

GLOBAL CHALLENGES: THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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

Threat Summary

	<p>Poverty. Elevated to RED due to food crisis that will persist across all crops through 2015 plus.</p> <p>Environment. Nano-particles leeching from clothing, toxic to aquatic life. \$600M green think tank.</p> <p>Inter-State Conflict. Taliban seeking missiles. Iraq blow up in August? Uzbekistan as key hub.</p> <p>Proliferation. Pakistan nuclear accident kills two. Uzbekistan a top producer of uranium.</p>
	<p>Infectious Disease. Chickens & wild mammals as disease source. Climate change elevates disease.</p> <p>Civil War. Congo is a major wild card (size of USA). Suffering continues, ignored by rest of world.</p> <p>Genocide. Rwandan policeman dies from grenade thrown into the Rwanda genocide museum.</p> <p>Transnational Crime. Caribbean leaders stepping up to create regional approach to crime.</p>
	<p>Other Atrocities. Nepal child soldiers and spies. Philippines on human rights. Peru convicts four.</p> <p>Terrorism. Israel: jihad has peaked. Tamil global funding network. Philippine sleeper cell.</p>

Policy Summary

	<p>Diplomacy. Editorial Note: Time to do creative destruction of UN, WTO, IMF, NATO, World Bank.</p> <p>Economy. Global economy “out of control” as “no one is in charge” (and Open Money not yet active).</p> <p>Security. RCMP wants a cruise ship as security hotel. Keystroke espionage. Classification confusion.</p> <p>Society. Islam finding women’s rights can co-exist. America has not reached the promised land.</p> <p>Water. Water wars beginning in Europe and the Middle East. Water bottlers face growing opposition.</p>
	<p>Agriculture. Driver of foreign policies and trade. Genetic “one time” seeds reduce food security.</p> <p>Education. Crisis in education, especially urban, could break the USA’s economy, retard assimilation.</p> <p>Energy. Nixon got it right in 1974. MIT Center for Sustainable Energy. Valuable new Wiki.</p> <p>Health. Mexico seeks to attract medical tourists. Cuba exports free medical knowledge.</p> <p>Immigration. 54 die in van out of Myanmar. Immigration inertia in US. Mexico cracks down.</p>
	<p>Family. Extremist religion in USA could further destruction of religious tolerance. “One-Book” nuts.</p> <p>Justice. Bush to sign Second Chance Act. Justice makes corporate deals rather than prosecute.</p>

Major Player Summary

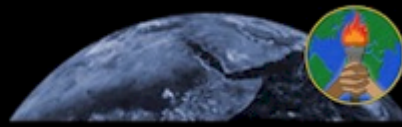
	<p>Brazil. Brainstorming invasions by USA, neighboring power, and incursions by irregulars.</p> <p>China. Wooed by Venezuela to displace US as client. Displacing USA as heavy-handed bully.</p> <p>India. India-Africa summit to open, seeking to stay even with China, exchange goods for energy.</p> <p>Indonesia. Illegal logging, East Timor acquittal.</p> <p>Iran. Dissident explosion at mosque? Taste of one’s own sword....</p> <p>Russia. Communist Party threatens Putin, now seen to be losing relevance and influence.</p> <p>Venezuela. South Atlantic Treaty Organization. Opus Dei remembered. Sugar plantations seized.</p> <p>Wild Cards. Mediterranean Coalition alarms Germans. Editor: regional alliances will become norm.</p>
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World Crises - monthly assessment by [International Crisis Group](#) - 01 April 2008

