

WorldWatch

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Asia Transforming

» China has enforced its ruthless family-planning policy for more than 20 years. By limiting urban couples to a single child and most rural couples to two, China has managed to slow the growth of the world's largest population. Now it must figure out what to do with a huge and potentially destabilizing gender imbalance. On average, boys outnumber girls by 17%, and in some areas that figure rises to 35%. Valerie Hudson, a professor at Brigham Young University, says societies with large numbers of unmarried males tend to experience more crime, unrest, and violence. While acknowledging that gender imbalance is only one factor influencing levels of violence, she points out that the 30 million unhappy, unmarried men that China will likely have by 2020 could become kindling for forces of political revolution at home. Another scenario would see the government deciding to use the surplus men for "military adventurism" and promoting their participation in the national interest.

» Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev first proposed an Asian counterpart to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in an address to the UN General Assembly in 1992. Now a new Pan-Asian security forum, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building measures in Asia (CICA), has been formed to speak for nearly half the world's population. Russia, China, India, and Pakistan—all nuclear powers—are among its 15 member nations. With Israel and the Palestinian Authority included, it also includes the participants in the world's two hottest crises—the Palestine and Kashmir disputes. Egypt—whose Sinai Peninsula is in Asia—is also a member, as are Afghanistan, Turkey, Iran, Mongolia, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan.

United Nations and Children

» A recent call-to-arms report by the UN is urging world leaders to campaign for "universal registration" of children to restore the rights of so-called "invisible children" across the globe. The UN Children's Fund estimates that 41% of births in the world go unregistered, a horrifying thought for globalists. According to this Orwellian view, the unregistered child may later be unable to get a formal job, passport, or marriage license.

» Non-Governmental Organizations and the European media are increasingly attacking the British government for showing little or no commitment to a UN treaty it signed. This treaty states that all children are entitled to a set of social, economic, civil, and political rights. Save The Children alleges that violence towards children is an "everyday sight in English streets and supermarkets"—a clear reference to parental corporal punishment. The Children's Rights Alliance for England says the British government's failure to ban corporal punishment in the home shows it is not serious about protecting children. In response to the government wanting to avoid heavy-handed intrusion into family life, John Errington, England program director for Save The Children, said: "Our

Government must stop treating what happens to children in the family as a private matter."

Russia

» NATO, an alliance set up more than a half century ago to contain Moscow during the Cold War, has formally welcomed Russia as a junior partner. Russia will now have more authority—including the power to veto, in some cases—than under an earlier, less formal arrangement. Under this new pact, NATO and Russia will decide only on those issues on which they can agree. Issues that are more contentious will be left off their agenda, and NATO will keep a free hand in setting and implementing policy. The Bush administration would like to see NATO improve its military capacity as it enlarges to complete European reunification.

» According to the annual report of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Russia has for the first time overtaken the United States to become the world's leading conventional arms exporter, increasing deliveries sixfold over the last five years. China topped the list of importers for 2001, though India and Pakistan both increased their spending on arms imports. Russia's exports rose 24% to nearly \$5 billion in 2001 compared with the U.S. figure of \$4.6 billion, a drop of 65% since 1998. The U.S. was still by far the biggest exporter over the last five years, with \$44.8 billion compared with Russia's \$17.4 billion.