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Articles from subscriber only sites are available on request. *Révolutionnaire* is edited by Samuel Chan, with contributions from Bernard Loo and Joshua Ho. The Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS) is a key research component of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS). It focuses on security research to serve national needs. IDSS' faculty and research staff conduct both academic and policy-oriented research on security-related issues and developments affecting Southeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific. Its research agenda presently comprises the following programmes: Maritime Security, the Revolution in Military Affairs, Multilateralism and Regionalism, Contemporary Islam, Indonesia and China.

CONTEMPORARY CONFLICT

[Numbers drop for civilian deaths, foreign fighters in Iraq](#)

CNN – 3 December 2007

Two indicators of the state of the war in Iraq appeared favorable in November, when fewer fighters entered Iraq from neighboring countries and fewer Iraqi civilians killed, according to two reports on Sunday. Lt. Gen. Ray Odierno, the No. 2-ranking U.S. commander in Iraq, told CNN fewer weapons and fighters entered Iraq from Iran and Syria over the past month. Odierno said the U.S. military is "pleased" with Syria's improvement but was reluctant to give credit to Iran. The U.S. military maintains that explosively formed penetrators -- a sophisticated and powerful type of roadside bomb -- are made in Iran and their components are shipped into Iraq by the Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' Quds Force, the Iranian unit accused by the United States of training and arming insurgents. Iran has denied any involvement. November witnessed the lowest monthly civilian death toll since sectarian tensions heightened across Iraq after the February 2006 bombing of the Askariya mosque in Samarra. The figure compares with 758 Iraqi civilians killed in October and 844 in September, according to the ministry. The monthly death tolls from the ministry were substantially higher earlier in the year. In January, 1,990 deaths were reported; February, 1,646; March, 1,872; April, 1,501; May, 1,949; June, 1,227; July, 1,653; and August, 1,773. The U.S. troop death toll in Iraq was 37 in November and 38 in October, marking the smallest number of American fatalities in a two-month stretch since early 2004, when there were 20 in February and 52 in March. Overall, 2007 has been the deadliest year for the U.S. military in Iraq since the war began. Nearly 30,000 more American troops were deployed this year in and around Baghdad to take on insurgents as part of what Washington calls the "surge." The year started out with 83 deaths in January and 81 each in February and March. The numbers jumped higher in the spring, with 104 in April, 126 in May and 101 in June. Those three months were the deadliest stretch in the war in Iraq for U.S. troops. As the military established its new counterinsurgency strategy, the attacks began dropping from the 101 deaths tallied in June to 78 in July, 84 in August, 65 in September, 38 in October and 37 in November.

[Afghans 'still hopeful on future'](#)

BBC – 3 December 2007

Most Afghans are relatively hopeful about their future, an opinion poll commissioned by the BBC has suggested. They also support the current Afghan government and the presence of overseas troops, and oppose the Taleban. But the poll suggests that Afghans are slightly less optimistic than a year ago, and are frustrated at the slow pace of reconstruction efforts. Charney Research spoke to 1,377 people in October and November in all 34 provinces for the BBC, ABC and ARD. Overall, the figures indicate that the peaceful north of Afghanistan is significantly more satisfied than the troubled south. Most dissatisfaction is found in the south-west, where the Taleban are most active. The figures indicate that 54% of Afghans think things are going in the right direction, one percentage point fewer than last year, while 70% described their living conditions as

good or very good. Security issues and the Taleban were the biggest problems facing Afghanistan, according to 56% of the people interviewed (against 57% last year). One of the most striking findings was the apparent unpopularity of the Taleban and their foreign supporters. Only 5% of respondents said they supported or strongly supported the Taleban (against 4% last year), with 14% of respondents saying they supported or strongly supported jihadi fighters from other countries. Only 4% would like to see the Taleban return to government. Against this, 71% of respondents said they supported or strongly supported the presence of US military forces in Afghanistan, with 67% supporting or strongly supporting Nato and its Isaf peacekeeping mission. Support for both of these has fallen in the past year, however, even though most respondents blamed the Taleban and their allies for most of the violence. Among other key findings: 69% criticise Pakistan for allowing the Taleban to operate; 60% want the government to do a peace deal with the Taleban; 62% say growing poppies for opium is unacceptable.