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

ISSUE -- 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**

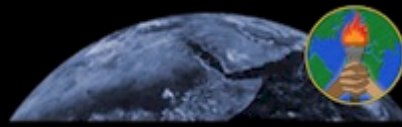
Poverty
 news list|forecast

↓ **Grain prices** explodes into a spreading **food crisis** for the world's most vulnerable.
Rising food prices to hit poorest countries: FAO -- "Food represents about 10 to 20 per cent of consumer spending in **industrialised nations**, but as much as 60-80 per cent in **developing countries**, many of which are **net-food-importers**."
 HAITI: *Haiti's government falls after food riots* -- "Stone-throwing crowds began battling **U.N. peacekeepers** and Haitian **police** in the south on [02 Apr 2008], enraged at the soaring cost of **rice, beans, cooking oil** and other **staples**". Also: *Haitian rioters storm presidential palace* -- "the government of America sees that the kids of America are eating and going to school -- and that we Haitians are not.... For Haiti to move on, the **high cost of living** must go down.... Outnumbered **U.N. peacekeepers** watched as people **looted** businesses".
 PAKISTAN: *Shortage continues to plague people* -- "the district administration has formed mobile teams to monitor the **flour supply** and **check prices** but to no avail".
 KAZAKHSTAN: *Kazakhstan's neighbors await decision on grain exports* -- "the decision could have serious repercussions for neighboring states, which have endured one of their worst **winters** in decades".
 PHILIPPINES: *Arroyo urged to declare state of calamity over rice crisis* -- "while the Arroyo administration has a lot of explaining to do, the most urgent concern for all of us in government -- whether administration or opposition -- is to help the poor **survive the crisis**".
 see: **Agriculture** (Manila demands emergency ASEAN food meeting)
 "Even in grain-rich **America**, **wholesale food prices** are rising at a rate not seen in 27 years"; with a *Christian Science Monitor* survey of impact on the streets around the world -- *Price shock in global food*.
 UK Prime Minister **Brown** [09 Apr 2008] calls for a coordinated response by the **UN, World Bank** and **IMF** to address soaring **food prices** -- *Brown calls for G8 action on food crisis*. [Comment: This will be as rapid as the response to **Climate Change** and **Darfur** no doubt.]
World Bank warns higher food prices to persist -- "surging global food prices are not a temporary phenomenon and prices are likely to stay well above 2004 levels through 2015 for most crops, the World Bank said Wednesday".
 But one of answers has been there all along; big nations and big problems call for big visions ...like **Ghandi's** ... "the full utilisation of manpower and raw products in villages, instead of sending them out and re-buying finished articles" -- *Pilot project in agro-industries planned*

Infectious Disease
 news list|forecast

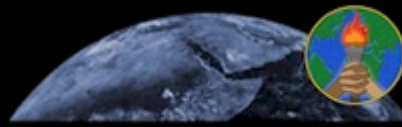
↓ "[Indonesia's Health Minister] said that **climate change** had caused increase in the **vectors` population** of a number of diseases, including **malaria, chikungunya** and **dengue fever**" -- *Climate change-related diseases kill 150 thousands yearly : minister*.
Bird Flu case caused by deadly strain -- "at least 239 people worldwide have died from bird flu since 2003, according to the **World Health Organization**. So far, most human cases have been linked to contact with infected poultry".
New map identifies emerging disease hotspots -- "the more [wild mammal species] that are nearby **human populations**, the greater the risk that some **pathogen** in those wild animals will **cross over** into humans".

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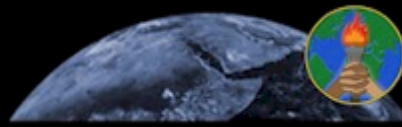


