

Futurewatch

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An information service on current, international perspective on our futures, prepared by futures scanner *Jennifer Coote*, NZ Futures Trust. Annual dates in last two digits.

Peace/War/World Affairs

J. Schell surveys the resumption of the resort to war and mass slaughter in the twentieth century as the nineteenth century systems of peace in Europe broke down. Only the rise of the nuclear threat paralysed the great powers. President Wilson's vision of a peaceful world based on principles of democracy, self-determination and the rule of law were countered by three protracted revolutions, scientific, democratic and industrial which provided vast new resources and recruits for the war system. The UN tried to bridge the Cold War Impasse and foster the Wilsonian vision in the face of the emerging scourge of "peoples war", where politics rather than advanced technologies provided the strategy. As the destructive power of war has accelerated, a new path to peace emerged, the Gandhian revision of violence and politics, which eventually enabled Eastern European masses to peacefully change their political system.

Extending the coercive option leads to Empire, which already is meeting its "stopper", nuclear proliferation. If the will is there, the co-operative agenda should operate at every level:- neighbourhood democracy, national democracy, with negotiated governance systems internationally, multi formed and flexible, yet channels of the rule of law. America will need to choose Republic over Empire, yet remain engaged in the world. *Harper's Magazine*, March, April, also *The Unconquered*

World, Metropolitan Books, 03.

Demilitarising the Mind: African Agendas for Peace and Security, Ed Alex de Waal, Africa Worldpress, 02 Explores succinctly a wide range of aspects of the predisposition to violence in many African countries, and ways by which regional efforts, utilising existing African arrangements, can promote post-conflict demilitarisation. Consideration included of the longer term influence of those most marginalised, women, youth and the poor. Highlights the concept of "security communities", and reminds us that African countries are very youthful in populations and in political experience. A study which could be applied elsewhere.

S. Elworthy, Oxford Research group, *Resurgence*, May/June 03, outlines the potency of non violence in the cycles of violence from atrocity to shock/terror, fear/pain, grief, anger, bitterness, revenge, retaliation and atrocity again. The anger stage is the critical intervention time. Interventions can be physical, (peacekeeping, protection, control and removal of arms) political, (rule of law, free democratic elections, control of militias, freedom of media) and psychological (active listening, mediation, bridgebuilding, truth and reconciliation.) Applied systematically, robustly and adequately funded, these interventions work.

Deepening Democracy: Institutional Innovations in Empowered Participatory Governance, Eds A. Fung, E. O. Wright, Verso, Vol 4. of Real Utopias Project, exploring tensions between dreams and practice. Four real-world experiments in the redesign of democratic institutions, from US, Porto Alegre (Brazil) and Kerala, illustrate three prevailing principles: bottom-up participation, practical orientation and deliberative solution making.

Democracy and War: the End of an Illusion? E. A. Henderson, Lynne Rienner, 02. A prevailing assumption

is assessed on a variety of situational variables, illustrating circumstances when democracies can, and do fight each other. The persistence of peace among them today is mostly due to a strong international security regime.

War, Warriors, Victims

Military historian *F. W. Kagan* considers that the present US defense policy focuses too much on winning wars, disregarding the political objectives, as is evidenced by the aftermath of Afghanistan and Iraq. The whole focus of the present transformation of the US military, based on Network-Centric Warfare, works on a target-set mentality. Vast complexes of information networks provide "dominant battlespace awareness" enabling any opposing moves to be effectively countered. Significant groundforces may be necessary only after this "shock and awe" attack, but they must be lightly equipped, swift, flexible. Securing population centres and the minimisation of human catastrophes, essential for the achievement of political aims, requires a different set of resources and training. Equipment to enhance troop "stand-off capabilities", is not suitable for control of often hostile population centres. Such troops should not be shooting anyone who might harm them, but they need sufficient armour such as present tanks provide, for protection in close engagement. Both wars reinforce the continuing centrality of ground-forces rather than speed and information. *Policy Review*, Aug/Sept 03.

National Security academic *S. Biddle* shows that despite assumptions of the success of special operations forces and precision guided weapons in Afghanistan, US forces were frequently required to use close quarters fighting. The opposing forces quickly adopted counter-measures to those of US troops. Resolute defenders can survive within the rubble to mount serious resistance. Precision firepower must be combined with skilled ground manoeuvre.

