

WorldWatch

by Staff

Forerunner, "WorldWatch," July 1996

Earthquakes

Though +4.0 earthquakes are occurring at the rate of around 175 tremors per week, their intensity over the last month has greatly decreased from previous months. Just ten temblors +6.0 have rocked the earth since last month, and only one over 7.0 occurred (7.2, Papua New Guinea, April 29).

Large earthquake totals for 1996 as of June 3:

+6.0s: 61 +7.0s: 7

Wild Fires

Extensive forest fires raged across Mongolia, killing at least 17 people and destroying one-quarter of its forests. Bitterly cold snowstorms, artificially induced by cloud-seeding to put out the fires, killed two shepherds and 5,000 cattle. Melting snow later flooded large areas of pasture, drowning many animals.

Drought

Some Texas ranchers are feeding their cattle cactus because the intense drought has turned their pastures to dust, while others have begun slaughtering their herds to avoid the high cost of feeding them. As only a few inches of rain have fallen since last October, Oklahoma farmers are considering plowing under the winter wheat crop and declaring a total loss. Such drastic measures bode ill for U. S. food prices and supplies.

Health

» A meningitis epidemic in Sub-Saharan Africa, the worst in memory, has infected 100,000 and killed more than 10,000.

» Since 1973, at least 29 previously unknown diseases, such as Ebola and AIDS, have surfaced around the world. In that time, twenty well-known diseases—cholera, yellow fever, malaria, tuberculosis and others—have re-emerged. Ease of travel spreads infectious agents quickly, while mutated forms of these "bugs" resist medications.

Jerusalem

Following Binyamin Netanyahu's election as Israel's Prime Minister, Yassir Arafat warned that "nobody can stop" the creation of a Palestinian state with its capital in Jerusalem. Netanyahu responded, "Jerusalem will never be divided and will remain under Israeli sovereignty."

Russia

Moscow has renewed ties with Soviet-era client regimes throughout the Middle East, such as Syria and Iran. In 1994 President Boris Yeltsin claimed he had to make good on existing contracts, but no new deals would be struck. However, the existing deals are effective through 1999!

Terrorism

A Pentagon study reported that a culture of botulism was found in the possession of a German gang member. Even tiny quantities of botulism can contaminate water and food or be spread through the air. Such portable chemical and biological means of terror have grown significantly in recent years.

Crime

Murder by teenagers has been increasing rapidly, and criminologists warn that teen crime is about to explode. "There is a ticking 'crime bomb' in America," they say, as teens make up a growing percentage of the U.S. population. Killing by teens ages 14 through 17 nearly tripled between 1985 and 1994.