<p>Environment news list forecast</p>	<p>see: China (<i>China reports 753 deaths from infectious disease in March</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Californians to pay \$600 mln for green think tank -- "<i>California electricity and natural gas customers will be charged \$600 million over the next 10 years to fund a green think tank ...</i>" • Nanoparticles leaching into environment -- "<i>silver nanoparticles used in fabrics were found by researchers to leach out after just a few washings, releasing harmful toxins shown to harm aquatic life</i>".
<p>Inter-State Conflict news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taleban seeking missiles to attack NATO helicopters -- "<i>the surface-to-air missiles played a key role in driving out Soviet troops in the 1980s because they let mujahideen fighters shoot down Russian helicopters</i>". • Petraeus meets his match -- an artful and intelligent exchange between General Petraeus and Senator Obama in the Senate touches on critical but yet unspoken geopolitical issues behind Iraq. [Comment: Important] • U.S. troops in Iraq: how vulnerable? -- "<i>Lesson Three: A good time for the insurgents to renew their bloody acts in Baghdad would be mid-August, when Petraeus and other American commanders will come to the end of what he called a 45-day 'period of consolidation and evaluation' ...</i>" • Uzbekistan offers assistance to NATO in Afghanistan -- "<i>The one interesting initiative on Afghanistan made in Bucharest was Uzbek President Islam Karimov's proposal to add NATO to the 6+2 talks on peace and stability in Afghanistan ...</i>". <p>see: Diplomacy (<i>Karimov approves overland rail re-supply route for Afghan operations</i>)</p>
<p>Civil War news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note: 'Civil War' here includes internal instability. <p>A Manila court has sentenced nine military officers to prison terms from <u>six to 40 years</u> for an attempted coup against Philippine president, Gloria Arroyo, in 2003 -- <i>Army officers sentenced to 40 years for failed coup.</i></p> <p>Suffering of Congolese shames humanity -- "... while a recent ceasefire agreement is hailed as a diplomatic success, the continued suffering of Congolese civilians remains an international failure".</p>
<p>Genocide news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grenade kills policeman at Rwanda genocide museum -- "<i>it must be one of those extremist fellows still harbouring the genocide ideology</i>".
<p>Other Atrocities news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nepal's child soldiers trade rifles for tools -- "... children served not only as fighters but also as porters, messengers and spies or took part in cultural and indoctrination programmes. They often joined the rebel movement - sometimes as young as <u>nine years old</u>..." • Peru court convicts 4 for 1992 massacre "... convicted a former general and three members of a military death squad of kidnapping and murder in a ruling that prosecutors say could set a <u>precedent</u> in the trial of former President Alberto Fujimori". • Asesinan a dos locutoras de emisora comunitaria indígena en Oaxaca -- "<i>dead are Felicitas Martínez Sánchez, 21, and Teresa Bautista Merino, 24. Four other people were wounded</i>". • Philippines to defend human rights record at UN review -- "<i>more than 900 people have become victims of extrajudicial killings and 180 of forced disappearances in the Philippines since 2001 under the Arroyo administration, according to local</i>

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	<p>human rights group Karapatan".</p>
<p>Proliferation news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uzbekistan among top ten producers of uranium -- "Uranium production in Uzbekistan grew by 0.5% to 2,270 tonnes. The United States closes the list of the largest uranium producers with about 1,800 tonnes (up 14%)". • 2 die in Pakistan nuclear plant accident -- "a gas leak sparked an explosion and fire [08 Apr 2008] at a nuclear plant that is <u>believed</u> to produce enriched plutonium for Pakistan's atomic weapons program". • Pakistan's nuclear arsenal is overseen by a National Command Authority (NCA) headed by the president and with the prime minister as its vice chairman; this stays <u>unchanged</u> under the country's new government -- <i>Pakistan's nuclear command stays unchanged: official</i>.
<p>Terrorism news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official: Tamil have global funding net -- "the organization, designated as a terrorist group by the U.S. State Department, has set up "branches" in <u>at least a dozen countries</u> to buy weapons and fund the fight to overthrow the Sri Lankan government ..." • The psychoanalytic roots of Islamic terrorism -- an "old" item at an interesting site; whether valid in detail or not -- <i>that the cruelest extremes of Islamism have roots in clan brutalisation of woman and children</i> -- it is the sort of discussion to be had. [Comment: Next ... log-cabin religiosity and its child brides perhaps?] • 'No al-Qaeda' at US-Mexico border ... says DHS undersecretary for intelligence and analysis; "... could undercut one argument by advocates in and out of government for get-tough tactics to fight illegal crossings at the southern US border - that they are needed to fight terrorism". • China claims to have foiled Olympic kidnap plot -- "security forces have detained 45 suspects and seized explosives and firearms from the groups in raids in Urumqi, capital of Xinjiang, a spokesman announced". • PHILIPPINES: Bomb materials seized from JI sleeper cell in Laguna -- "Pagayao's group is being linked to the two deported Jordanian nationals Abu Walid Aisheh and Khalil Hasan Al Ali who are suspected members of the al Qaeda terrorist network". • Terrorism has peaked: ex-Mossad boss -- "when you are fighting for your personal survival, you have less time and energy to invest in thinking, plotting, (or) planning for additional terrorist attacks. I think, personally, that global jihad is already beyond its zenith".
<p>Transnational Crime news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caribbean: regional security takes centre-stage -- "... Caribbean leaders were unanimous that it was time to invest in new strategies to stem the rising tide of violent crime in the region"
<p>Policy see daily items with links to full stories on the web at PDB-Policy</p>	
<p>Agriculture news list forecast</p>	<p>↓ see: Poverty (various items on global food crisis)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHILIPPINES: Manila demands emergency ASEAN food meeting -- "ASEAN has in its membership the world's two biggest rice exporters and the world's biggest rice importer". • Agriculture is a hidden policy driver of foreign trade deals -- "Farms contained <u>half</u> the American population at the turn of the last century, and are down to about <u>one percent</u> today. Yet the U.S. is the largest agricultural exporter as well as importer in the world. This means that farm concerns bear very directly on world trade policy as well as domestic politics".