Which raises doubts about the assumptions in, *Ly Waging War Without Weapons? The Changing Culture of Military Conflict*, C. Coker and Reinher, 02. In future there will be no place

for the warrior ideal, as the new warriors are irrevocably linked to machines that think for them. Information systems, other equipment, and also drugs to affect personal reactions, will change the military ethos.

D. P. Southall, B. A. O'Hare, British Medical Journal, 21-28 Dec, 02 examine the literature on arms trading, especially to the poor countries, where the majority of conflicts since 1945 have occurred, and the effects on the health status of the women and children. These comprised most of the civilians casualties, who suffered most in these conflicts. Their general health suffered drastically, aggravated by social and economic disruptions especially displacement and resulting mortality. Measures to control or eliminate the arms trade, illicit or otherwise, and its support systems should be taken urgently and the UN reconfigured to allow greater voice from the poor countries.

M. Naim, Foreign Policy, Jan/Feb 03, argues that governments are fighting five wars of globalization against illegal trading in:- drugs, arms, intellectual property, people trafficking, money laundering, as well as lesser commodities such as human organs, endangered species and toxic waste. Governments could do much better in these wars if they:- developed more flexible notions of sovereignty, strengthened existing multilateral institutions and moved from repression to regulation.

Extreme Hate & Violence

French researcher *O. Roy* examines the transformation of European Islam into two alternative forms "European", and "universalist". The former adherents maintain links to their original country and are gradually reintegrating, through a distinct European Islamic church. Some of the younger locally born are becoming highly radicalised, cutting bonds to original countries and identifying with a universal "umma", or community of the faithful, with strong violent features. This "umma" is constructed, emphasising difference from the host culture, and its subcultural vision can be exported to any country, regardless of that prevailing culture. This radical Islamic mode is technically

modern, decultured (rejecting both host and traditional Muslim culture) and globalised. The chosen battlefields are not in most of Middle Eastern conflicts but on the margins of the universalist "umma", driven by personal reaction to Westernization. Its an extreme example of religious revivalism expressing individual identity crisis as traditional social and cultural influences breakdown. *National Interest*, Spring.

In the same issue, Australian governance academic D. M. Jones examines the growing arc of instability to the north in S.E. Asia. He applies the insights (1992) of E. Gellner. In Indonesia especially some under 40 middle class males are retreating into a closed world of sectarian identity, in response to the turbulence of rapid growth, social change, and the breakdown of authoritarian regimes. The result is a form of 'salafism', a faux tradition, a closed ideology which thrives best under social conditions arising from modernity. It seeks to leap over the bureaucratically centralised post-colonial system into a transnational, networked cybercaliphate. Thus the war against terror is not a geographical one against traditional Islamic states, but against the networks in the West, where authority is hampered by a "paradox of liberal Olympianism" which tolerates minority difference even though it nurtures hate and terror aiming to purify Western secularism.

Preachers of Hate: The Rise of the Far Right, A. Roxburgh, Gibson Square, 02, provides a carefully and extensively reported account of a nasty virus working in European politics, with no apparent antidote. It is a compound of hates: the European Union, non-whites, non-Christian people and, (coded) Jews, combined with an obsession about Hitler. All this coincides with a long-overdue, but crisis ridden, reform of the EU.

America & The Rest

Icon Book/Disinformation Co, 02- a futurist/cultural critic and an anthropologi *Why Do People Hate America?* Z. Sadar, M.W. Davies, st write of their concern that "America's idealised view of the human future permits a perverse, dangerous and often brutally destructive dis-

connection between end and means." The resulting "reasonable fear of the... hyperpower ...moves beyond fear and begins to crystallise into hatred." Unique, comprehensive analysis.

Captain America and the Crusade Against Evil: The Dilemma of Zealous Nationalism, R. Jewett, J. S. Lawrence bring US theological insight and pop culture to their lucid, extensive, shrewd analysis of the US sense of mission.

K. Larres, *Washington Quarterly*, Spring 03 explores the mutual European (German)/US incomprehension arising from value gaps and a half century of different political experience. Bridging measures are suggested.

