

Zonal Report 131 Summary
PROJECT ON BUSINESS AND POLITICS IN THE
MUSLIM WORLD

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This is the summary of the whole Euro-America zone (zone 3) taking into account the political, economic, socio-cultural and geo-strategic issues around North America/Canada, Western Europe, Latin America/Southern Europe, Southeast Europe, Oceania, Russia and its Neighbour and East/Central Europe.

Report Summary

US/Canada

Political Issues

Challenging Multinational Corporations is always a tough and bold decision and unshouderable by republican administration, but Obama democrat administration mustered the courage to challenge BP and even forced a compensation for damaging the Gulf of Mexico. President Obama is hoping to take advantage of his achievement on the oil spill during the midterm elections, though his acclaimed achievement is being punctured by republican critiques.

The puzzling question is the extent to which Pentagon can influence Wikileaks to withdraw all classified published and unpublished information from its website. Implicitly the leak has done unlimited damaged to American war strategy in Afghanistan and offended many working covertly and otherwise with Washington to see that Afghan war reaches a conclusive end.

The US Senate confirmed Elena Kagan to a seat on the Supreme Court replacing Justice John Paul Stevens after a protracted evaluation. Elena, a liberal will have to wrestle with the conservatives in the apex court.

If the Canadian government would continue with infuriating policies across political and business broad, the possibility to maintaining lead over liberal opposition party will be less likely. In view of the recent crisis over census administration, Canadian Ekos survey puts the Conservatives at 29.7 percent in popular support, down from 32.2 percent in the previous reading. Whatever the poll is saying does not reckon with government position, bent not to compromise with the plan of changing the compulsory for voluntary census forms. The new plan is what many Canadians are uncomfortable about and believe it will skew the data and make it less reliable for planning purposes.

In spite of the declining support for the Conservative minority government, the political state of affairs suggest that neither the ruling nor the opposition wants an early election, rather amid political scrambling both will want to re-stabilised the economy.

Economic Issues

For many Americans unemployment remains worrisome and there is little or no indication that the joblessness gap will close sooner even as private businesses fill their vacant positions. The increasingly concern of joblessness makes it a potential political issue for the midterm elections.

Loss of jobs is also true for the Canadian economy, as permanent jobs saw a loss while part-time gained certain degree of progress. The fluctuation in the Canadian economy could implicitly suggest that most industrial economies are yet to fully regain their grip.

The leak at the Gulf of Mexico oil was not just detrimental to the environment but was equally damaging to jobs amid the problem of unemployment facing many Americans. Immigrant workers have joined the band of those seeking compensation from BP seen responsible for their layoff at workplaces along the Gulf.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

The battle over the construction of a 13-story complex by Muslim within the neighbourhood of Ground Zero is an unfinished brawl even after the New York authorities have given their green light. Objection to the mosque according to authority is a betrayal of U.S value of freedom for all, while antagonists see it as respecting lives of the victims.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

As BP engages in static kill, an effort to permanently seal the leak at the Gulf of Mexico that nevertheless does not displace the environmental fallout of the leak which has become a menace for animals and human inhabitants of the Gulf.

Geostrategic Issues

It was a war tagged as illegal and as created dented image for Americans, but President Obama is about fulfilling one of his campaign promises by closing the chapter of Iraq war and hopes to accord him domestic praise. Ending the Iraq war is of course not the end of many miseries Iraqis are still undergoing, as former Saddam's lieutenant Tariq Aziz said departure of the United States from Iraq will be tantamount to leaving the country to wolves. The end of Iraq war meant the war in Afghanistan should be giving a thorough attention.

Western Europe

Political Issues

The inability of the opposition to get through a vote of no-confidence against the ruling Italian government indicates that despite the recent infighting Silvio Berlusconi's government can still move on irrespective of the political storm.

The libertarian Pirate Party in Sweden wants the country to revert its child pornography laws back to their previous form, which existed before 1999. The party said it does not voice for discriminatory exhibition of child pornography but wants to change the system that will disallow police to charge everyone even for things that does not amount to child pornography.

Cyber crimes cannot be downplayed more especially in a world of hi-tech where crime is possible visually without notice and causing an immense damage. UAE government has banned the Blackberry on security ground, but the European Commission is far from doing same with iPhone, believed to be security fortified, even after a German security office alerted on its vulnerability.

As the United States government battles with Wikileaks, a Swedish website says it is ready to champion the cause of freedom of speech by helping to launch Wikileaks accused by the American government of declassifying sensitive information to the public.

Recent report published by Eurostat on the EU graphically explains the expenditures of the bloc on technical issues. According to the publication, the EU expended more than €601m on "external advice" between 2005 and 2008, €84,000 used as payment for those drawing up questionnaire asking EU officials about their career plans, while the European Commission spent €150m a year on consultants.