PAKISTAN: **Farmers protest against WTO, genetic seeds** -- "regarding seeds, he said the **Plant Breeders Rights Ordinance 2000** would be against the interest of small farmers, and asked the government to rethink its decision in the larger interest of the people".

INDONESIA: **Anti-GM rice activists arrested in Jakarta** -- "... for participating in a peaceful people's gathering to voice their protest against GM rice and call for saving the **diversity of local rice** to ensure people's **food security**".

Cuban says boosting farm output a matter of "national security" -- "a senior member of the **Cuban Communist Party** said that boosting domestic food production is a 'matter of national security' due to the increase in prices on the international market". [Comment: Time will tell whether **command economies** have any advantage in exigencies such as rising **world food prices**.]

Factory farms hurt the environment -- "Earth Day is April 22, and the whole month of April is Animal Cruelty Prevention Month -- Factory farming joins the two issues".

Diplomacy

[news list|forecast](#)

- **Russian foreign minister says nothing can replace UN** -- "... no other organization can replace it ..." [Comment: Despite happy post-war beginnings, the **US** has made no similar affirmation for decades.]

The secret aspects of NAFTA -- "in order to justify a **free trade pact** with Bogotá, President **Bush** repeatedly presents **Colombia** as a thriving **democracy** and President **Uribe** as a committed constitutionalist".

US-Colombia trade deal 'dead' unless Congress acts: Bush -- "... analysts predict the bill will not get a vote before November's presidential and congressional elections.... a movement of six **US trade unions** and seven million workers, had welcomed the House's move, after campaigning against the deal over numerous **murders** of trade unionists in Colombia". Also: **Colombia union members still targeted** -- "But the nation's trade unions and other critics see the opposite scenario if the U.S. Congress approves the deal - the loss of millions of **jobs** and an **economic downturn** that could drive even more farmers into the **cocaine** trade."

UZBEKISTAN: **Karimov approves overland rail re-supply route for Afghan operations** -- "but Tashkent's acceptance comes with a potentially problematic catch for the United States".

see: **Inter-State Conflict** (Uzbekistan offers assistance to NATO in Afghanistan)

Why did so many Muslims seem to celebrate 9/11? [A useful analysis.]

Saudi prince gives Cambridge University £8m for Islamic Studies Centre

Economy

[news list|forecast](#)

- **Finance chiefs urge IMF keep closer eye on economy** -- the IMF's 24-nation **steering committee** thinks someone should be driving this thing; but who, and with what authority?

see: **Justice** (In Justice shift, corporate deals replace trials)

Education

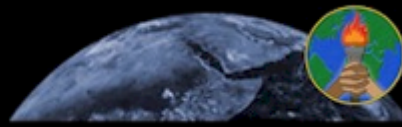
[news list|forecast](#)

- **Destroying Public Education in America** -- an "activist" review of what is bad in US education and some insidious forces that threaten to make it even worse.