Harvard national security academic S. P. Rosen, *National Interest*, Spring 03, considers that if there is an emerging American Empire, it faces different problems to being in interstate parity. A hierarchy of power must be enforced through-walls; the application of overwhelming force followed by withdrawal; and indirect rule. US power can be stretched, even broken, by multiple hostile peoples who cannot mount a direct military challenge, but can use unconventional means to create disorder. Empire may not be an anomaly in the pre- or post-modern eras. Nation states may have been made possible by the temporary conditions of industrial society.

Australian commentator P. Kelly, *same issue*, examines the concerns rising over the US-Australian relationship, in which the middle-power is a model ally while the superpower is becoming more demanding. The shared strategic purpose appears to be clouded as Australia tries to balance the partnership with neighbourhood collaboration in S. E. and E. Asia.

Listings

The Human Face of Security: Asia-Pacific Perspectives. Ed D. Dickens, Strategic Studies Centres, ANU, VUW, 02. While the issues now embraced by the new security agenda are not new, their portfolio definition and its importance features significantly in foreign policy. These papers from the *Council for Security Cooperation in Asia-Pacific*, (CSCAP) 2001 are representative of much of the regional thinking.

Economics/Business

Small Business Futures

T. Fuller, small business specialist, Teesside Business School, Univ. of Teesside, edits *Futures*, May 03, with eight worldwide research views of small business, rarely covered in the futures field, from Russia, S. Africa, Taiwan, the Internet, micro-enterprise, China and the western perspective. Small business is an individual creation dependent upon its environment but shaping that environment; a series of change agents. China illustrates that the capitalist framework is not necessary for successful small business, it may even be a hinderance. The diversity of small business can hedge society against risk. Innovative small business is more common in unstable times; stability breeds conservatism. It is vital to socio-economic futures.

Pathways Out of Poverty: Innovations in Microfinance for the Poorest Families, Ed S. Daley-Harris, Kumarian Press, 02 presents a multitude of essays for a Microcredit Summit+5 (after 1997), Nov 2002, which developed a Campaign to reach 100 million of the world's poorest families, especially women, with credit for self-employment and other business services, by 2005.

Risky Business

Leading US business academics *N. Ferguson*, *L. Kotlikoff* warn that the US is becoming fiscally overstretched. By 2005 the 77 million "baby boomers" will start collecting their Social Welfare benefits, by 2011 they will be collecting Medicare. The numbers will climb to 2030. The size of this entitlement renders the US technically insolvent, reports of which have been buried. A significant jump in inflation will have small effect. Fiscal balance requires increasing taxes, or cutting spending. The harder it gets to pay for the most politically sensitive item the more likely that the rest will be cut. *Financial Times*, 15 July 03, p15.

Going Off the Rails: Global Capital and the Crisis of Legitimacy, *J. Plender*, John Wiley, 03, examines the many ways by which the drive to increase shareholder value in the 1980s-1990s

was flawed. Dealmaking and the drive for corporate control beat working and the buyers' shareholders lost out. The fundamental problems in the structure of American and thus global capitalism will become more pressing over time. *Regulatory Policies in OECD Countries: from Intervention to Regulatory Governance*, OECD, (www.SourceOECD.org) 02. Examines 25 years' experience which has enabled such tools to become more effective in almost all the 30 countries. Regulatory impact analysis is becoming widely used.

B. Easton argues that NZ's single policy instrument, setting the base interest rate for the regulation of price stability, renders a small open economy, and its tradeable/export sector, hostage to the ebbs and flows of the domestic/import sector. Other proposals should be considered including applying the government deficit/surplus to controlling the macroeconomy. *"The Listener"* 20 Sept 03, p 38.

P. Brain, (Australian) National Institute of Economic Research, *BRW*, 17-23 July 03, p. 48 warns that the world will pay a high price for the failure to develop a synthesis of monetarist-Keynsian theory, because of the influence of New Right ideology. It would have affirmed the need to limit the inflationary pressures of "bubbles" by targeting money supply to control wider asset prices, property, equities, and prevented debt-build up, high current account deficits and low domestic savings.

B. K. Gordon, US political scientist, *Foreign Affairs*, July/Aug, 03 argues against the current US drive to develop regional trade blocs and bilateral arrangements. Supposedly, this promotes completion of the global open system under WTO, but it is risky since it is being paralleled by similar developments in E. Asia, turning those economies inwards. Currently US exports to E. Asia are massive, though equalled roughly by its exports to rest of N. America, and to Europe, a pattern unequalled by other major economies. US domestic perception that it is not competitive in global markets is wrong, but this drives the "regional" policy to the detriment of the national interest for the global open system.