Economic Issues

Eurozone financial crisis did not exempt the big European markets like France from its impact. The French economy was recorded to have suffered huge deficit, but that trend is beginning to change as the economy picked pace due to exportation of transportation equipment which was instrumental for deficit reduction.

EU and IMF are standing by the Greek government on its economic reforms aimed at bailing the recessed economy and as measure to getting more funds from the two institutions. The Greek government economic reforms have not been receptive to the people, protesting the reforms with national strike actions.

European Central Bank chief sent a strong note of caution to the members of Eurozone about being complacent with the economy rather should expect a slow growth in the second half of the year. The message is a pointer that Eurozone recession will take more time to be stabilised.

As Liberia leaves its past for a democratic reconstruction, western countries have not shunned their look from this West African country. The European Commission recently allocated an extra €10 million in humanitarian aid for Liberia.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

Despite its border tight policy the EU is recording an increase in asylum seekers and irregular and illegal border-crossers. The fact indicates that the United States will not be alone in the fight against illegal immigration, similarly the rise further prove the increasing population of Europe characterize by immigrants.

Google has announced that starting September 14th, it will allow European markets to bid on brand names as keywords, something it already allows North America, Ireland, and the UK to do. This will allow advertisers to have their ads show up when users search

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

Nuclear talk between the EU and Iran remains unsettled over the allegation that Tehran is not ready for a compromise with the western world. Despite the impasses which culminated to recent EU sanctions, the EU foreign office still want to dialogue with Tehran, but once again could stick and carrot policy works for Iran.

The British Prime Minister has once again got himself in soup for confrontational foreign policy statement which in diplomatic forum is believed to be sign of inexperience. David Cameron slipped by saying that Iran has nuclear bomb, a fact unacceptable to Labour opposition.

The EU is speaking out against countries that have not been able to live to expectation after the Copenhagen climate summit. The EU urges countries to do a "fair share" of gas cuts, as the menace of global warming and climate change intensifies.

The Family Farmers Association in Britain has called on the European Commission to provide ongoing financial support for working livestock producers and growers who are unable to make a living from agriculture.

Geostrategic Issues

The European Commission believes the newly imposed \$14 fee by the US government on travelers under the visa waivers system is unattainable as it hurt the agreement between EU and US. The Commission is reviewing the fee and could do the same for US travelers coming to EU.

EU-Brazil is bound to be strengthened by the approval of a visa-free waiver deal. It is obviously a recognition of the Latin America economic and diplomatic influence.

The appointment of Rosalind Marsden, a British career diplomat by Catherine Ashton, the EU's foreign policy chief, to help in preparations for a referendum on independence for South Sudan and in peace efforts in Darfur, shows the extent to which Sudan remains under EU's radar.

Yet the EU is exiting her security adviser from Guinea Bissau on the ground of political unrest. The EU accuses the West African country of lacking political instability and respect for rule of law.

The EU has offered Rwanda an informal support in its forthcoming elections. Unlike EU usual practice of sending monitoring group, the bloc only sent four experts to do an internal analysis, whose report will be internally used by the EU.

Despite what opposition called inexperience in foreign affairs matter, Prime Minister David Cameron appears to be committed along with other world leader to putting life back in the Middle East peace talk. While on a separate note, the British premier welcomed the Pakistani President Asif Zardari in London, after a huge debate that the visit is uncalled for upon Cameron's irritating talk about Pakistan while in India.

Southeast Europe

Political Issues

As part of its longing for the EU visa liberalization scheme, Albanian Prime Minister Sali Berisha has called on local institutions to complete the questionnaire sent by the European Commission. Albania hopes to join others that are now part of the scheme. Albania has also increase the number of its presence in Afghanistan, showing its commitment as a NATO member.

Political division in Bosnian parliament could further isolate the country from the EU. The parliament has not been able to resolve and adopt a law on holding a national population census.

Sentencing former parliament member Vladimir Glavas of Croatian Democratic Party of Slavonia and Baranja (HDSSB) to ten year prison terms for war crimes against Serbian civilians during the 1991-1995 war has caused uproar between the judiciary and the political party. HDSSB claims Glavas is punished for shifting political party.

Kosovo Foreign Minister Skender Hyseni has clearly said during his visit to the UN that Kosovo's independence is not precedent for any country, while at the same time urging the UN to change its Resolution 1244 upon the recent ICJ rulings. Hyseni nevertheless ruled out any dream of partitioning Kosovo as suggested by Serbia that northern Kosovo should be autonomous.