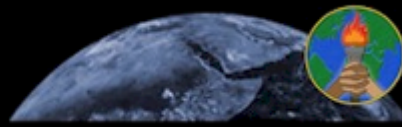
Crisis in urban American education could break the nation's economy -- the graduation rate in **Detroit** is 25%; "... our country will not be able to shoulder the heavy **social and economic price** of a vastly **undereducated urban population** " says President emeritus of Western Michigan Univ.

Education key to assimilation, study says -- **Arab-American women** "get it" about education: "... while more white educated women are working, more Arab American

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	<p>women are educated by comparison with <u>37% of working-age Arab American women having received a bachelor's degree or higher</u>, while 29% of working-age white women have the same education ... "</p> <p><i>Violent Society, Violent Schools</i> [Comment: So shall ye reap... Schools are the product of the Society: Society is the product of the Schools.]</p>
<p>Energy news list forecast</p> <p>Algae</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<i>Nixon invoked the spirit of the Manhattan and Apollo Projects and called for measurable energy independence by 1980. Impossible? Perhaps. But for those of us writing the State of the Union Address of 1974 ... <u>it seemed no more difficult than putting a man on the moon</u>", -- <i>Energy independence?</i></i> • <i>Directory: Biodiesel from Algae Oil</i> -- "some species of algae are ideally suited to biodiesel production due to their high oil content--in some species, topping out near <u>50%</u>". • Heavy-weights make an entrance ... "The center, with \$5 million in initial funding by the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative and \$1 million from National Grid, is a partnership between [MIT] and Germany's giant Fraunhofer Institute" -- <i>MIT announces center for sustainable energy.</i> • <i>Clean alternatives</i> -- India has dire energy needs and glowing potential for renewable energy -- this lengthy paper is a good example of how to evaluate <i>national needs</i> as a whole. • A valuable new <i>wiki: PESwiki</i> (PureEnergySystems) http://peswiki.com
<p>Family news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Lawmaker wants 'I believe' license plates</i> -- like al-Qaeda, those from <i>one-book households</i> in the US insist on confronting others.
<p>Health news list forecast</p> <p>Food Safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>USDA eyes irradiation for vegetables</i> -- an old debate that may need a re-run; "... the technique could reduce the numbers of <i>foodborne illnesses</i> reported each year". • <i>Medical tourism</i> in the wake of India's success: "<i>Mexico is poised to capitalize on the rising trend of U.S. patients shopping the globe for high-quality, low-cost health care. Its hospitals are upgrading their equipment and training doctors in English while private companies are building state-of-the-art hospitals to cater in part to Americans</i>" -- <i>U.S. patients turn for care to Mexico.</i> • <i>World's Healthiest Countries</i> -- "Historically, these countries had an ethic of having more of a <i>nationalized health care system</i> ..."; Iceland, Sweden, Finland, Germany, Switzerland, Australia, Denmark, Canada, Austria, Netherlands. • <i>Medical expertise</i> as an <i>export commodity</i>: The Cuban medical brigade has given <u>11,039 848</u> free <i>consultations</i> since the arrival in Bolivia in February 2006 -- <i>11 Million Free Consultations in Bolivia.</i>
<p>Immigration news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Research <u>debunks</u> myth that migrants spread disease</i> -- "It's not enough to just concentrate on border control, because for one thing, one in three people in the world are infected with TB". • <i>Mexico cracks down on illegal Central American immigrants</i> -- a good insight into <i>illegal immigration</i> across the Guatemalan border into Mexico then northwards to the US -- numbers are down by about <u>60%</u>. • <i>The Heritage Foundation</i> discusses some of the issues a <u>real legislative solution</u> will need to address -- <i>Immigration Inertia.</i> • <i>Chertoff defends immigration enforcement</i> -- "We're enforcing the law as it is, but Congress has not yet given us the authority to really expand the temporary worker program."