[Sudan forces killed 100s of civilians in Darfur-UN](#)

Reuters – 4 December 2007

Sudanese forces and allied militia have killed several hundred civilians in ground attacks and aerial bombardments on villages in Darfur in the past six months, United Nations human rights experts said on Tuesday. Bystanders caught up in clashes between the warring parties have also been tortured, raped and suffered widespread looting in the western region, according to the U.N. experts on Darfur. Their 106-page report calls on the Khartoum government to protect civilians in Darfur and investigate all crimes. It is to be presented next week to the U.N. Human Rights Council. "According to United Nations sources, from June 20 to mid-November 2007, at least 15 land and air attacks were made on civilian centres in all three Darfur states by the forces of the government, affiliated militia and the Minni Minawi faction of the Sudanese Liberation Army," the report said. A Reuters tally of casualty figures contained in the report indicated that at least 300 people were killed in about 20 land and air attacks documented by the U.N. in the past six months. U.N. officials pointed out they had been unable to document all the incidents due to restrictions on movement, logistical constraints and insecurity in Darfur. "The information in the group of experts' report was meant to be illustrative only and not to provide a comprehensive picture of violations," Lyal Sunga, the Geneva-based coordinator of the U.N. experts' group, told Reuters.

TERRORISM & COUNTER-TERRORISM

[Terror alert in Delhi](#)

The Hindu – 4 December 2007

A general alert has been sounded here in the Capital in the wake of inputs from the Intelligence Bureau warning of a possible terrorist strike in the next two weeks. The agency has tipped off the Delhi police about information that terrorist outfits such as Harkat-ul-Jehad-e-Islami and Lashkar-e-Taiba may carry out an attack in the city in the coming fortnight, mainly at market places and crowded areas. Though the input is not

“specific”, as it does not identify conspirators, the police are not taking it lightly. The entire force has been put on alert and beat staffers have been directed to keep a close watch on suspicious activities. As part of the drill, owners of cyber cafes, vehicle and property dealers have been directed to inform the police about any suspicious-looking person they come across in their areas. “The force was already on alert in view of the recent serial blasts in the Uttar Pradesh courts,” said a senior police officer. Security for the Delhi Metro, high on the target list of the terrorist outfits, has also been strengthened.

[Real spooks with new role after 9/11](#)

BBC – 4 December 2007

In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, only one plane was allowed to fly from Britain to the US. On board were Britain's top spy chiefs, including Eliza Manningham-Buller, then number two at MI5, and soon to become the director general. The Americans revealed that they were already sure al-Qaeda was responsible, having recognised names off the passenger lists for the flights that had crashed. Back home, the atmosphere was less than calm amidst fears of a hit on the UK. After the end of the Cold War, there were questions about whether MI5 was really needed any more. In the 1990s, it wrested control of dealing with terrorism from Northern Ireland from the Police Special Branch and moved into fighting organised crime. But it was only with 9/11 that its new role became clear - and even then it was not clear just how dramatic the transformation would be, a change which included being thrust in the public spotlight. In the wake of the 7 July 2005 attacks, MI5 would face its most public barrage of criticism when it emerged that during the surveillance operation called Operation Crevice in 2004, its agents also had multiple sightings of two of the bombers who had gone on to kill. The 7 July attacks also made clear that the threat was not coming from abroad, as had been thought in the wake of 9/11. "The fact these there British citizens did really bring the system up with a jolt and had serious implications for what we were trying to do," says Sir Richard Mottram, who has just stepped down as chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee. A key task has been improving the flow of intelligence from communities. Last month, MI5's new director, Jonathan Evans, talked of 2,000 individuals who the security service believe pose a threat to national security, up by 25% from a year earlier. MI5 is also growing fast - it will soon have doubled in size and will continue to grow. It has had to learn to work much more closely with the police as well as other intelligence agencies - both at home and abroad. But as the infrastructure of counter-terrorism grows, have the mechanisms of accountability kept pace? "It is not a question of MI5 walking out on the street and deciding to bug and burgle people," argues former MI5 director general Stella Rimington. Every time the security service wants to do something like break into someone's house to install a listening device or intercept their phone calls, it needs to get a warrant. This has to be personally authorised by the home secretary. The number of warrants has risen inexorably in the last few years. Ultimately, the home secretary is responsible for saying yes or no, but not for deciding what operations to run, a system designed to prevent security services being used as political tools, as has happened in some European countries. But as the security service grows - and new technologies bring even more capabilities - making sure the mechanisms of public accountability and trust are in place is going to be vital.

