

GLOBAL CHALLENGES: THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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

Threat Summary

	<p>Poverty. Food riots, the perfect storm, seething anger, free trade in food proposed, this is a CRISIS. Environment. Political interference reported by 889 of 1600 EPA staff scientists. Inter-State Conflict. Middle East conflict looms as Egypt others begin to realize price of inaction. Proliferation. No major stories.</p>
	<p>Infectious Disease. UN focus is on mosquito nets to save the million a year dying from malaria. Civil War. Zimbabwe, Afghan assassination attempt, Turkish air strike on Kurds, Sri Lanka, Somalia. Genocide. Armenia determined to label Ottoman genocide. Editor: All genocides should be so. Transnational Crime. Drug lords outbidding Mexican army for shooters. Mobsters without borders.</p>
	<p>Other Atrocities. Colombian president's cousin linked to paramilitary death squads. Terrorism. Some beginning to see value of negotiating. Scotland yard foils 15 plots since 7/7.</p>

Policy Summary

	<p>Diplomacy. Israel claims secret deal with White House. Politics in Latin America. Clinton on Iran. Economy. US retirees feel dollar collapse. \$105B Bank of England rescue package. 3 strikes for US? Security. Hidden architecture of US Militarism—see also Chalmers Johnson's <i>Sorrows of Empire</i> Society. Humans neared extinction 70,000 years ago. Women and women right to the forefront. Water. Yemeni losing water at 400% of replenishment. Water desalination becoming realistic.</p>
	<p>Agriculture. US Farm Bill morphs into farm, food, and energy bill. Education. Only 30% of jobs require a college degree. Editor: smartest kids dropping out. Energy. Now beyond dispute that ethanol's true costs are horrendous. Health. Doctors agree—need single-payer health care. Medical marijuana faces obstacles. Immigration. Chinese illegals may dwarf other nationalities around the world.</p>
	<p>Family. Family fragmentation costs federal, state, and local \$112 billion a year. Justice. CIA once again trumps common sense justice. Torture is in, there are no rules.</p>

Major Player Summary

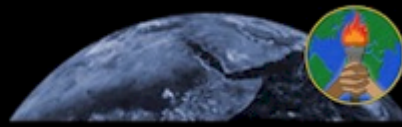
	<p>Brazil. Permit system for foreigners entering Amazon. Farmer who reporting logging shot dead. China. Interpol warns China of Olympic unrest. Editor: China as clueless as US on cyber-media. India. Begins massive census. Gas pipeline talks renewed. India considers FBI-equivalent. Indonesia. Three day simulation, a MAJOR national-level drill on dealing with bird flu pandemic. Iran. Kicked out of arms show. British dealers supplying. Azerbaijan blocks Russian nuclear deal. Russia. Putin in charge until 2020 according to Russia's richest man. Venezuela. Chavez wants to monitor all news all the time. Editor: CIA cannot do this, he might. Wild Cards. Karzai calls for peace negotiations with Taliban. Editor: he's always liked them.</p>
--	---

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.

↓ deteriorated	• steady	↑ improved	↗ ALERT
----------------	----------	------------	---------



Threats

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

Poverty

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

↓ The ‘Silent Famine’ keeps biting.

But it comes at a time when the world is affluent enough, alert enough– and perhaps motivated enough – to do something about storm-proofing the underlying systems.

"Before, if you had \$1.25, you could buy vegetables, some rice, charcoal and a little cooking oil. Right now, a little can of rice alone costs 65 cents, and it's not good rice. Oil is 25 cents. Charcoal is 25 cents. With \$1.25, you can't even make a plate of rice for one child" -- [Disaster in Haiti as world's food prices jump](#).

*"In the teeming, dense flour bazaars of **Kabul**, it's hard not to miss the anger" -- [Global Emergency Triggers Food Riots](#).*

The perfect storm of **rising grain prices** grows stronger as **Thailand**, the *rice bowl of Asia*, hits **drought** – [Drought hits millions in Thai rice region](#).

