b> -- "around 200,000 teachers will stage a one-day strike over <b>pay</b> following the Government's refusal to improve a <b>2.45 per cent offer</b>".</li> <li>• <b>Opting out of No Child Left Behind</b> -- "States have engaged in a '<b>race to the bottom</b>,' and sadly, <b>Arizona</b> is one of the leaders".</li> <li>• <b>Education South Africa: Making the blackboard jungle less so</b> -- the <b>child death rate</b> due to violence in the country's <b>schools</b> is <b>60% higher</b> than the global average; "There is also a need to support <b>teachers</b>. We frequently get reports from them that the situation is bad because <b>corporal punishment</b> has been banned in schools".</li> </ul>
<p><b>Energy</b>  <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't beat up <b>Big Oil</b> -- <b>Peak Oil</b> and <b>futures-driven world prices</b> are providing the best impetus yet to finding enduring <b>sustainable</b> solutions -- <b>Beating up on oil execs is not an energy policy</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Energy Integration and Security in Latin America and the Caribbean</b> – a survey.</li> </ul>

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	<p><i>Algae could one day be major <b>hydrogen fuel source</b> -- "biology can do it, but it's making it do it at <u>5-10 percent yield</u> that's the problem".</i></p> <p><i>Algae: 'The ultimate in <b>renewable energy</b>' -- "Locating <b>algae facilities</b> next to <b>carbon producing power plants</b> ... could <b>sequester the CO<sub>2</sub></b> they create and use those emissions to help grow the algae, which need the CO<sub>2</sub> for <b>photosynthesis</b>".</i></p>
<p><b>Family</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [nothing significant to summarize -- see <i>News List</i>]</li> </ul>
<p><b>Health</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Going to the heart of the <b>health-care</b> debate: is it a jungle out there or is it about communal <b>pooling of risk</b>: <i>If <b>socialized medicine</b> is such a bad thing, then why not <b>privatize the police and fire departments</b>? -- "Here's the thing. Once upon a time in America we actually did have a <b>free market</b> for fire protection! So why was it socialized? Because <u>the private system didn't work out very well</u>".</i></li> <li>• <i>"<b>Telemedicine</b>" links <b>Africans</b> to <b>Indian expertise</b> -- one of the finest outcomes of modern <b>technologies</b> and "<b>globalisation</b>" -- sharing <b>medical expertise</b> throughout the world.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Immigration</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i><b>San Francisco</b> provocatively promises it will <u>not</u> report <b>illegal immigrants</b> to federal authorities -- <b>San Francisco campaign tells illegal immigrants they are safe there</b>.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Justice</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>US: <b>Rising prison population</b> an undeclared <b>national crisis</b> -- "the <b>criminal justice system</b> hasn't caught up with the <b>social science</b>".</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Security</b>  <a href="#">news list</a><a href="#">forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i><b>Crime, a monster challenge for Caribbean countries</b> -- "of the <u>15 countries</u> with the <b>highest murder rate</b> in the world, <u>11 of them</u> are from the <b>Latin American</b> region ..."</i></li> <li>• <i><b>\$240 million in Internet fraud last year</b> -- "the \$239 million loss represents a <u>20 percent growth</u> from fraud losses reported to the center in 2006, and officials say it represents just a <u>fraction</u> of the total costs of <b>cybercrime</b> to the U.S. economy".</i></li> <li>• <i><b>Cyborg insects eyed by military</b> -- "the idea is to develop <b>insects</b> with <b>electronic circuitry</b> inside them so that, among other things, their movements can be controlled remotely. These will be put to use in <b>war</b>: militarized bugs."</i></li> <li>• <i><b>Laser plane could destroy tanks from 10 miles</b> -- "the ten-centimetre-wide beam will heat targets almost instantly to thousands of degrees and will slice through metal even at maximum range. It is intended both for <b>battlefield</b> use and for <b>missile defense</b>".</i></li> <li>• <i>"Here's <b>Wired.com's</b> definitive guide to the <b>congressional surveillance debate</b>": <i>Everything you wanted to know about the <b>wiretap</b> debate.</i></i></li> <li>• <i><b>Pentagon expected to close intelligence unit</b>: <b>NYT</b> -- a initiative under then Secretary <b>Rumsfeld</b>, the <b>Counterintelligence Field Activity Office</b>, tasked with activity against threats <u>within</u> the <b>US</b>, is a candidate for <b>abolition</b>.</i></li> <li>• <i><b>GAO Blasts Weapons Budget</b> -- "flagship acquisitions ... continue to <u>cost significantly more</u>, take <u>longer to produce</u>, and <u>deliver less</u> than was promised.... This is likely to continue until the overall <b>environment for weapon system acquisitions</b> changes".</i></li> <li>• <i><b>McConnell pushes new intelligence plan</b> -- "improving <b>information sharing</b> will bring about true <b>all-source analysis</b> and deliver <b>timely, objective, and actionable</b> intelligence to our senior decision-makers, war fighters, and defenders of the homeland". [Comment: This has been said before, for 10 years or so.]</i></li> <li>• <i><b>OPEN SOURCE INTELLIGENCE: Today's spies find secrets in plain sight</b> -- "it's no longer unusual to see <b>open-source</b> material in the <b>President's Daily Brief</b> ..."</i></li> </ul>