Jihadi terrorism and China are business threats

Telegraph – 5 December 2007

British business was warned to raise its security level amid signs that the threats of terrorism and industrial espionage are increasing. A major report warns that home-grown Islamist extremism "presents an unprecedented threat" to businesses, while at least two major UK companies have reportedly faced acts of espionage linked to the Chinese government. Yesterday, a report from Lloyd's of London insurance market and the International Institute of Strategic Studies said the risk of major economic damage from terrorism had intensified. Lloyd's chairman Lord Levene said: "No-one should be in any doubt that home-grown terrorism has the potential to disrupt business significantly. However, although most business leaders are increasingly worried about it, they have also told us that they currently understand very little about what home-grown terrorism risk means for their business." He added: "The business community urgently needs to close the gap between growing awareness of the risk and a lack of understanding of what it means in practice." The report came as warnings about the threat of Chinese industrial espionage reverberated around Britain's boardrooms. At the weekend it was disclosed that the head of MI5, Jonathan Richards, had written to 300 chief executives and heads of security at major companies about attack from "Chinese state organisations". It followed similar warnings in America, France, and Germany, that Beijing was seeking to steal industrial secrets. China has strongly rejected the suggestions. Yesterday, oil company Royal Dutch Shell's computer system in Houston, Texas, was said to have been attacked by spies with links to China. And aero-engine company Rolls-Royce is also thought to have been a victim. Analysts said the hacking into computers was likely to have been attempts to steal secrets that would give the Chinese authorities the upper hand in negotiations for contracts. Shell declined to comment and Rolls-Royce did not return calls.

Attack mars oil talks in Nigeria

BBC – 5 December 2007

Gunmen in Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta have attacked a vessel operated by the Exxon Mobil oil company, killing one crew member and wounding another. The incident comes as three days of peace talks begin in Bayelsa State between local officials and militants. Bayelsa State Governor Timipre Sylver told the BBC he was confident a deal would be reached that would address the militants' grievances. They want more of Nigeria's oil wealth to be used to help local people. The militant group, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta, is expected to sign the peace deal on Friday. Nigeria, an Opec member, is one of the world's biggest exporter of crude oil. Disruptions to supply are one of the causes of the recent rise in oil prices towards \$100 a barrel. Violent attacks on oil company workers and installations have slowed since President Umaru Yar'Adua was elected in April on a promise to end the conflict. This latest incident took place in Rivers State. Security sources said the Seamark vessel was on the Bonny river heading for Onne when it was boarded by eight men from a speedboat, who shot one crewman dead and wounded another before ransacking the vessel. Both men are Nigerians.

DIPLOMACY & DEFENCE STRATEGY

[US Democrats want rethink on Iran](#)

BBC – 4 December 2007

The Democrats in the United States have called for a rethink of policy on Iran. The call comes after a major new intelligence assessment suggested the government in Tehran is not trying to develop nuclear weapons at present. The latest National Intelligence Estimate says it is now believed Iran stopped its weapons programme in 2003. But Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said it was vital to continue US-led efforts to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. Earlier his Defence Minister, Ehud Barak, cast doubt on the report's findings, saying that while Iran might have stopped its suspected weapons programme it had probably restarted it again. Reports of this kind were "made in an environment of high uncertainty", he added. The Democrat leader of the US Senate, Harry Reid, said he hoped the White House would undertake "a diplomatic surge" to engage with Iran. "I hope this administration reads this report carefully and appropriately adjusts its rhetoric and policy vis-a-vis Iran," said Mr Reid. He added that the Bush administration should emulate former President Ronald Reagan's engagement with the Soviet Union. The BBC Washington correspondent Justin Webb says the Democrat response is a sign of the pivotal importance the new intelligence assessment might turn out to have. But, our correspondent adds, Washington's Iran hawks are horrified. In particular they are concerned that news of that key assessment will drown out other findings in the document - for instance, that Tehran is keeping open its option to develop a nuclear weapon and would have all the capacity to do so in the future if its leaders decided to go ahead. A senior adviser to President Bush said the report was "positive" but the risk of a nuclear Iran remained "serious". "It seems Iran in 2003 halted for a certain period of time its military nuclear programme but as far as we know it has probably since renewed it," he told Israeli radio. Iran is currently under sanctions from both the UN Security Council, which is demanding the end of uranium enrichment, and unilateral US sanctions.