The List: The world's most dangerous food crises -- a snapshot: **North Korea, Pakistan, Indonesia, Ethiopia, Yemen**

see: **Indonesia** (*Indonesia says has ample rice, no risk of unrest*)

[Food crisis catches up with Americans](#) -- **Wal-Mart**, the world's largest retailer, has announced **rationing of rice**.

'Africa needs Technology Development Fund' -- Sustained **high-tech research**, not **subsistence** first-aid: "We can design all types of research projects but if there are no funds to execute them, they end up on paper."

Starve the poor? How about free trade in food? -- Professor of Agricultural, Environmental and Development Economics at **Ohio State** does a quick traverse from the **Green Revolution** of the 1960's until now [Comment: The revolution is never over!]

Development: views clash at UNCTAD over what's best for Africa – [UNCTAD -- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development] "the **MDG challenge** has been complicated by the alarming rise in global food-prices. High prices threaten to undo the gains achieved so far in fighting hunger and malnutrition". [And other important arguments are aired]

UN chief calls for immediate action to solve food crisis -- "**Ban** estimated that around 100 million of the world's poorest who previously did not require help now can also not afford to buy food."

Infectious Disease

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

• [U.N. Launches World Malaria Day](#) -- ABC News takes a look at six countries battling **malaria** and assesses their progress in containing the disease.

*Health: **Malaria** campaigns ramp up focus on **bed nets*** -- "with a million people a year still dying from malaria, the United Nations is leading a new campaign to provide universal coverage of essential malaria control measures -- particularly bed nets -- in Africa by the end of 2010". [Comment: Bed-nets are not rocket science but are spectacularly successful.]

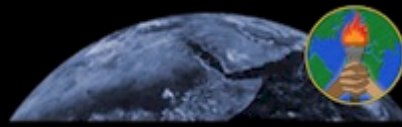
Environment

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

↓ [Hundreds of EPA scientists report political interference over last five years](#) -- "889 of nearly 1,600 [EPA] staff scientists reported that they experienced political interference in their work over the last five years".

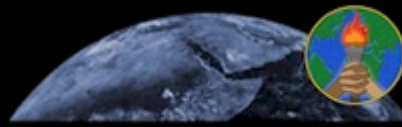
Infertility rising in Europe - chemical exposure could be a contributory factor -- "roughly one third of infertility remains 'unexplained' Something has changed in

