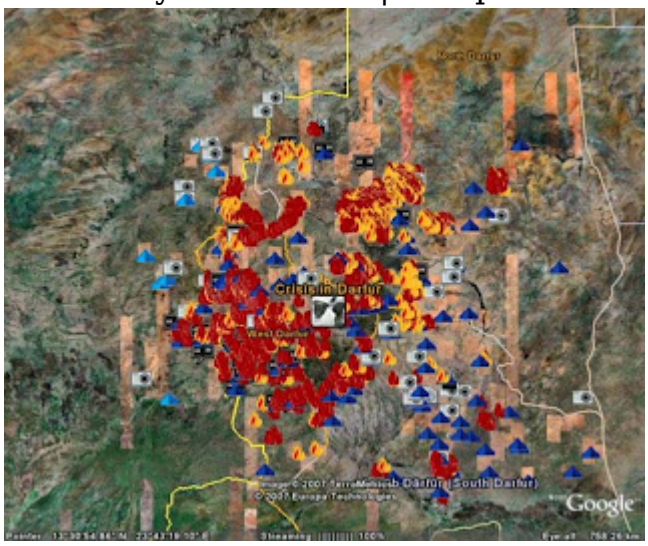
Atrocity exhibition

written by Clive Bates | 21 April 2007



There is something stunning in the brilliance of Google Earth [download] – a streaming map of the world in the form of satellite photography with the mean to zoom from planet to street level in scale. 'Layers' are overlaid on the map images showing an ever expanding range of surface features: national boundaries, roads, video stores, government offices, monuments – with 3D buildings, flights through the Grand Canyon etc. Each year the images increase in resolution and the coverage of higher resolution photography increases.

But potentially interesting political uses are also emerging: take the pictured map of conflict in Darfur… The recently announced (CNN / BBC) layer by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum documenting atrocities in Darfur (an image grab shown to the left) is a pivotal development that would have been impossible just five years ago. When actually using the Google Earth program, you click on the icons showing destroyed villages and can see details about the location, population and what happened. The layer blends information about villages destroyed with testimony, photographs and statistics – essentially allowing the world to 'bear witness' while keeping a live record of what is happening on the ground. Also, providing a live record or the failure to accept our common *responsibility to protect*.

Another layer in the 'global awareness' category is the UN Environment Programme: *Atlas of our changing environment* documenting major impacts on the environment. One can hardly imagine where this could eventually go… but I'm excited!