[China denies spying in UK claims](#)

CNN – 4 December 2007

A news report claiming Chinese agencies were spying on British companies via the Internet was irresponsible and incorrect, China's Foreign Ministry said Tuesday. The Times of London reported Saturday that Jonathan Evans, who heads Britain's spy agency MI5, sent letters to 300 executives and security chiefs at banks, accountancies and legal firms warning them that "Chinese state organizations" were hacking into their systems through the Internet and stealing confidential information. On Tuesday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang denied the report, saying China opposed computer hacking and that it was cooperating with British authorities. He also accused the British media of spreading inaccurate information. "We express strong dissatisfaction. It is a very irresponsible act," Qin said of the British news report. The Times said the letter told its recipients how to identify Chinese "Trojans" -- e-mails carrying software designed to

hack into a computer network and feed back confidential data. The accusation comes ahead of a planned trip to China in January by British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, his first to the country since taking office in June. Computer experts have blamed hackers linked to the Chinese military for cyber attacks on the U.S. Pentagon, the British Parliament and the German chancellery. China denies it is engaged in any cyber crime and said its networks also have been targeted. Experts say China is home to a large number of insecure computers and networks that hackers in other countries could use to disguise their locations and launch attacks.

[Rice seeks to ease crises in Africa hot spots](#)

Reuters – 4 December 2007

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice headed to Ethiopia on Tuesday, on a rare trip to Africa, seeking to ease long-running crises in the war-racked Great Lakes region, Somalia and Sudan. On only her second trip in two years to sub-Saharan Africa, Rice said she wanted to move international efforts forward to resolve those conflicts in a string of meetings with African leaders during her 24-hour trip to Addis Ababa. "I am increasingly concerned about several crisis spots in Africa," she told reporters travelling with her to the Ethiopian capital, which is also the headquarters of the African Union. Her first talks on Wednesday are with leaders from Uganda, Burundi and Democratic Republic of Congo as well as the foreign minister of Rwanda, to discuss the conflict in the African Great Lakes region that brings in all those countries. The focus will be to develop common strategies to deal with what Washington says are "negative forces" including the FDLR (Democratic Liberation Forces of Rwanda), made up of key figures in the 1994 Rwandan genocide, as well as the Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army and renegade Tutsi General Laurent Nkunda. Those forces have been fighting over territory and resources in lawless eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, a conflict that has embroiled neighbours of the vast central African country formerly called Zaire. In meetings with Sudanese officials, Rice said she would seek to prevent a north-south peace deal from unravelling, threatening a return to full scale civil war. Rice said the fact that the southern Sudanese were not participating in the cabinet was a "complication". Rice will also discuss delays in deploying a U.N.-African Union peacekeeping force for Darfur and she reiterated U.S. frustration at hold-ups by the Sudanese government in letting in the peacekeepers to resolve a conflict that the United Nations estimates has claimed about 200,000 lives. The schedule for getting 26,000 peacekeepers into Darfur by year-end is months behind and Rice said she had spoken to U.N. Secretary General Ban ki-Moon about the delays. She was also pressing Egypt and Saudi Arabia, which have some influence over Sudan's President Omar Hassan al-Bashir. Rice will also meet Somalia's new Prime Minister, Nur Hassan Hussein and she said she would appeal to him to be more "inclusive" in pulling together his fragile, new government. Four Somali cabinet members resigned on Monday, barely 24 hours after being appointed to protest against what they said was their clan's under-representation in the government which is faced with long-standing clan divisions and an Islamist insurgency. Rice will also meet officials from Ethiopia, which cooperates closely with the United States on counter-terrorism issues. Tensions have been mounting between Ethiopia and neighbour Eritrea

over its disputed border, with Eritrea accusing the United States of siding with Addis Ababa over the issue.

DEFENCE TECHNOLOGY

[Keeping defence spending in-country is a top priority for Australia's new government](#)

Jane's Information Group – 3 December 2007

Joel Fitzgibbon has been named as Australia's new defence minister and will focus on ensuring that that "as much of the [Australian] defence budget as possible is spent in Australia", according to the Australian Labor Party's (ALP) defence policy. The ALP won the general election in Australia on 24 November, with leader Kevin Rudd becoming the country's new prime minister. Fitzgibbon, former shadow defence minister, kept hold of his portfolio and was named in Rudd's new cabinet on 29 November. As well as a highly publicised policy of withdrawing Australian troops from Iraq, the ALP also aims, according to its policy document 'Labor's Plan for Defence', to involve Australian defence industries to the "greatest extent possible". The policy states: "A Rudd Labor government will ensure that as much of the defence budget as possible is spent in Australia. Labor will emphasise preference for Australian content and require tenderers to develop detailed strategies for involving Australian industry to the greatest extent possible." The policy states that the ALP intends to highlight Australian defence industry involvement in military acquisition projects on a yearly basis. "To ensure that Australians receive maximum benefits from their spending on defence, a Rudd Labor government will introduce new reporting obligations on defence to include in its annual report a specific section outlining Australian involvement in major equipment acquisition projects," it says.