↓ deteriorated • steady ↑ improved ↗ ALERT



	<p><i>the past 20 or 30 years".</i></p>
<p>Inter-State Conflict news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egypt grapples with Palestinian dilemma -- "<i>Hosni Mubarak's intelligence chief faces obstacles at every turn as he attempts to head off a new crisis in Gaza... 'It's mission impossible,' admits a senior Egyptian official</i>" [Comment: A good insight into the <i>realpolitik</i> of the Middle East.]
<p>Civil War news listforecast</p>	<p>↓ <i>Note: 'Civil War' here includes internal instability.</i></p> <p>Zimbabwe recount deepens crisis -- "<i>with a government crackdown now well under way, the political crisis following the elections is escalating sharply</i>". Mugabe opponents seized in police raid -- "<i>the police carried out simultaneous raids on the home and office of the head of an election-observer mission that had concluded Mugabe was defeated in the March 29 presidential vote</i>".</p> <p>Afghan president escapes assassination bid -- "<i>Karzai, government ministers, former warlords, diplomats and the military top brass ducked for cover after gunfire sounded at the celebration to mark the 16th anniversary of the fall of the Afghan communist government to the Mujahideen</i>".</p> <p>Turkish warplanes raid PKK targets in Iraq -- "... in what military sources called the <i>biggest Turkish air operation in northern Iraq this year</i>".</p> <p>'Heavy losses' in S Lanka clashes -- At least 52 Tamil Tiger rebels and 38 soldiers were killed in fighting in the <i>Jaffna peninsula</i> in the far north of the country, a military spokesman said.</p> <p>Somalis flee corpse-littered capital -- "<i>Fighting between Ethiopian troops and Islamic fighters trying to topple Somalia's shaky government killed 81 people over two days ...</i>"</p>
<p>Genocide news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Armenia vows to boost efforts for genocide recognition -- "<i>Armenia's new president vowed [24 Apr 2008] to redouble efforts to have mass killings of Armenians by the Ottoman Empire recognised as genocide ..</i>"
<p>Other Atrocities news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colombia leader's cousin arrested -- "<i>a cousin and key ally of Colombian President Alvaro Uribe has been arrested over alleged ties to paramilitary groups</i>".
<p>Proliferation news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [nothing significant to summarize -- see <i>News List</i>]
<p>Terrorism news listforecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police 'have foiled 15 terror plots since 7/7' -- Mainly with the purpose of extending the <u>28-day period</u> for <i>detention without charge</i>, Scotland Yard stresses its achievements. <p><i>Analysis: Engaging 'negotiable terrorism'</i> -- "... make more sense to engage in <i>negotiations</i> with those considered enemies (and yes, terrorists), <i>rather than unavoidably ending up doing so years down the road ...</i>"</p>
<p>Transnational Crime news listforecast</p>	<p>↓ Mexico army ops allow crime surge in border city -- "<i>Mexican troops are failing to provide basic security in the violent border city of Ciudad Juarez, residents say, testing support for President Felipe Calderon's army-led assault on drug gangs</i>". [Comment: No army is trained for civil crime work.]</p> <p>Mexican soldiers recruited to be drug cartel's hit men -- "<i>One of Mexico's biggest drug cartels has launched a bizarre recruiting campaign, putting up fliers and banners promising <u>good pay, free cars and better chow</u> to army soldiers who join the cartel's elite band of hit men.</i>"</p> <p>'Mobsters without borders' are global threat: U.S. -- "... more adaptable and sophisticated than La Cosa Nostra and other syndicates the U.S. government set out</p>

↓ deteriorated	• steady	↑ improved	↗ ALERT
----------------	----------	------------	---------



to defeat half a century ago."

Policy

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

Agriculture
[news list|forecast](#)

- [US] [Negotiators reach tentative farm bill deal](#) -- "a lot of painful **reductions** (had) to be made in order to shift **resources** to places that are being hard hit by this **weakening economy**.... We carried a heavy load for **nutrition**.... It's not just a farm bill. This is a farm and a **food** and an **energy** bill."

Diplomacy
[news list|forecast](#)

- [Israelis claim secret agreement with U.S.](#) -- "Ehud Olmert, the current Israeli prime minister, said this week that **Bush's letter** gave the Jewish state permission to expand the **West Bank settlements** that it hopes to retain in a **final peace deal** ..." [Comment: This is flatly denied across the US administration. What "**permission**" really means in this context is question-begging.]
 see: [Iran](#) (Clinton threatens to 'obliterate' Iran if Israel attacked)
[Glance at politics in Latin America](#) -- "A look at the politics of Latin American countries, and at their **relationships** to the United States". [Good checklist]

Economy
[news list|forecast](#)

- ↓ [If only the dollar were stronger](#) -- "... in nearly every part of the world, **retirees** from the **United States** are being pinched."
[Bank of England announces \\$105B rescue package](#) -- "... one of the biggest moves by a major **central bank** to combat the **global credit crunch**."
[Three scenarios that could cause a sudden drop in the U.S. dollar's value](#) -- "Foreign countries drop their U.S. dollar reserves./ oil prices increase catastrophically / double whammy of trade and budget deficits" - good discussion of possibilities any (or all !) of which may eventuate.