Eminent Business academic/writer *I. I.*

Mitroff, & M. C. Alpaslan, *Harvard Business Review*, April 03, outline the experience gained from a twenty year study of the crisis readiness of the major US firms. Two types emerged:- crisis ready and crisis prone (reactive). The former were smaller in number, but their preparedness paid off in several ways:- they had faced and minimised a number of emergencies, reduced the frequency of these, stayed in business longer and their reputations held up better. See also *Crisis Leadership: Planning for the Unthinkable*, I. I. Mitroff, John Wiley, 03.

Yakuza: Japan's Criminal Underworld, D. Kaplan, A. Dubro, Univ Calif. Press, 03 is an updated version of standard text, showing how the new generation of corporate mob bosses have changed, their role in the Japanese "Bubble" and their connections to the under-worlds of China, Russia and S. E. Asia.

"Dragons" Ascendant, Emerging?

J. Henderson, B. Reilly, Australasian political academics, *National Interest*, Summer 03, track the rising star of China in Oceania, incorporating the small island states into its quest to become a new Asia-Pacific power politically and economically. Western interests are declining. The attractions of the Oceanic states lie in their large exclusive economic zone with maritime resources, fish and minerals; the leverage of a group of 14 small states in the international voting fora; and their instability, as political corruption eases influence and deal making. Long standing tensions between the Oceanic Chinese residents whose trading interests may be complementary to those of local populations can also cause them to suffer outbreaks of ethnic violence. The US, Japan, Australia and New Zealand could jointly counter this influence. R. Crocombe has provided much greater detail on all this in his comprehensive survey of *The South Pacific*, U.S.P, 01.

From 2004, China and the ten ASEAN nations will be moving into a Free Trade Association which could, within a decade, sweep away trade and investment barriers. Reactions are mixed about impacts on ASEAN but for China there are more than economic

benefits. It hopes to develop a political grouping as a power to counter that of Europe and the US. The US is also seeking FTAs with the ASEAN states. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 17 July, 03, p 20, pp28-30.

According to Y. Huang, T. Khanna, (MIT/Harvard), since 1990 India has taken a different path to major economic power status, it has not depended on foreign direct investment, nor on a prosperous diaspora, but it has produced a number of world class companies to rival the West and its financial and legal infrastructure is far stronger, though its GDP is well behind. At the microenterprise level it has as much dynamism as China as it builds upwards from its soft brand of socialism, while China has been shielding its state owned enterprises. The future of both countries will be determined by how well they utilise their resources, and for India, how much populist governments will be distracted by ethnic tensions. *Foreign Policy*, July-August 03.

Environment

Making Plans

T. Bubbs, Lincoln Univ. examines NZ official initiatives since 1990 to develop capacity for long-term or "green" environmental planning. International pressure from a variety of sources has been the driving force in national environmental planning worldwide. Such plans are comprehensive and integrated, long-term, contain specific objectives and targets, involve public deliberation and stakeholders and are formally documented policy. NZ capacity for this depends on two elements:- the formal political-institutional infrastructure and the policy development capacity of the green planning agents(advocates). Integration of the former into all institutions across government is necessary but has not been achieved in NZ, especially since under the Resource Management Act, local government has the main responsibility for environmental quality.

NZ national level capacity is limited, with major gaps, minimal resources and support-level capacity Highest level political support for environmental Ministries is vulnerable, with

bureaucratic and anti-green criticism. A major step forward, the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy,⁰¹ depends on adequate resources and integrating major players, agriculture and transport.

At the political-economic-institutional level, the longer term effects of New Right ideology have constrained state development of social and environmental policies, while the problems have increased. The public service needs greater capacity to achieve goals across policy areas and to assess their outcomes. The traditional mechanisms for reconciling differing interest and values in a pluralist society has diminished *Political Science*, June 02.

Environment, May 02 summarises, p 11, seven core questions devised by scientists for understanding the basic character of the interactions between nature and society, see also *Science*, 27 April 01, pp 461-462, I. R. Kates et al.