**Society**

news list|forecast

- *Teens hooked on video games; alarm bells ring* -- "... *the Internet can take you out of Walnut Creek. They see the world outside of their life and their house. In part that's why it's so powerful. It brings meaning*".

"*USAID denies funding to nongovernmental organizations that perform or actively promote abortion as a method of family planning in other nations. However, health advocates and librarians strongly disagreed with the USAID decision*" -- '*Abortion*' search restored on popular *POPLINE web site*.

*New evangelical Christians will have an impact on election* -- "being a good Christian hasn't made George **Bush** a good **president**.... I want a good president, not necessarily a Christian".

The War on *pagans, heathens, idolaters* and *humanists* begins: *Saudi King wants monotheisms to unite to defeat atheism* -- "the disintegration of the family and the rise of atheism in the world – a frightening phenomenon that all religions must confront and vanquish".

**Water**

news list|forecast

- *ISRAEL: Gov't study: Water usage from natural sources down since 1967* -- "the state Water Authority conducted the study ... to refute a claim made by international water experts that Israel launched the **1967 war** to increase its **water pumping capacity**".

*Water scarcity troubles head of Nestlé* -- "scarcity of water would make food less accessible to the **world's poor**.... it takes 9,100 litres of water to produce one litre of biodiesel".

**Challengers**

**Brazil**

news list|forecast

- *Methane harvest from municipal dump: 'Green' trash dump in Brazil on a road to revenue* -- "... annual carbon-credit sales would hit \$3 million in two years and make up a quarter of the facility's total revenue stream".

*Brazilian president will not attend Olympic ceremony: official* -- President **Lula da Silva** will not attend the **opening ceremony** because he is not attending the Games.

**China**

news list|forecast

- ↓ *US dismayed by sentencing of Chinese activist* -- China thumbs its nose at its loyalest supporter.

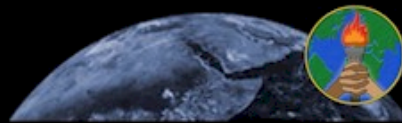
*Thales denies selling radio jamming kit to China* -- "**French** defence electronics firm **Thales** denied accusations by **human rights campaigners** it sold equipment to China that has helped Beijing **scramble radio broadcasts**".

*Chinese spy 'slept' in U.S. for 2 decades* -- "the Chinese government, in an enterprise that one senior official likened to an '**intellectual vacuum cleaner**,' has deployed a **diverse network** of professional spies, students, scientists and others to systematically collect **U.S. know-how** ..."

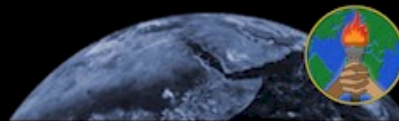
*China's crackdown helped internationalize the Tibet issue* -- "In the past, only AP has reporters based here [Dharamsala, India] while Reuters and AFP have stringers here. Every month we received an average of three to four foreign reporters. But in the past month, we have received nearly 200 foreign reporters ... " China goes clinically mad: *China warns of Tibetan suicide attacks* -- "[China's **Public Security Ministry** ] says the next plan of **Tibet independence forces** is to organize suicide squads to launch violent attacks".

*Chinese police raid houses in Xinjiang* -- "Chinese police have conducted raids on several houses in the restive northwestern region of Xinjiang, possibly looking for **weapons, sources** in the area have told Radio Free Asia". *Uyghurs Protest in*

