

# WorldWatch

by Staff

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1999

Intelligence Digest listed five reasons that 1999 portends great trouble for the world. Editor Joseph de Courcy writes, "It could hardly be a more crucial moment in world affairs." The list below contains five areas that auger the greatest threats to world stability in 1999:

» Like the collapse of a great power, the rapid rise of another, China, fuels instability. In China's case, India has reacted by joining the nuclear club, forcing Pakistan down the same path. Next, Japan will begin to rearm to counter China, then Japan's neighbors will respond to *its* rearming. And so the cycle goes.

» The general instability caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union is not being felt just around its borders. In Africa, war threatens to spread across the continent, with troops from Angola, Burundi, Chad (backed by Libya), Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda, and Zimbabwe all reported to be active in the Congo.

» The economic crisis—spread from Asia via Russia to virtually the whole developing world—now imperils major industrialized Western economies, and, echoing the 1930s, calls for protectionism are beginning to sound. The crisis will be heightened by the introduction of the Euro in January 1999, as well as by fears over the year 2000 computer bug (Y2K).

» Of all the major crises brewing, the Middle East is of greatest concern, partly because of its potential to escalate out of control—even to the extent of the first use of nuclear weapons since 1945—and partly because of the number of major flash points pending in the next 12 months. These include the proposed delivery of S-300 missiles to Cyprus (bringing Turkey to war against Greece and Russia, thus freeing Syria to attack Israel); Turkish elections (returning the Islamists to power with similar consequences); Yasser Arafat's threat to declare Palestinian statehood in May (prompting an Israeli move to retake the West Bank and Gaza Strip with obvious consequences); and the likely deployment next fall of Israel's anti-missile Arrow system (nullifying the immense Arab investment in missiles, and therefore, providing them an incentive for a pre-emptive strike).

» The collapse of the Soviet Union, like the collapse of any empire, has left the border regions in turmoil. This has led directly to the first war in Europe for over 50 years and could lead to further upsets. Russia's economic crisis is deepening daily and could easily lead to a political coup and even a revolution if food supplies continue to dwindle.

**Europe**

Twenty-eight European foreign and defense ministers met in Rome to discuss developing a defense structure capable of independent action. Recently, British Prime Minister Tony Blair has pushed the long-debated issue of a "European defense identity" to the fore.

### **Famine**

Though the world's largest relief operation is pouring aid into Sudan, people are still dying by the thousands. Sudan's civil war, in which an estimated 1.5 million people have died, keeps crops from being planted.

### **Religion**

Pope John Paul II has expressed a keen desire to visit Jerusalem as part of the millennium celebrations. The pope has declared the Holy Land and Rome as the Holy See's two focal points of the millennium celebrations.

### **Science**

Scientists have grown human embryo cells in a lab for the first time so that they can produce brain, liver, heart and other organ cells for organ transplants. The hope is that when a child is born, his cells can be duplicated and provide non-rejecting organs for a lifetime.