[Big guns train their sights on universities](#)

The Guardian – 4 December 2007

Six weeks ago, with little publicity, the Royal Air Force's first "hunter-killer" unmanned drone took flight in Afghanistan. Although initially to be used for reconnaissance, the drone will soon be armed with Hellfire missiles for ground attacks. It is, appropriately, called the Reaper. Made in the US, the Reaper is based on the Predator B, the drone used last year by the CIA to target a Pakistani village where it was thought Ayman al-Zawahiri, the deputy leader of al-Qaida, was in hiding. Instead, more than 20 villagers, including five women and five children, were killed. British ministers and military chiefs think the drone will be the frontline attack plane in years to come. The work, like a surprising number of military-related projects, is being done in UK universities. Researchers found that between 2001 and 2006, more than 1,900 military projects, worth at least £725m, were conducted in the 26 universities they examined, 20 of which are in the elite Russell group. The largest number of contracts were placed at Cambridge, Loughborough, Oxford, Southampton and University College London, with a total value of £139m. The biggest was a 22-year, £366m contract at Cranfield University's Defence

College of Management and Technology, to provide postgraduate training to the MoD for 4,000 students a year. Seventy per cent of the projects were sponsored by three industry leaders: BAE Systems, RollsRoyce and the controversially privatised research group QinetiQ. The report says they have "developed a disproportionately powerful say in universities' research agendas". In a flurry of acronyms beloved by the defence industry, the report identifies a plethora of jointly funded programmes that lock science departments into business. There are the four Defence Technology Centres, with a £90m contribution from the MoD to produce "innovative cutting-edge research for enhanced UK defence capability". Towers of Excellence, launched in 2002, combines eight commercial and government bodies and nine academic partners for research into guided weapons, sensors, radar and electronic warfare. The Defence and Aerospace Research Partnerships is an £18m programme spread across 20 universities, looking at advanced weapon systems. RollsRoyce supports 20 University Technology Centres embedded in 15 universities (there are four at Sheffield). Then there is Flaviir, the project developing the advanced drone. The Flapless Aerial Vehicle Integrated Interdisciplinary Research Programme is a £6.2m effort running over five years to 2009. It is unique, says BAE Systems, because it is producing "an entire working system, rather than just looking into individual technologies".

Protection for submarines

The New Straits Times – 6 December 2007

THE Royal Malaysian Navy is looking at acquiring the capability of protecting its two Scorpene diesel-electric submarines. Royal Malaysian Navy chief Admiral Tan Sri Ramlan Mohamed Ali said the submarines could take offensive action "but we need the capability to protect the submarines from someone else getting to them". One potential solution could lie with the Cerberus system, a diver detection system developed by British defence technology contractor, QinetiQ - one of the exhibitors at Lima '07. Named after the three headed, ever-vigilant hound of Greek mythology that guarded the gates of Hell, the system uses sonar technology to detect undersea intrusions to a distance of up to 900m within a 360° radius. Pods are placed at the sea bed to detect any divers within range via sonar detection. QinetiQ business development manager Ross Gooding said sonar technology had been around for years, but the sonar processing used by the company was relatively new. "It is a wide-band, high-frequency technology. So, you get very good definition which can detect differences between humans, other mammals and fish. "Because of the type of pulses we use, we can also get long ranges. "Traditionally, a high frequency system that gives you good resolution doesn't have a long range. "But by combining different methods of getting the sound pulse into the water, we can actually get the long range and still maintain the high-fidelity of the system," he said. Backing the pod on shore is a processing unit that has within it a classification system and a tracking system. "It has the ability to tell the difference, by looking and bringing together parameters such as behavioural patterns, target strength, speed, direction and position, between a diver and marine animal or something that looks like a human," said Gooding. He said the system, which is in use by the German navy as well as in central Europe to protect the shore of the Caspian Sea, can also be mounted on a ship. "We have also sold a system to a 133m long super yacht, which they use for security when they go out to sea."

Gooding said the system could be used to protect ports and harbours, where submarines, among other ships, were docked. "If you have a submarine base, you're much more open to diver attacks. There's a reason for having submarines, but that also means that you are now a legitimate target for a diver to attack. "Security above water is becoming more advanced. "The underwater environment is largely ignored and that is why we have Cerberus," he said, adding that Cerberus would be of use not only to the navy, but to commercial ports as well.

NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY

[Iceland best place to live, Africa worst - UN](#)

Reuters – 27 November 2007

Iceland has overtaken Norway as the world's most desirable country to live in, according to an annual U.N. table published on Tuesday that again puts AIDS-afflicted sub-Saharan African states at the bottom. Rich free-market countries dominate the top places, with Iceland, Norway, Australia, Canada and Ireland the first five but the United States slipping to 12th place from eighth last year in the U.N. Human Development Index. But the index, blending 2005 figures for life expectancy, educational levels and real per capita income, finds that all 22 countries falling into its "low human development" category are in sub-Saharan Africa, with Sierra Leone last. In 10 of these countries, two children in five will not reach the age of 40, said the compilers at the U.N. Development Program. Last year's report said HIV/AIDS had had a "catastrophic effect" on life expectancy in the region. The index ranks 175 U.N. member countries plus Hong Kong and the Palestinian territories. It does not include 17 countries, including Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia, because of inadequate data. Norway had held top spot for six years but was edged into second place by Iceland this year because of new life expectancy estimates and updated figures for gross domestic product, or GDP, the report said. U.N. officials played down the significance of minor short-term shifts in the rankings including the slide in the U.S. position. They said if subsequent data for the year in question been available for last year's report, the United States would have been in 10th, not eighth place. The United States scores high on real per capita GDP, which at \$41,890 is second only to that of Luxembourg (\$60,228), but less well on life expectancy -- joint last in the top 26 countries, along with Denmark and South Korea, at 77.9 years. Japanese have the longest life expectancy -- 82.3 years -- and Zambians the lowest, at 40.5. The report said most countries had seen their human development index rise over the last 30 years, but in 16 it was lower than in 1990, and in three -- the Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia and Zimbabwe -- lower than in 1975. Per capita GDP is 45 times higher in Iceland than in Sierra Leone.

[Asian nations face "unprecedented" water crisis-ADB](#)

Reuters – 29 November 2007

Developing countries in Asia could face an "unprecedented" water crisis within a decade due to mismanagement of water resources, the Asian Development Bank said in a report on Thursday. The effects of climate change, rapid industrialisation and population growth on water resources could lead to health and social issues that could cost billions of dollars annually, it said. "If the present unsatisfactory trends continue, in one or two decades, Asian developing countries are likely to face and cope with a crisis on water quality management that is unprecedented in human history," Ajit Biswas wrote in the report. The report, entitled "Asian Water Development Outlook", was submitted to the Asia-Pacific Water Forum in Singapore, which will discuss the issue at a summit in Japan next week. The report also comes before a U.N. meeting in Indonesia next week to discuss a successor to the Kyoto Protocol on climate change. "Water quality management has mostly been a neglected issue in Asian developing member countries. The annual economic cost is likely to be billions of dollars," Biswas wrote. The report said massive urbanisation will present new types of water-related challenges. In contrast to cities in developed countries such as Tokyo, developing countries have fallen behind in the collection, treatment, and safe disposal of wastewater, it said. Climate change is likely to increase the frequency of extreme events like droughts and floods and introduce high levels of risks and uncertainties that the water industry may not be able to handle with confidence, Biswas said. The report, written by a team of water specialists, covers 12 Asian countries: Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, the Philippines, Samoa, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. The ADB report recommends major changes in water governance practices in most Asian developing countries, and to look to successful models such as in Singapore and Cambodia which had improved monitoring of water consumption. The report also called for countries to improve the accessibility of data on water quality.

[World farm output to drop due to global warming: experts](#)

AFP – 4 December 2007

Global warming is likely to cause a significant decline in world agricultural output, with poor countries in Africa set to be hurt the most, a group of farm experts said Tuesday. As a result, policymakers must take into account food issues when dealing with climate change, a report by the International Food Policy Research Institute said. "World agricultural output is projected to decrease significantly due to global warming, and the impact on developing countries will be much more severe than industrialised nations," said the report, released in Beijing. "Africa is particularly vulnerable to climate change because of its high proportion of low-input, rain-fed agriculture, compared with Asia or Latin America." In the report, the group urged policymakers to take agriculture and food issues into account when developing national and international climate change agendas. The report, titled "The World Food Situation," was released at an international conference aimed at addressing a global rise in food demand. While hundreds of millions have emerged from poverty through better agricultural techniques, rising standards of living mean that more grain is being used to produce high value products like meat and dairy products, the report said. This in turn makes grain prices rise as demand grows,

making it harder for poorer people in the developing world to fulfil their daily food needs. Due to rising oil costs, the production of biofuels as an alternative energy source was also adding to dramatic changes in the world food situation, which "will adversely affect poor people in developing countries," the report said. The group called on developed nations to lower trade barriers on farm products and reduce biofuel production, while developing nations needed to invest more in their farming infrastructure. "Surging demand for feed, food and fuel has recently led to drastic price increases, which are not likely to fall in the foreseeable future," said Joachim von Braun, lead author of the report. "The days of falling food prices may be over.

