

# WorldWatch

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## Britain

According to America's leading business-trend spotter, Faith Popcorn, future Britain will experience a demographic shift toward an Asian-dominated economic class. She dubs the future country "Britafornia," saying that its racial and nationality changes will emulate those of California, where whites are no longer a racial majority and Asians supply the lion's share of the capital. "Consider that a large and increasing number of Britain's college graduates and successful entrepreneurs are Asian newcomers," she writes. "These recent immigrants, many from China, India, and Pakistan, have achieved higher living standards than average whites. The resulting demographic and income shifts will have profound (and not always positive) implications for British social life."

## Abortion/Breast Cancer

A newly released analysis of breast cancer rates in Europe suggests that women who have an abortion double their risk of breast cancer. Just as insurance companies assess risk, researchers examined Britain, Sweden, Finland, and the Czech Republic for a statistical link between abortion and breast cancer. According to Dr. Joel Brind, professor of biology and endocrinology at the City University of New York, "The connection is showing up. . . . When you look at the incidence of breast cancer, its rise cannot be accounted for by anything else but abortion, and it's happening in just those groups that were exposed to abortion." Based on past abortion rates, the study predicts breast cancer rates will more than double in England over a 25-year span. Because of the effects of hormones on the body, the highest risk is for women who have an abortion before bearing their first child.

## European Union

» A senior Israeli intelligence source reports that tens of millions of dollars are being sent by the European Union (EU) directly to Palestinian Authority (PA) Chairman Yasser Arafat. The source claims Arafat uses the money to pay his security forces to launch or aid in attacks against Israel. "For a time, EU funding used to be directed toward specific projects," the source said. "Now, it goes straight to Arafat, who has complete discretion over the money. We know that this is a source of funding to ensure the continuation of the uprising." EU spokesman Gunnar Wiegand responds that the EU regards the PA as a "necessary partner to fight the extremists and to work for peace."

» The EU's process of creating a directly-elected president is a significant step toward a European superstate. Such a president would have a greater democratic mandate than any national leader within the Union. The proposal will be fleshed out by a convention to be headed by the veteran former French president, Valerie Giscard d'Estaing. The so-called Laeken Declaration describes the Union as "at a crossroads" as it prepares to become "one big family" following enlargement from 15 to up to 30 countries. The final draft also argues for a new EU constitution and includes proposals for new "European electoral constituencies" which would encourage Europe-wide political parties rather

than merely groupings of national parties. According to German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, "the ideal outcome" would be that the convention would draft a formal EU constitution.

» European Union leaders are about to declare the 15-nation bloc's joint rapid reaction force operational, while further efforts are necessary to boost military capabilities. "The Union is henceforth capable of carrying out crisis management operations," the draft document for its inauguration says. "The development of the means and capacities that the Union has at its disposal will allow it progressively to take on ever more complex operations." EU leaders pledged in 1999 to create a force of 60,000 troops by 2003 to conduct peacekeeping and crisis management tasks in areas where NATO, dominated by the United States, chooses not to get directly involved. The EU is still trying to clinch a deal with the alliance over access to NATO planning resources.

## **Chip Implants**

Applied Digital Solutions of Palm Beach, Florida, may be the first company to sell microchips designed to be implanted into human beings. Technologists have long discussed implantable chips, while others—those who object on religious or constitutional grounds—denounce them. However, the company says the specter of terrorism is shifting attitudes. "The bottom line is, when people are trying to regain their peace of mind, they're more open to new approaches," says Keith Bolton, Applied Digital's chief technology officer. The company expects to receive Food and Drug Administration approval for the chips by midyear 2002. It already has secured permission from the Federal Communications Commission—necessary because the chips use radio frequencies. The direct union of man and computer is no longer dismissed out of hand. "I'd be shocked if within 10 years you couldn't get a chip implanted that would unlock your house, start your car, and give you money," predicts Chris Hables Gray, a computer science professor at the University of Great Falls, Montana, and author of *The Cyborg Citizen*.