Education
[news list|forecast](#)

- ['College material' label doesn't stick for all – and that's OK](#) -- "Research shows that only about 30 percent of jobs require a **college degree**. "

Energy
[news list|forecast](#)

Algae

- [Ethanol betraying its promises](#) -- "It is now beyond dispute that congressional mandates on ethanol use are having a number of deleterious effects, soaring **food prices** chief among them.... almost all of the increase in global maize (corn) production from 2004 to 2007 (the period when grain prices rose sharply) went for **biofuels** production in the U.S."
[Asian Development Bank willing to finance TAPI gas line](#), UPI - USA, 20080421. [31867] "As oil ministers from **Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India** prepare in Islamabad for meetings on the TAPI gas pipeline, an ADB executive says it will invest in what could be the entire project."
 see: [India](#) (India joins TAP pipeline)
[Indian renewables generate 11,449 MW](#) -- "This comprises of 7,939 MW **wind power**, 2,062 **small hydropower**, 1,446 MW **biopower** and 2 MW **solar power**".

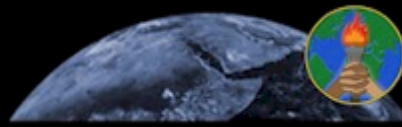
Family
[news list|forecast](#)

- [The dollars and sense of marriage](#) -- "Family fragmentation costs federal, state and local taxpayers \$112 billion a year."

Health
[news list|forecast](#)
Food Safety

- [Doctors agree: We need single-payer health care](#)-- "... health care is not a commodity subject to the laws of supply and demand".
[Medical marijuana patients face transplant hurdles](#) -- although legal in some states, users of medical marijuana may be denied life-saving transplants because the behavior is against **federal law** and indicative of an '**addictive personality**'.
[Lessons from Sweden's universal health system](#) -- A straw-man look at Sweden towards a desired conclusion that **socialised medicine** is too expensive for the **US**.

↓ deteriorated	• steady	↑ improved	↗ ALERT
----------------	----------	------------	---------



Immigration
 news list|forecast

- *Chinese-run job agencies face illegal immigration scrutiny* -- "we Provide Quality **Hispanics**," employment agencies say in **Mandarin**; Chinese labor entrepreneurs face **conspiracy** and **fraud** charges related to **immigrant smuggling**.
Silvio Berlusconi says illegal migrants are 'army of evil' -- Returning Italian prime minister **Belusconi** -- *neo-fascist billionaire* and person frequently charged with **corruption** -- has simple populist solutions for **illegal immigrants**.

Justice
 news list|forecast

- *Using kin's DNA to track suspects* -- Highly effective '**familial DNA searching**' "... turns family members into genetic informants without their knowledge or consent. They say it takes material collected for one purpose and uses it for another."
Letters Give C.I.A. Tactics a Legal Rationale -- "The fact that an act is undertaken to prevent a threatened **terrorist attack**, rather than for the purpose of humiliation or abuse, would be relevant to a reasonable observer in measuring the outrageousness of the act" [Comment: de facto there are now NO rules.]

Security
 news list|forecast

- *The Hidden Architecture of U.S. Militarism* -- "... our military empire would probably top **1,000 different bases** in other people's countries, but no one -- possibly not even the Pentagon -- knows the exact number for sure ..."

Society
 news list|forecast

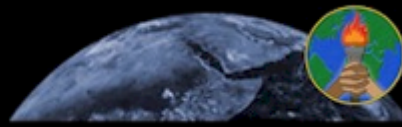
- *Second Chance: Humans flirted with extinction 70,000 years ago* -- "... researchers at Stanford University estimated the number of early humans may have shrunk as low as **2,000** before numbers began to expand again in the **early Stone Age**".
Dull tasks really do numb the brain: study -- "... as people perform **monotonous tasks**, their brain shifts towards an **at-rest mode** whether they like it or not".
Pratibha in Chile on an all-woman trip -- a state visit by **India's president Pratibha Patil** to **Chile** to meet president Michelle **Bachelet** evidences the growing role of **women** in world politics.
Focus on the rights of women in Islam -- a Brussels event discusses the clear gender equality expressed in the **Koran** and the **social / cultural overlays** that have hugely distorted this.
Saudi "guardianship" key to women rights abuse - HRW -- "The authorities essentially treat adult women like **legal minors** who are not entitled to authority over their lives and well-being".