Fifty-four Myanmar migrants suffocate in container -- "They should be treated as victims of a tragedy and viewed as hard-pressed people risking their lives for a better future. The **Thai** government should acknowledge their plight and provide them the welfare that they deserve". Also: *Burma migrants suffocate in lorry* -- "Fifty-four Burmese migrants have been found dead after suffocating in a lorry smuggling them into southern Thailand".

see: **Terrorism** ('No al-Qaeda' at US-Mexico border)

Justice
 news list|forecast

- "The reputation of the United States and its historic commitment to the principles of **due process** and the **rule of law** have been and continue to be severely damaged by the affront to justice that are these **military commission** hearings" said Jamil Dakwar, Director of the **ACLU Human Rights Program** -- *Military commission proceedings put credibility of U.S. justice system on the line*.

The Feds surrender in the face unbearable costs: "President **Bush** is to sign the **Second Chance Act** in a public ceremony on [09 Apr 2008], making **rehabilitation** a central goal of the **federal justice system**" -- *U.S. shifting prison focus to re-entry into society*.

Deferred Prosecution Agreements: "... legal experts now wonder if the policy shift has led companies, in particular **financial institutions** now under investigation for their roles in the **subprime mortgage debacle**, to test the limits of corporate anti-fraud laws" -- *In Justice shift, corporate deals replace trials*.

Security
 news list|forecast

- *Agencies use contradictory rules for classifying information* -- the report's recommendations include requirements for "meaningful definitions of **classification levels**" as well as **reasons** "for classifying or not classifying information" It also calls for definitions of "**damage levels**"

The new E-spying threat -- "... his every **keystroke** would have been reported back to ... an obscure company headquartered on the banks of **China's** Yangtze River".

Fidel Castro weighs in on U.S.-Russia missile shield debate -- No-one has yet said "**Cuban Missile Crisis**"-- perhaps it's too obvious.

RCMP wants floating home for 2010 security -- "the RCMP is in need of an entire **cruise ship** - maybe even two or more - to house security personnel during the **games**".

Society
 news list|forecast

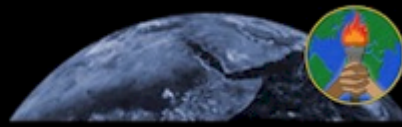
- Spin-off **Mormon** sect in **Texas**: "... we are more shocked that this young girl might be **married**, than by the fact that she has a baby" says a Cornell anthropologist -- *The shocking truth about married girls*.

Is America a good country or not? -- Little surprising: **Republicans** say yes, **Democrats** have misgivings; but few nations are insecure enough to need ask themselves these questions.

Has America reached King's promised land? -- Forty years ago, like Moses, Martin Luther King started the trek out of the desert; "*I don't think we **African Americans** have reached the promised land. We're only beginning to see it from here.*"

American society is still conditioned by race politics -- a view by an Egyptian-American: "... they're also **terrified of American society**, so they enroll their children in Islamic schools, where they often emerge **more fundamentalist than their parents**."

Superfast internet may replace world wide web -- **CERN's** second offering: "The power of the grid will be unlocked this summer with the switching on of the Large Hadron Collider (**LHC**), a new particle accelerator designed to investigate how the



universe began".

Can women's rights coexist with the tenets of Islamic law? – [US News and World Report] "As late as 1995, many feminists from Islamic countries insisted women's equality could be attained only by jettisoning religion, including the outward trappings of the faith, such as the veil. Since then, though, an expanding reform movement within Islam has led more Muslims to explore the sacred writings on their own. This has often reinforced the patriarchal viewpoint of militant Islamists, but it has also supported progressive and feminist interpretations."

Amid the horror, some remember to look skywards ... *A Brazil-Argentina joint effort peers into deep space* -- "... Pierre Auger Cosmic Ray Observatory, installed in the province of Mendoza, in Argentina, is now one of the main scientific projects in progress worldwide ..."

