

## The Editor's Note

# Some very bad news

by James Hansen



Most people know the story of the shepherd boy who ‘cried wolf’ – and then, when real wolves came to raid his flock, could find no one to believe him.

Something similar has happened in the case of the deadly hemorrhagic fever Ebola, now raging across five West African countries, with no indication of containment in sight.

After the relative flops of Swine Fever, the Avian Flu and Mad Cow Disease – none of which turned out to be the pandemic their promoters were predicting – the World is only slowly awakening to the possibility that Ebola might be ‘the real thing’.

The only good news we have about this outbreak is that it appears slightly less deadly than in the past – killing only about 60% of those infected, as opposed to the 90% seen previously. There is no known cure and no vaccine. This is very bad news.

Fortunately, in this issue we do have other, brighter – or at least less appalling – things for you.

Zelda la Grange, Nelson Mandela’s assistant and personal ‘Rottweiler’, tells us about life with one of the greatest and most unlikely statesmen of the last century. We have the good and the bad about prospects for peace on the island of Mindanao in the Philippines. A war has been underway there for forty years. The situation in the South China Sea instead just keeps looking worse.

We have parallel opinions about the surprising – and dramatic – decline in popularity of Barack Obama. Former European President and Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi and his military advisor, Gen. Giuseppe Cucchi, offer their very interesting take on how the West is getting it wrong in the Middle East: “Sins of omission and foreign policy.”

American women lose their own right to sin when they become pregnant. Our dossier on “talent” touches on themes ranging from military schools to the training of young bullfighters. It is, on the whole, better to be born rich, and Mexico’s ‘Sub-Comandante Marcos’, once the trendiest revolutionary around, retires – announcing that his was, well, a pious fraud.

Other ‘disco terrorists’ of the last century have begun selling out. Diplomatic wars are now being fought over Internet country domains. Every separatist wants one to show that his is a ‘real’ country – even if it is not. The English language is now so universal that it is beginning to fall apart.

The Fuggers, once Europe’s richest bankers, helped create the modern world and then vanished. Cigarette smuggling instead has never gone away and is still doing very well thank you. **E**