Water
 news list|forecast

- *Virtual water: impossible reality in Yemen* -- "In some regions, **extraction** exceeds **replenishment** by **400 percent**" and Yemen says it is not wealthy enough to **import 'virtual water'**,
Mysteries of water and the future of a scarce resource -- Water may one day trade like oil; another useful essay on the world of **water scarcity** and what can be done about it.
Water desalination becoming more realistic -- "Some **97 percent** of the water on Earth -- seawater and brackish groundwater -- is too salty for drinking or irrigation" and many cost issues and environmental concerns still surround desalination.
Drought-hit Cyprus signs deal to ferry water from Greece -- "a chronic water shortage has been brought on by a two-year-long **drought**, unseasonal **weather** rising above **30 degrees Celsius [86 F]**, and the failure of on-the-spot fines to deter those **wasting water**".
see: Poverty (Drought hits millions in Thai rice region)

Challengers

Brazil	• <i>Brazil wants approval for all foreigners heading to Amazon</i> -- the government
↓ deteriorated	• steady ↑ improved ↗ ALERT



news list|forecast

proposes a **permit system**: "Those caught in the Amazon without a permit granted by military and justice authorities could face a fine of US\$60,000".

Report: Brazil police kill 11 in raid -- "a record 1,260 civilians died in clashes with police in **Rio de Janeiro** state last year ..."

Whistleblowing farmer killed in Brazil -- "An Amazon farmer who received death threats after reporting **illegal logging** to authorities was shot to death as he left his house ..."

China

news list|forecast

- *Interpol warns China of Olympic unrest* -- "an attempted act of **terrorism** is a real possibility and a real concern that all Olympic host countries have shared in recent years".

India

news list|forecast

- No mean task: *India begins massive census to map future* -- India's population is projected to grow to 1.19 billion in 2011 from 1.13 billion in 2008 and in one of world's biggest censuses India hopes to collect accurate information.

India, Pakistan renew talks on gas pipelines -- The new Pakistan government has resumed talks with India on two major strategic gas pipelines - **Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India** and **Iran-Pakistan-India**. *India joins TAP pipeline* -- "India has formally joined the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan pipeline project".

India eyes federal agency to tackle terror -- "... a **central agency** to enable the investigation of certain types of **terrorism-related** and other offenses having **interstate** and **global linkages**." [Comment: India has no equivalent of the **FBI**.]

India declares Assam disturbed area -- "... concerted and sustained **counterinsurgency** operations in Assam have been increased to flush out insurgent groups active in the state, including the outlawed **United Liberation Front of Assam**".

Why Pakistan won't leave Kashmir alone -- An expert view.

Punjab terror movement renewal eyed -- India said certain **foreign-based militant groups** are attempting to revive terrorism in Punjab state.

see: **Energy** (Indian renewables generate 11,449 MW)

see: **Society** (Pratibha in Chile on an all-woman trip)

Indonesia

news list|forecast

- *Indonesians hold major drill for bird flu pandemic* -- "The three-day simulation started with the isolation of a village on the resort island of Bali, where a field hospital was being set up to treat people with flu-like symptoms".

Indonesia says has ample rice, no risk of unrest -- Although vulnerable to rice riots as in 1998, "Indonesia can meet domestic demand for rice this year, avoiding the risk of social unrest, thanks to a **bumper rice harvest**, curbs on **rice exports** and **subsidies for the poor** ..."

Iran

news list|forecast

- *Iran expelled for showing missiles* -- "Iran has been kicked out of an **international defense show** in **Malaysia** for exhibiting **missile equipment** in violation of **UN rules**".

Clinton threatens to 'obliterate' Iran if Israel attacked -- intemperate words of comfort for **Christian Zionists**, and others.

British dealers supply arms to Iran -- "[UK] **Customs probe** reveals **sanctions-busting** sales of **arms, missile technology** and **nuclear components**."