Water
[news list|forecast](#)

• *Is this the beginning of water wars?* -- "... **Spain** has been forced to consider **importing water from France** by boat. It is the latest example of the growing struggle for water around the world – the 'water wars'; an authoritative quick look at several regions.

Thirsty Jordan will struggle for water this summer -- "most tributaries [of the **River Jordan**] were diverted for industrial and farming purposes by neighboring **Syria** and **Israel**. Environmentalists also say it has become a **dumping site** for Israeli industrialists".

Water bottlers face growing opposition -- Nestle's plan to build the nation's largest water bottling plant in McCloud CA is coming unstuck on **environmental** concerns. [Comment: The new other concern with bottled drinking water -- the zillions of empty plastic containers -- is not mentioned.]

Challengers

Brazil
[news list|forecast](#)

• *Brazil justice minister wants army abusers tried [Interview]* -- "**Argentina, Chile** and **Paraguay** have investigated and put **military officials** on **trial** in recent years but Brazil has done relatively little to bring to justice those who **murdered** and **tortured** during the **dictatorship**".

Brazil considers possible Amazon invasion scenario -- "... **asymmetrical war** in the Amazon Other scenarios included **military action** by a neighboring country sponsored by a big power, as well as **incursions** by **irregular** or **paramilitary** forces"

China
[news list|forecast](#)

↓ *China reports 753 deaths from infectious disease in March*

US wants a more transparent China -- "we have had some very **interesting**, if not entirely fruitful dialogue with our Chinese colleagues," Keating said.

Top Chinese cops protect Olympic flame -- "the **Olympic flame** wasn't part of the ancient games, and the torch relay didn't become a fixture in the modern Olympics until the **1936 Berlin Games**, when it was part of the **Nazi** pageantry that promoted Hitler's beliefs of **Aryan supremacy** in the world of sports." [Comment: **Aryan Supremacy: Han Supremacy** – same trough: different pigs.]

Rudd says 'no' to China torch guards -- "Chinese **paramilitary police** will not be allowed to run alongside the **Olympic torch** in **Australia** ..."

"Oil Chinese" in Venezuela are treading carefully -- "President **Hugo Chávez** would like China to buy more Venezuelan oil so his country can become more independent of the **United States**".

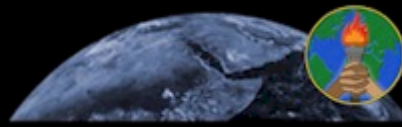
India fears a macabre turn to protests as China 'foils terror plot' -- "police say that

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they are ready for the possibility that Tibetans will **set themselves on fire** in front of the world's media". [cf **Viet Nam**; but different school of **Buddhism**]

China says it has brought 'golden age' to Tibet [Comment: But there has been no vote on how many misguided Tibetans would prefer the "dark ages of **feudal serfdom** under the **Dalai Lama**".]

see: **Terrorism** (China claims to have foiled Olympic kidnap plot)

Female special forces established in Xinjiang -- "... expected to conduct reconnaissance, assault in the anti-terrorism struggles ..."



China slams European parliament's "arrogant interference" on Tibet. -- Suddenly China is at (**diplomatic**) **war** with the world and may not understand why, a natural hazard for chaps who don't get out much.

Earning his rations ... **Australia's** new Prime Minister **Rudd** says "There are still many problems in China. Problems of **poverty**, problems of **uneven development**, problems of **pollution**. Problems of broader

human rights" ... to students at **Beijing Univ**, ... and in **Mandarin** -- *Australia's Rudd confronts Tibet issue on China trip.*

Heavy-handedness has not brought the US unalloyed joy; China too now may be rattling the cage just a little too manfully: *China faces Muslim resentment in West* -- China's staged exaggeration of the **Uyghur** "threat" in **Xinjiang** may draw undesired attention of **jihadis** from **Algeria** to **Uzbekistan**.