The Wentworth View

Eleven leading Australian scientists from various disciplines form this "college" which has published some of its proposals for sustainable care of the environment in scientific reports, eg *Blueprint for a living Continent: a way forward from the Wentworth Group of concerned scientists*, WWF Australia, 02, summary, *Ecos*, April-June, 03. Topics in summary:- Blueprint for Change, River Rights, Trading Water, Fishing for the Best Flows, Peddling the New Commodities, The Murray or the MCG? Reform Lost in Red Tape.

Water Worlds

The third World Water Forum, Kyoto, March, focused over 5000 delegates on the water supply crisis in developing countries, where safe water is scarce. The fundamental issue debated is water supply as "a public good". Social and political instability have countered making it a tradeable commodity in some countries. The major water company and water privatiser Suez has exited the developing countries saying "We now agree that water is a public asset and belongs to everyone. All people

should have the right to water, but we need to transform that right into a reality." Possible international water wars were also discussed. *The Bulletin/Newsweek*, 1 April, 03, p14. See also M. W. Rosegrant et al, *Environment*, Sept 03 for full outline and three scenarios.

Science, 22 Aug, 03, pp 1034-1037 covers some important research efforts in the deep-seas, particularly around seamounts in N. Atlantic.

Climate Change Developments

Abrupt climate changes have punctuated Earth's history. W. S. Broecker explains two hypotheses, one based on the deep ocean currents, another arises from the dynamics of the tropical atmosphere-ocean. *Science* 6 June 03, pp 1519-1521. R. B. Alley et al., *Science*, 28 March 03, pp 2005-2007, explore the possibility that human forcing may trigger another abrupt change. They argue for more research to improve modelling, with better monitoring systems and policies to improve adaptability and resilience of ecosystems and economies. The role of the ecosystems of trees in climate change provides new understanding of forest canopies in cloud formation and atmospheric chemistry. Trees also respond in species-specific ways to higher carbon dioxide levels with impacts on plant-animal interaction. *Science*, 11 July, 03, pp 183, 186. Long-term studies of tropical trees by specialists D. and D. Clark indicate that these forests are highly sensitive to global warming and could become a major source of greenhouse gas rather than a sink. In hot years, trees grow less. *Science*, 25 April, 03, pp 566-567. An assessment of the debate around the "sceptical environmentalist" B. Lomborg, *Nature*, 15 May, 03, pp 216-218 indicates that his disciplinary colleagues consider his data is correct but his analysis is not..

Australian Dept of Health and Ageing, Human Health and Climate Change in Oceania: a Risk Assessment, produced by an ANZ medical and climate science team shows significantly more deaths from heat stress, though an ageing population in any case is more vulnerable to temperature changes. *UNEP Programme*

Finances Initiatives report Climate Change and the Financial Services Industry warns that financial losses from natural disasters are doubling each decade and climate-driven natural disasters have the potential "to wreak havoc across the world's stock markets and financial centres." *Go-Between*, No 94, Oct-Nov 02, pp19-20.

Greenhouse and Statehouse: the Evolving State Government Role in Climate Change, Pew Center, Nov 02 examines initiatives in nine different states which have focused on specific sectors as vehicles for climate change policies. They are well ahead of the Federal government, but could provide models for wider consideration.

A.B. Pittock examines next steps to inform both public and policy makers regarding recommendations from the *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Environment*, Dec 02. *T.J. Wilbanks et al* explore *Possible Responses to Climate Change: Integration, Mitigation and Adaptation, Environment*, June 03.

Futures Thinking

Islam, Postmodernism and Other Futures: a Ziauddin Sardar Reader; Eds S. Inayatullah, G. Boxwell, Pluto 03, is a comprehensive introduction to a major futurist and columnist, who has critiqued the dominant Western worldview while rethinking his Islamic heritage. Three parts:- Rethinking Islam, (the Shari'ah, nationalism, IT, Muslim civilisation); postmodernism (the clash of worldviews over the next fifty years, Christian-Muslim relations, Walt Disney and history); Other futures, (western "colonisation" of futures, Asian cultures and futures, non-western views of chaos theory) and more. Valuable editorial introduction.

Futures, March 03, whole issue, examines *Democracy Works: People Thinking About Futures*. Peace researcher/futurist J. Galtung edits and discusses a 2000 re-examination of a massive, worldwide research study conducted in late 1960s on popular anticipations of 2000. Most of the 2 million+ respondents to the extensive questionnaire were under 40. Another study was conducted among experts.