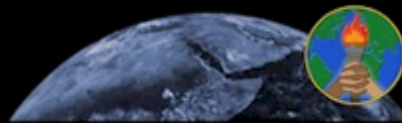
Russian shipment for Iranian nuclear plant blocked -- "Azerbaijan halted a **Russian shipment** of equipment intended for Iran's **Bushehr nuclear power plant**, demanding

↓ deteriorated

• steady

↑ improved

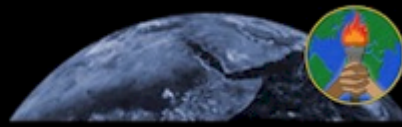
↗ ALERT



	<p>more information for fear of violating United Nations sanctions, officials said [21 Apr 2008]”.</p>
<p>Russia news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russia’s richest man sees Putin in charge to 2020 -- Oleg Deripaska, has said he is convinced Vladimir Putin will remain fully in charge of Russia <u>until 2020</u>, even though he is stepping down as president on May 7.
<p>Venezuela news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Venezuela’s Chávez wants government monitoring of news -- "the president says the offices would report to a national center and help the government respond swiftly to negative coverage with its own side of the story." Negotiation of steel plant nationalization continues in Venezuela -- "the Venezuelan government and Argentine steel company Ternium formed a joint commission in Caracas Thursday to negotiate indemnity for the nationalization of Ternium Sidor ..."
<p>Wild Cards news list forecast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pakistan lifts roadblocks in militants’ stronghold -- "... to open the troubled South Wazristan tribal district to rest of the country amid a proposed peace deal ..." Afghan President says fight should be taken to Pakistan -- "President Karzai is urging U.S. forces <u>to stop</u> arresting suspected Taliban members and sympathizers in his country he supports the new Pakistani government’s plan to negotiate for peace with Taliban."

20080428w [078]

pdbweekly20080428.pdf



New Book Reviews by Robert Steele (#1 Amazon Reviewer for Non-Fiction, #35 Over-All)

EIN receives IRS Letter Granting 501c3 Public Charity Status.

We seek sponsors for tailored weekly reports on each of the ten threats, twelve policies, and eight challengers. \$5,000 will cover all search, processing, analysis, and online access. Our intent is to lay the ground-work for offering a Global Range of Gifts Table Online, such that individuals and organizations can opt-in to harmonized giving program that is transparent and complete—for \$100 a year cell phone gifts to a village to \$100 million water-desalination plans for Africa and the Middle East.

For \$2,500 we will train a sponsor employee and provide full access to our global system provided the resulting stack and weekly reports can be shared with others. \$10,000 a year is the cost for private service that is not shared.

Any contributor of \$1000 may review our search profile and suggest changes that would make our existing free service more useful to them. All credit cards welcomed. Fax to 703.266.6391.

This is a free public service

to be included on the weekly email list, go to . . .

http://meta2.com/pdb/pdb_weeklysummarylist.htm

Free Decision-Support Training

<http://www.earth-intelligence.net>

Free New Book on Collective Intelligence

www.oss.net/CIB

.oOo.

EIN Publishing Plan (Free Online and in Hardcopy at Amazon)

Book Title (all edited except last—links below lead to Amazon page)	Free Online	Amazon
<i>COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE: Creating a Prosperous World at Peace</i>	15 Jan 08	12 Apr 08
<i>PEACE INTELLIGENCE: Assuring a Good Life for All</i>	1 Jun 08	15 Jul 08
<i>COMMERCIAL INTELLIGENCE: From Moral Green to Golden Peace</i>	1 Jul 08	4 Aug 08
<i>WAR & PEACE: The Seventh Generation</i>	1 Jun 08	4 Jul 08

Each book will appear at www.earth-intelligence.net as a menu item on the date above.

Sponsors for each book are sought. For \$25,000, the first flyleaf will carry the sponsor’s message and contact information, and we will provide 500 copies of the book to the sponsor for distribution. The sponsor will also be recognized with their message as the first file in the free online offering of the book.

We have started work on the Peace Book. Draft Table of Contents at www.oss.net/Peace. We are calling for proposed chapters, Group A acceptances will be included in hard-copy edition; Group B acceptances will be supplemental to the free online version of the book.