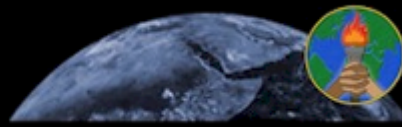
India
 news list|forecast

- *Maoists kill six activists of rival group in India's Bihar state* -- "rebels belonging to the outlawed **Communist Party of India (Maoist)** shot dead six activists of the **Sashatra People's Morcha (SPM)** ...". Also: *Maoists kill eight villagers in Jharkhand* -- "the dead were members of a **government-backed tribal group** formed to fight the **rebels**".

India Prepares for first India-Africa Summit -- "analysts say India wants to ensure it is not left behind by **China**, which has made deep inroads into the continent. African countries are emerging as a **big market for Indian goods** as they post strong growth". Also: *First India-Africa summit opens in New Delhi* -- "the summit opened as India looks for more **energy sources** to fuel its booming economy and seeks to counter **China's** growing influence in **resource-rich Africa**".

India strengthens its presence in African Indian Ocean Rim -- **Chatham House** says "Increasingly it is **China** rather than **Pakistan** that worries New Delhi's policy makers. In 2007, India warned Beijing about its increasing activity in the **Seychelles** and at the same time opened a new **surveillance installation** in **Madagascar**, indicating the importance of the Indian Ocean as New Delhi's own backyard"

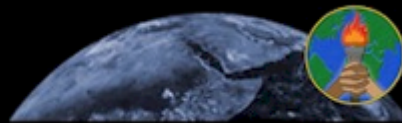
Indo-German naval exercises to commence tomorrow -- "... being held in the context of the **Indo-German Defence Cooperation Agreement** signed in 2006 ..."



	<p>Bangladesh, India restore train link -- "... the first passenger train to leave Dhaka for India since <u>1965</u> ..." <i>see: Energy (Clean alternatives)</i></p>
<p>Indonesia news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indonesian police officers grilled in illegal logging case -- "in March [2008], police seized around 12,000 cubic metres of illegal logs worth about 208 billion rupiah (<u>US\$22.6M</u>), which were about to be smuggled to Malaysia ..." E Timor militia leader released -- "but late last week the Supreme Court found that he was <u>not proven</u> to have had full command over the attack, and therefore could not be held criminally responsible".
<p>Iran news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iran media says mosque blast was not an attack -- dissident attack is slightly more likely than "explosives left behind from an earlier exhibition commemorating the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war".
<p>Russia news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zyuganov threatens to strip Putin of Communist support -- Communist withdrawal of support for Putin will leave him with little more than his Gazprom shares, the adoration of the Russian people, some nice suits, the government of Mother Russia, and the FSB.
<p>Venezuela news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chavez: Defense Council to be created -- "I once said that if NATO exists — the North Atlantic Treaty Organization — why couldn't SATO exist? The South Atlantic Treaty Organization," Chavez said. "We've placed it on the table for Latin America once again". Washington asks Argentina for help with Venezuela -- "we talked about our interest in <u>improving relations</u> between Venezuela and United States, which is our current purpose. We underlined that with the help from a friendly government such as Argentina, we can improve those relations." The Opus Dei coup remembered: "Massive street protests were instrumental in helping Chavez return to power just <u>two days</u> after the putsch, with the aid of loyal generals" -- Venezuela commemorates 2002 coup. Venezuelan military seizes sugar plantations -- "the farms in Lara state were taken over by army units at the request of the Chavez government's National Land Institute, or INTI. The institute in recent years has handled takeovers of <u>thousands of acres</u> of underused farmland and turned them over to worker cooperatives". Venezuela steps up efforts to thwart cocaine traffic -- "as a state, we are showing that there is a policy to fight narco-trafficking". <i>see: China ("Oil Chinese" in Venezuela are treading carefully)</i>
<p>Wild Cards news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • German alarm at Nicolas Sarkozy's plans peace for Mediterranean union -- 'Club Med' as a solution: "The idea of a Mediterranean union has irritated the Germans, who have insisted that it be created in association with the EU". US says Central Asian bloc not turning into military alliance -- "It's not a Warsaw pact," said Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher. 'Bush struggling to save Musharraf' -- "however, US officials John Negroponte and Richard Boucher, who recently visited Pakistan, were told that the President would be reduced to a titular head".

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