(Afghanistan) The Afghan Taliban Strikes Out
Bolstered by the powerful terrorist groups, notably al-Qaeda, that it hosted within the borders of Afghanistan, the Taliban repeatedly enraged the international community with offensive acts and was forced out of power after the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001. How did a group of religious students take power in Afghanistan?

(Andean Initiative) The Expanded U.S. Drug War in Latin America: A Downed Missionary Plane Places the Spotlight on the Andean Initiative
A tragic shootdown focused the attention of the U.S. public and Congress on the "drug war," anti-drug efforts in the Andes, and the United States' expanding and controversial dealings with Latin American governments to stop the flow of illegal drugs to the United States.

(Australia) Hard to Say Sorry: Indigenous Australia's Reconciliation Movement
The status of aborigines in Australia as compared to the rest of the population and the government's apparent reluctance to embrace the indigenous reconciliation movement.

(Britain) The Euro Versus the Pound: Britain and the European Single Currency
From March 1, 2002, forward, 12 European countries will have one currency, the euro. Britain, or the United Kingdom, has never made the decision to abandon its own currency, the pound sterling, for the euro, repeatedly deferring the issue, and along with it, the possible advantages in trade and foreign relations.

(Child Soldiers) Reading, Writing, and Warfare: Children in Armed Conflict
Hundreds of thousands of children throughout the world are being used as soldiers, learning the skills of warfare rather than reading and arithmetic. They are often brutalized, and worldwide efforts at rehabilitation are insufficient. The conditions that cause child soldiering, and the international efforts to put an end to the practice.

(China) The Sanxia (Three Gorges) Project in China: A Crisis in the Making?
China is in the process of building the largest and most powerful dam ever to be built, and there is strong disagreement about it.

(China and the United States) The Spy Plane Incident: China-U.S. Relations
Although China and the United States have been making moves toward diplomacy, unresolved friction between the two states remains, as seen in April 2001 when a Chinese fighter plane collided with a U.S. surveillance plane. Did China's reaction indicate hard-line policies and a future as a fierce competitor to the United States in world power?

Côte d'Ivoire: A Cosmopolitan Society Descends into Political Chaos and Violence
In the past decade, Côte d'Ivoire, once considered the African model of economic and political success after independence, has experienced political and economic instability along with violent confrontations along ethnic and religious lines. With people thus divided, the election system and party politics machinery have been ineffective and the threat of chaos looms.

(Espionage) Post-Cold War Espionage between the United States and Russia: How Has the Mission Changed?
When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991 and the Cold War ended, the nature of espionage between the United States and Russia changed dramatically. Propelled by its own history, espionage continues between the two powers beyond the Cold War.
India's Caste System under Attack: The Dalit Movement
Although India's constitution of 1947 abolished the practice of untouchability, hundreds of millions of Indian citizens from the Dalit population, the former untouchable caste, experience severe discrimination, segregation, and violent abuse in modern India. The government of India maintains that these problems should be handled internally, while the Dalit population seeks international attention to the problems they face.

International Military Tribunals: Bringing the World to Justice
When violent conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda went beyond the pale of human endurance—involving the torture, rape, and massacre of groups of people—the international community, under the auspices of the United Nations, created ad hoc tribunals in the Hague and Tanzania to try individuals for their war crimes.

(Ivory) Africa's Ivory Trade: Fighting for the Bearers of "White Gold"
An international ban on ivory trade went into effect in 1990 in an effort to stop the killing of elephants that had wiped out almost half of Africa's elephant population. The ban has been called into question by some southern African countries after being in force for ten years. East African nations support the ban. Can a consensus be found?

Japanese Voters Seek Change as Their Economy Deteriorates: New Prime Minister Vows to Break Political Logjam
Japan's economy has been in a decade-long period of slow growth and voters have elected a reformer, Koizumi Junichiro, to try to make Japan over into a free market economy. In the short-term, Japan's economy is in jeopardy.

(Kyoto Protocol) Quitting the Kyoto Protocol: The United States Strikes Out Alone
The United States' decision to pull out of the huge international effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and counter global warming created a major setback at the 2001 Kyoto conference. What could be done when the producer of 25 percent of the world's greenhouse emissions refused to participate?

Libya, Qadhafi, and the African Union
Muammar Qadhafi deftly brought about the unanimous decision of the African states to form the new African Union in 2001. Qadhafi's vision of a United States of Africa will face some major obstacles and will almost certainly entail changing the concepts of national identity within the African nations, as well as changing his own image as a troublemaker.

The Lockerbie Trial on Trial: Was Justice Served?
When Pan Am Flight 103 exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988 Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi refused to hand over two suspects to be tried in the United States of the United Kingdom. Almost 12 years after the crash, the suspects were brought to trial in a neutral location, but questions linger about the case and the way it was handled.

Macedonia Faces Division and Violence
Tensions between the Macedonian and Albanian communities in the Republic of Macedonia have been high since the 1980s; in 2001 the hostilities descended into violence and mass flight. Can peace hold when ethnic frictions remain intense?

(National Missile Defense) Defending Against the Indefensible: Creating a National Missile Defense in the United States
The George W. Bush administration has pushed ahead with plans for a U.S. National Missile Defense (NMD) program to be deployed around 2005 at tremendous cost and with questionable feasibility. Critics say that deployment of the NMD could threaten the world security environment by fueling an arms race and make enemies out of current allies.

North Korea: The Hermit Kingdom in the Global Era
In 2001 the North Korean economy had collapsed; it seemed the time to end its isolation. But with its background of Cold War animosity, hard-line communism, and alleged terrorist activities it is difficult for
North Korea to take the steps to reintegrate and it is also difficult for some world leaders to accept it as a legitimate nation.

In the two most populous countries of the world, attention has lately been drawn to a disturbing trend in which some couples try to ensure male children by means of sex-selective abortion and infanticide. Because of these practices, a significant imbalance has been noted, which will almost certainly mean that millions of young men will never marry.

Russia Agrees to Take the World's Nuclear Waste: But Where to Put It?
With already serious nuclear waste problems and a very poor track record in nuclear safety, Russia has approved plans to import spent nuclear waste from elsewhere in the world for reprocessing. There is worldwide skepticism about Russia's ability to handle the waste and fear for the planet if its efforts are unsuccessful.

Sierra Leone: Lasting Peace or Cruel Mirage?
Peace was proclaimed in Sierra Leone in January 2002, but grave concerns remain. With the economy destroyed, child soldiers now facing unemployment, diamond mines still under questionable control, and ongoing fighting at Sierra Leone's borders between Liberia and Guinea, the weak new government in Freetown faces challenges ahead.

(Tobacco Control) The World Health Organization Takes On the Tobacco Industry
Since 1999 the World Health Organization has been at work on a Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), which it envisions as a comprehensive, international, multilateral effort to reduce smoking rates, abate smoking-related illnesses, and regulate the trade, sale, and marketing of tobacco products.

(Trade Protectionism) World Trade Conflict: Has the Third World Been Cheated?
Third world countries, having entered into free trade agreements with Western nations in the expectation of securing greater opportunities for their exporters, complain that these trade agreements are being ignored or circumvented in the West. Trade barriers, although reduced on paper, continue to protect important products such as textiles and agricultural products in Western markets. The figures on developing nations' exports are not encouraging.

The United States Loses Its Seat on the United Nations Human Rights Panel
The United States, long an outspoken advocate of human rights in other countries, lost its seat on the United Nations Human Rights Commission, signaling tense relations between the United States and other UN member nations.