↓ deteriorated      • steady      ↑ improved      ↗ ALERT



	<p><i>China's Remote Xinjiang Region</i> -- "several hundred ethnic Uyghurs have staged protests in China's remote and restive Xinjiang region following the <b>death in custody</b> of a prominent Uyghur businessman and philanthropist". <i>China Confirms Protests by Uighur Muslims</i> -- "the news of the protest in Xinjiang underscored the breadth of China's problems with <b>ethnic and religious minority groups</b> in the country's vast western regions, where there is a long history of unhappiness with Chinese rule". <i>China equates pro-independence Uighurs with terrorists</i> -- [Backgrounder] "... the <b>global fight against terrorism</b> following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States has allowed China to claim the <b>moral right</b> to crack down on <b>political and religious dissent in Xinjiang</b>".</p>
<p><b>India</b>  <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>'India ready to export missiles to shortlisted countries'</i> -- "... sources said that India could place <b>Indo-Russian supersonic cruise missile BrahMos</b> and recently tested <b>surface-to-air Akash</b> for sale".</li> <li><i>Nine railway stations to come up in Kashmir Valley</i> -- "the railway stations would come up at Anantnag, Baijpora, Pampore, Kakapora, Awantipora, Rajvoser, Srinagar and Budgam and Baramulla, said sources in the Northern Railways".</li> <li>"There are some <b>20 militant groups</b> active in <b>Manipur</b>, bordering <b>Myanmar</b>, their demands ranging from <b>secession</b> to greater <b>autonomy</b>" -- <i>Manipur descends into chaos and lawlessness</i>.</li> <li><i>Indian Muslim group ran terror training</i> -- "senior figures in the <b>Students' Islamic Movement of India</b> conducted at least <b>three secret combat camps</b> last year [2007]".</li> <li><i>India told 'dry-up Maoist funds' [Analysis]</i> -- "an effective <b>anti-extortion and economic wing</b> that can curtail if not totally dry up funding sources of <b>Left-oriented extremism</b> has to be constituted".</li> <li><i>Nine groups target India's Assam state</i> -- "India's Assam state said nine militant groups with <b>2,115 armed members</b> are waging war against the state".</li> <li><i>"CRPF to devise new ways to tackle militancy and Naxalism"</i> -- "the CRPF [<b>Central Reserve Police Force</b>] is tackling <b>counter insurgency operations in Jammu and Kashmir, Northeast and Left wing extremism, across the length and breadth of the country</b>".</li> <li><i>India limits rice exports to boost local stocks</i> -- mirroring restrictions now imposed by <b>Viet Nam</b> and <b>Thailand</b>, India takes steps to limit rice exports to ensure sufficient <b>food stocks</b> for its more than one billion people.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Indonesia</b>  <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Indonesia 'could have role' in Afghanistan</i> -- "there might be some virtue in seeing how <b>Malaysia</b> or <b>Indonesia</b> might feel about offering contributions particularly to <b>southern Afghanistan</b>, where it would be relatively easy to mobilise troops who are themselves <b>Muslim</b> ..."</li> </ul>
<p><b>Iran</b>  <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Gates says U.S. wants diplomacy to solve Iran disputes</i> -- Defense Secretary <b>Gates</b> reaffirms to the <b>Gulf States</b> a commitment to a <b>diplomatic</b> resolution of differences with Iran.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Russia</b>  <a href="#">news list forecast</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Putin to NATO: Let's be friends, guys</i> -- "<b>Mr Putin</b>, who has been harshly critical of the alliance in the past, sought to emphasise Russia's positive approach, such as its agreement to facilitate the transit of <b>NATO</b> supplies for forces in <b>Afghanistan</b> across Russian territory".</li> <li><i>Russian bid to replace Pakistan as supply route: War in Afghanistan</i> -- "the proposal, if accepted, will <b>change the course of the war in Afghanistan</b> and will also</li> </ul>



*have far-reaching consequences for Pakistan ..."*

**Venezuela**  
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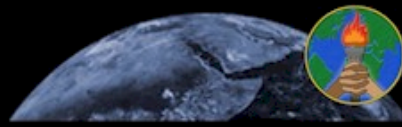
- **Chavez and his friends are an unholy alliance [Opinion]** -- a temperate statement by the president of **Hudson Institute** on Venezuela's **strategic counter-balance** to **US regional interests**.  
**Hugo Chavez nationalizes cement industry** -- Last year [2007], he said many of Venezuela's cement factories prefer to sell their product abroad at higher prices and warned: "*If the cement factories do not (sell in Venezuela), we will occupy them.*"  
**Venezuela rejects documents, rebel ties** -- "*Venezuela is refusing to recognize documents that Colombia says show President Hugo Chavez planned to provide \$300 million to Colombia's largest rebel group [FARC]*".

**Wild Cards**  
[news list](#)[forecast](#)

- **Culture, politics hinder U.S. effort to bolster Pakistani border forces** -- "*but military analysts say that **cultural and political fault lines** within the **Frontier Corps** and Pakistan itself could prove the undoing of the U.S. program*".  
**Nawaz party ministers take oath with black armbands** -- "*members of the **Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)** Monday took oath as federal ministers from President Pervez Musharraf wearing black armbands as a token of **protest** against him*".

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