The people were largely right about what

they expected for 2000, but the experts were more often wrong. The overall anticipation was sombre: people expected what they did not hope for and hoped for what they did not expect. Core western countries were less accurate than those termed "periphery", perhaps the latter understood more "where the shoe pinches". There was a premonition of postmodern reality. The failure of experts may be ascribed to their narrow disciplinary thinking and their use of prediction.

The Singularity, J. J. Bell, *The Futurist*, May-June 03, see also Singularity watch (<http://www.singularitywatch.com/>) is a mathematical term for a point of departure from reality. *R. Kurzweil* applies this to technological change so rapid and profound it could create rupture in the very fabric of human history. "It could emerge in the later first quarter of this century-c.2030, as machine intelligence exceeds and merges with human, and convergence of technologies in bioscience, nanotech etc give rise to new definitions of life, nature and human. *The Matrix* gives some idea of the result. Trans- or post-humanists are its enthusiasts, while *B. Joy*, computer systems guru warns "We may be the last humans.... Knowledge alone will enable mass destruction."

State of the World, 2003, Special 20th Annual Ed, Worldwatch, W.W.Norton, reports on progress toward building a sustainable society with succinct, well-documented essays:- History of our future: Watching birds disappear; Linking population, women and biodiversity; Charting a new energy future; Scrapping mining dependence; and of special interest:- Uniting divided cities; Engaging religion in the quest for a sustainable world; Malaria.

Health/Medicine

New Broom at WHO

Its Commission on Human Security Report, May 03, emphasised the "prevention of poverty-related health threats as perhaps the greatest burden of human insecurity. Most preventable infectious diseases, nutritional deprivation and maternity related risks are concentrated among the world's poorest people. Poverty and disease

set up a vicious spiral with negative economic and human consequences" WHO under its new Director-General, *Jong Wook Lee*, faces priorities: the creation of primary health care services in functioning health-care systems, as a human right; the development of a single and inclusive global disease surveillance network to meet challenges such as SARS; and similar systems to monitor non-communicable diseases to track risk factors and develop preventive programmes for hypertension, tobacco and alcohol use, obesity.

The Lancet, 17 May 03, p1665. *The Lancet*, 19 July, 03 p179, reports that Dr J. W. Lee is leading WHO with a new confident vision and programmes. Top priority HIV/AIDS aims to get 3 million people in developing countries on antiretroviral treatment by 2005.

WHO Commission on Macroeconomics and Health proposed practical measures to improve health R&D for progress on the above priorities, defining it as a "global public good". *Commentary, Nature*, 10 April 03, p 561-562, suggests extending the small-science approach by decentralising and funding a number of smaller research centres, such as already exists in some middle income countries, Malaysia, Brazil, China, which could be harnessed into a global health-research network. Their advantages include: in house expertise, autonomy over their research priorities and national research funding systems relatively free of politics. WHO is also contributing to a new evaluation of intellectual property, innovation and public health, as several innovative developments and a drive from top scientists pushes for WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organisation) to promote "open" innovation models, patent-free. *Nature*, 10 July 03, p 118.

Since 1997 the fight against malaria has been led by the *Multilateral Initiative on Malaria (WHO)* whose third conference, Tanzania, was well attended by the African countries where 90% of the related deaths occur. Efforts are underway to boost training of African scientists and strengthen links with research centres in rich countries, for both basic research and development of vaccines and drugs. African states face the challenge of fund-

ing more initiatives themselves if the promise to halve the malaria toll by 2010 is to be met. Some of the debt burden shifting could be refunded into this. The complete sequencing of the malaria parasite's genome by an international team 02, heightens the tensions between those who seek to develop drugs and vaccines, and the need to improve existing counter-measures such as insecticide-impregnated bednets.

Nature, 28 Nov, 02, pp 351-352; 3 Oct 02, pp 426-431.

Journal of Social Issues, Vol 59/3, 03, focuses on *The Residential Context of Health*, from the European Network for Housing Research. Topics range over Housing and Mental Health; Owning v. Renting; Residence, Poverty and Health; Residential Activities, Stress and Health. Concepts as well as practical measures are examined. It assumes a view of health as a condition of physical, psychological and social well-being subject to multiple influences at multiple levels. NZ medical research is finding robust evidence of housing as a health determinant especially for poorer people in older, poorly insulated housing. Cold houses put extra stress on children and the elderly, and overcrowding of families facilitates meningococcal meningitis and TB. Retrofitting houses with insulation to raise temperatures is being tried. *Health Research Council Newsletter*, Nov, 02, p21.

