

WorldWatch

by Staff

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Weather

This year has seen the greatest intensity of natural disasters since the 1930s. Nearly 65% of U.S. counties have applied for federal emergency aid after various weather-related calamities. Because many of these catastrophes occurred in crop-producing areas, the U.S. may have to import corn for the first time in its history.

Terrorism

- » U.S. intelligence agencies report that Iran is running 11 camps that will train 5,000 would-be terrorists from a dozen Moslem nations. Iran is also supporting Hezbollah in making preparations for firing a new wave of Katyuska rockets on Israel.
- » CIA director John Deutch told Congress that the West has seen nothing yet in terms of international terrorism. He said that Iran sees terror as a strategic weapon that it *will* use in future conflicts with the U.S.
- » *Jane's Sentinel* reports that Syria and Iran have amassed two of the largest stockpiles of chemical weapons in the Third World and the means to deliver them. Syria, with the help of North Korea, has begun manufacturing Scud missiles that could reach any spot in Israel.

Germany

German Defense Minister Volker Ruhe confirmed his nation's support of the Mideast peace process by saying that European security is closely tied to the situation in the Middle East and Israel in particular. Israel has asked Germany for its help in preventing Arab nations from obtaining long-range missiles. Conversely, German political and business leaders indicated recently that they intend to expand their "cooperation office" near Gaza in the Palestinian territory.

Israel

Israeli security forces are on "extremely high alert" because of their belief that the Islamic Jihad is planning a major terrorist attack to avenge the killing of their leader in October 1995.

Drugs

A federal study shows the U.S. teenage drug use between 1992-1995 skyrocketed 105%. Nearly 11% of 12-17 year olds used drugs during this period. LSD use jumped 183%; marijuana, 141%; and cocaine, 166%.

Roman Catholic Church

At a service marking the 400th anniversary of part of the Orthodox Church submitting to the pope's authority, Pope John Paul II renewed his appeal for Catholic-Orthodox unity. On the 450th

anniversary of Martin Luther's death—when the Pope wanted to announce the lifting of Luther's excommunication—an advisor to German bishops said, "Is the Pope becoming a Protestant?"

Pestilence

Researchers report that mysterious microbes—some lethal—are being discovered worldwide, and there are no cures in sight. Some of these new bugs include:

- » *Hepatitis G*, carried by 2-5 million people, which remains in blood for up to 10 years.
- » *Equine morbilli virus*, causes violent respiratory illness and death in horses and humans.
- » *Bartonella*, a sometimes fatal disease that causes illnesses from cat scratch fever to heart valve infection, is carried by cats and transmitted by fleas.