[Report: World food prices to jump](#)

CNN – 4 December 2007

Food prices are set to rise around the globe after years of decline, with climate change making it harder for the world's poorest to get adequate food, according to a report released Tuesday. Rising global temperatures as well as growing food consumption in rapidly developing countries such as China and India are pressuring the world food system, meaning that food prices will rise for the foreseeable future, according to the International Food Policy Research Institute. Joachim von Braun, the director of the Washington-based research group, said food prices have been in a declining trend since scientists began developing high-yield plant varieties decades ago, "but the days of falling food prices may be over." "The last time the world experienced such food price increases was in 1973 to 1974 ... but today the situation is completely different. For one, the climate risk and climate change situation has increased, the climate vulnerability has increased," von Braun told reporters in Beijing. The institute said in a report that hunger and malnutrition could rise as poor agricultural communities most sensitive to the environment, such as in Africa, are hurt. Dependency on food imports will also increase as cereal yields decline in those countries. The world's agricultural production is projected to decrease by 16 percent by 2020 due to global warming, the report said, with land used for certain crops shrinking. For example, it said land to grow wheat could almost disappear in Africa. It said growing demand in rapidly developing countries such as China and India for processed food and expensive meat and dairy products is driving up prices for those goods, as well as for staple grains used to feed cattle. In addition, switching to crops used for biofuels will also reduce the amount of available food and increase prices, it said. Trade barriers for food should be eliminated, especially in developed nations, the report recommended, so small farmers can earn more money. "A world facing increased food scarcity needs to trade more, not less," the report said. The European Union and the United States have been reluctant to cut support for their own farmers and reduce trade barriers in world trade talks.

MILITARY / PEACEKEEPING / HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS

[Sudan blames U.N. for Darfur peacekeeping delays](#)

Reuters – 28 November 2007

Sudan held the United Nations responsible on Wednesday for delays in deploying some 26,000 police and soldiers to Darfur after the world body said Khartoum's restrictions could derail the peacekeeping mission. Jean-Marie Guehenno, head of the U.N. peacekeeping unit, said in New York obstacles raised by Sudan ranging from rejection of non-African troops, failure to provide land and operational restrictions on the force meant the mission's viability was in doubt. "The head of the peacekeeping operations Guehenno is working on different agendas which violate the directives of the U.N. Security Council resolutions," Sudan's state news agency said. SUNA quoted senior foreign ministry official Suraj el-Din Hamid as saying President Omar Hassan al-Bashir had already issued directives to allocate all the land the mission needed, and that the United Nations had delayed meetings in New York to discuss the deployment twice in two weeks. "The problems in dealing with the United Nations on this peacekeeping operation reflects the ability of the peacekeeping unit to direct this mission," Hamid said. Khartoum accepted the joint U.N.-African Union mission to replace a struggling AU force after months of diplomacy, threats and negotiations. Critics have said the United Nations gave too many concessions to gain Khartoum's support and that Sudan was insincere in its acceptance to win time while it continues military operations in Darfur. Guehenno said Khartoum's conditions, such as the ability to disable the joint mission's communications during security operations, would make it impossible for the force to function. The force hopes to offer better protection to more than 4 million Darfuris affected by the revolt in Darfur by mostly non-Arab rebels in 2003. International experts estimate some 200,000 have died and 2.5 million been driven from their homes in almost five years.

[Mediators display US-Russia division on Kosovo](#)

Reuters – 3 December 2007

Russia insisted on Monday the U.N. Security Council should have the final word on Serbia's breakaway Kosovo province, putting it on a collision course with the West days before mediators report to the United Nations. Moscow's Alexander Botsan-Kharchenko, visiting Belgrade with fellow envoys from the EU and United States after the failure of talks last week, said the four-month dialogue had been the most serious since the 1998-99 war, and should continue. "The Security Council began considering this question and this question will be finally resolved in the Security Council," the diplomat told a news conference. He said later in Kosovo that there was "room for continued negotiation", something the West says would be pointless. Russia, which holds a veto in the U.N. Security Council, has already blocked one Western-backed independence plan. American mediator Frank Wisner said it would be up to individual governments to decide how to proceed after the mediators' report is submitted to the United Nations by Dec 10. "It is a matter for governments to take over and carry forward thereafter," he said. "Our positions as national governments have been articulated elsewhere. There are no surprises there." Washington and almost all EU member states support Kosovo's independence from Serbia as the best option for stability in the Balkans and leaders of Kosovo's 90-percent

Albanian majority say they will declare it within months. The mediators will submit their report to the United Nations by next Monday, after failing at talks last week to bridge the gap between Serbia's offer of broad autonomy and the Kosovo Albanian independence demand.