Prof. P. Beresford, Centre for Citizen Participation, Brunel Univ, considers that thinking, policy and practice of "mental health" is still in the nineteenth century and needs radical change. "Mental illness" carries massive political and professional authority. The user/survivors of the relevant services find that to question the prevailing paradigm is a sign of their deviancy. Discussion is developing about "social models of madness and distress", as similar approaches are being used in the disability area, focused on social barriers, discrimination and oppression experienced by those with impairments. *Journal of Mental Health*, Vol 11/6, 02. A longitudinal study of New Zealanders has shown that some environmental factors activate genetic ones, especially for psychiatric illness. One gene, which influences depression, governs a transporter for serotonin, related to emotional

responses. This gene has two common versions, short and long. The short version is more prone to stresses, because of serotonin-transmission impairment. *Nature*, 18 July, 03, pp 291-292.

Finnish futurist *M. Manermaa* prepared *Biosociety and Human Being*, for National Technology Agency, Finland. (<http://akseli.tekes.fi/Resource.phx/bike/neobio/julkaisut.htx?cache=refresh>)

This covers specifically the main biotechnological trends affecting human beings in medicine; scenarios of different biosocieties from the human perspective, everyday life etc; conclusions and next steps. (Private futurist e.mail network)

Sociologists *A. Petersen, R. Bunton*, *The New Genetics and the Public's Health*, Routledge, 02, examines the political and economic factors in the impacts of genetic knowledge and medicine, especially issues of power rather than individualistic bioethics. Comparisons with the earlier eugenics movement are used. *G. Vines* reports, *New Scientist*, 23 Nov, 02, pp 42-45, on over-the-counter genetic testing, but questions whether the customer learns anything useful.

An NZ study on longer-term effects of crashes indicates there is an invisible component in the statistics, the loss of quality of life for the surviving victims, even if they have not required hospitalisation. WHO's Burden of Disease Study projects that traffic accidents will be the third leading component in the global disease burden by 2020. *Health Research Council Newsletter*, Nov 02. p13.

B. Gill notes that SARS exposes weakness of the Chinese governmental reactions to such a crisis-opaque communication channels, and early, persistent reticence to collaborate effectively with foreign partners. More crises may be expected. China, its health and health-care system is global concern. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 1 May 03, p23. *A. Price-Smith*, *The Health of Nations: Infectious Diseases, Environmental Change and Their Effects on National Security and Development*, MIT Press, 02 develops the concept of "health security" by

examining the correlation between the rising levels of disease and declining capacities of states to deal with these. Its examination of the effects of globalisation as reflected in economic polarisation and exclusion is limited.

Ageing eyes may no longer need reading glasses and surgery, but rather a replacement polymer gel now under trial in Melbourne. Inserted into the lens it enables this to change shape and focus more readily. *New Scientist*, 9 Aug, 03, pp21-22.

The Early Years

Ten million children under 5 die annually, yet the tools to prevent this exist. Research on its prevention, into promoting growth and well-being and into ways to overcome inequalities of income in and between countries, is underway, though more is needed. The will is lacking. *The Lancet*, 4 Jan 03, p1 and expert articles, *The Lancet*, 28 June, 5, 12 19, 26 July 03. *J. W. Lee*, WHO emphasises the greatest priority of building capacity in public health programmes at the district level, 26 July, p 262.

Research results are more robust regarding the circumstances experienced by the fetus and the life-choices it makes which affect the adult. Conditions resulting in low birth weight have been linked to later risk of heart disease, because the fetus uses its resources to give itself the best-under-the-circumstances start in life. *The Economist*, 14 June 03, pp73-74.

The US is planning a massive study of its children, from birth to 21 years. Denmark has started a study of 100,000 pregnant women to establish a databank for future generations of researchers into the multitude of pregnancy and child health issues, to be shared with Norway which has such a databank already. *Science*, 11 July, 03, pp 162-163.

Research into Australian public opinion regarding the "beginning of human life" finds that a majority think this is pre-birth but post-conception, Over time opinion is shifting the "start" further back into the development of the foetus/embryo. *Australasian Science*, Oct, 02, pp 27-29.

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