[UN Chief Presses Sudan, Europe on Darfur](#)

AFP – 6 December 2007

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said Wednesday he is sending high-level envoys to press Sudan's president to accept non-Africans in the 26,000-strong peacekeeping force for Darfur and to get critically needed helicopters and heavy trucks for the new U.N.-African Union mission. Ban said in an interview with Associated Press editors that he was "deeply concerned and disappointed by this foot-dragging of the Sudanese government" in reaching a final agreement so that the force can start deploying in Darfur in January. He said he was also concerned at the lack of support from European countries and well-equipped developing countries. He said he had spoken to many leaders around the world and "I have not gotten one single helicopter." For the force to be effective, Ban said, it needed 24 helicopters and heavy trucks. The force would have the 26,000 troops needed if Sudan would agree to contingents from Thailand, Nepal, Sweden and Norway, which Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir has so far refused to accept, Ban said. The U.N. Security Council agreed that the force should be predominantly African — at Sudan's insistence. But Khartoum has refused to approve the non-African units, even though 90 percent of the ground troops and 75 percent of the proposed force are from Africa. "So I'm now experiencing difficulties from both ends — Sudan and from our own end," said Ban, speaking at a luncheon at AP headquarters. Ban said he is sending Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Edmond Mulet and his Deputy Chief of Staff Kim Won-soo to Lisbon, Portugal, on Thursday to meet al-Bashir, who will be attending the European Union-Africa summit this weekend. He said they will be seeking to get al-Bashir to sign off on the composition of the force and on a host of technical and administrative issues, including permission for night flights, land for the force in several key towns, and a status of forces agreement. "If there is political will, I think that can be resolved," Ban said. The United States pays 25 percent of all U.N. peacekeeping operations and has provided transportation and training for some troops rotating into Sudan. The U.S. has built and operated 34 Darfur base camps for AU peacekeepers, and has expanded seven camps that will be turned over to the hybrid force, according to Carolyn Vadino of the U.S. Mission to the United Nations. Washington has also contributed nearly \$4 billion since 2005 in humanitarian, peacekeeping and development assistance to the people of Sudan, Vadino said.

NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

[U.S. report: Iran stopped nuclear weapons work in 2003](#)

CNN – 3 December 2007

Iran halted work toward a nuclear weapon under international scrutiny in 2003 and is unlikely to be able to produce enough enriched uranium for a bomb until 2010 to 2015, a U.S. intelligence report says. A declassified summary of the latest National Intelligence Estimate found with "high confidence" that the Islamic republic stopped an effort to develop nuclear weapons in the fall of 2003. The estimate is less severe than a 2005 report that judged the Iranian leadership was "determined to develop nuclear weapons despite its international obligations and international pressure." But the latest report says Iran -- which declared its ability to produce enriched uranium for a civilian energy program in 2006 -- could reverse that decision and eventually produce a nuclear weapon if it wanted to do so. Enriched uranium at low concentrations can be used to fuel nuclear power plants, but much higher concentrations are needed to yield a nuclear explosion. "We judge with moderate confidence that the earliest possible date Iran would be technically capable of producing enough highly enriched uranium for a weapon is late 2009, but that this is very unlikely," the report says. A more likely time frame for that production is between 2010 and 2015, it concludes. Iran has insisted its nuclear program is strictly aimed at producing electricity, and the country has refused the U.N. Security Council's demand to halt its enrichment program. U.S. National Security adviser Stephen Hadley expressed hope after Monday's announcement, but he said Iran remains a serious threat.

[Bush: Nuke-less Iran remains dangerous](#)

CNN – 5 December 2007

Iran remains a danger to the world even though it stopped a program to develop a nuclear weapon four years ago, President Bush said Tuesday. "Iran was dangerous, Iran is dangerous and Iran will be dangerous if they have the knowledge necessary to make a nuclear weapon," Bush said, pointing out that Tehran continues to try to enrich uranium for civilian purposes and therefore develop technology that could be used for a weapon. A declassified summary of a National Intelligence Estimate released by the U.S. government on Monday said Iran had stopped working toward a nuclear weapon in 2003 and is unlikely to be able to produce enough enriched uranium for a bomb until at least 2010. Enriched uranium at low concentrations can be used to fuel nuclear power plants, but much higher concentrations are needed to yield a nuclear explosion. The new estimate is less severe than a 2005 report that judged the Iranian leadership was "determined to develop nuclear weapons despite its international obligations and international pressure."