Extradition rejection of former Bosnia and Herzegovina presidency member Ejup Ganic by a British court wanted by Serbia in connection with a May 1992 attack in Sarajevo against a Yugoslav National Army convoy was another diplomatic setback for Belgrade. Despite the rattling, Belgrade has decided not to appeal the case.

Meanwhile, as Serbia commemorates 15 years anniversary of Operation Storm, when Croatian military launched offensive on Serbs living in Croatia, refugees of the war are asking Serbia and Croatia to resolve their difference so as to facilitate the return of the refugees.

Economic Issues

Romanian economy will see a boost as the European Commission (EC) releases the third 1.15 billion-euro tranche of the 20 billion-euro loan. The fund became due after all criteria and conditions in the agreement were accomplished.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

Geostrategic Issues

Unlike Albania's input to NATO, Montenegro is collaborating with EU ATALANTA naval operation, which combats piracy off the Somali coast. Sea piracy is increasingly becoming a global menace and nations are working jointly to put it out.

Italy has joined countries that ratified the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with Serbia, becoming the fourth EU member state to do so.

Oceania

Political Issues

Election is around the corner and Australian political parties have been sensitizing the public with political gimmick in an attempt to woo voters. The Labour party has no option than to settle its internal fracas if it must retain the premier's seat as there has been a political roar between ousted PM Kevin Rudd and PM Julia Gillard.

Economic Issues

Social/Humanitarian Issue

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

Australian scientists reported to have found in sea sponges sharing genes similar to human. The discovery is hoped to revolutionize medical outlook of human history and how diseases could be reduce through the exploitation of the sea sponges.

Geostrategic Issues

Latin America

Political Issues

As Brazilians prepare for the next presidential elections, the two outstanding aspirants continue wooing voters. Latest Ibope's poll suggest a lead and support for president Lula's candidate, yet elections outcome will judge whether Lula's popularity can see Ms. Dilma Rousseff through as the next president.

Colombian new President Santos is geared not to discontinue with the policies of his predecessor yet he has also determined to reduce the tempo of confrontation between his government and FARC rebel group if only the latter will recognise Colombian sovereignty.

Economic Issues

Argentines and Mexicans will be better placed to substantiate their government's assertion of a reduction in joblessness. Both governments claim unemployment is decreasing due to better economic policies.

Argentina will have to convince China not to further boycott its soy oil as the latter plays a great role in Argentina's agricultural sector. Despite the boycott, during a visit of the Argentine president to China, both countries signed agreement to boost mining and railroad infrastructure in Argentina. Meanwhile, the Argentine ambassador to Pakistan sees a prospect in Argentine-Pakistan relations in many fields.

Mexico like every other country in the region hopes to make China a good trade partner, as China's economic influence in the region widens.

According to Brazil's Development Industry and Foreign Trade Ministry, trade surplus in the first seven months of 2010 was down at 45.1 percent year-on-year. The ministry also said the surplus reached 9.237 billion U.S. dollars.

Brazilian government under the umbrella of Mercosur will be inking a free trade agreement with Egypt. Both countries have been sound trade partner owing to \$87.7 million of trade in 2009 and \$1.53 billion in 2010.

Colombia hopes to benefit from the India's investments; the latter has lot to offer to the Latin American country. India is expected export motorcycles, organic chemicals and technology related fields.

Venezuelan government is expected to get \$4 billion loan from China, the Asian economic giant. China will be issuing the amount as first installment of \$20 billion.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

Is it a new Pandora box that was just opened or a success for the Mexican government? Mexican security agents reported killed the most wanted drug lord with the

help of the FBI. The drug related violence in Mexico is taunting the country's image and has been the reason why US consulate was shut down.

Venezuelan government is making a distinction between the people of Colombia and the government. The head of Venezuelan National Commission of Refugees holds that clash between Colombia and Venezuela will not force the latter to send Colombian refugees back home.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

Geostrategic Issues

The just concluded Mercosur summit held in Argentina was referred to by Brazilian President Lula da Silva as a success as the summit agreed on a common custom code aimed at reducing the cost of commerce within the region. Venezuela meanwhile wants the group to recognise its presence as a permanent member.

Argentina-Britain conflict is yet to be over and both countries have not consented to UN suggestion over disputed regions.

Ex-Colombian President Uribe is challenging President Lula for choosing the word negotiation as a way of resolving the brawl between Venezuela and Colombia. The latter accuses Venezuela of supporting FARC rebel group; therefore asking for negotiation will be tantamount to undermining the proof Colombia has against Venezuela.

Ecuador has called the meeting of UNASUR countries to resolve the dispute between Colombia and Venezuela.

Upon meeting the requirement of stepping up human rights protection and democratization of its society as laid down by Organization of America States, countries in the region are ready to reopen diplomatic relation with Honduras after the coup that ousted an elected democratic president.

Russia and its Neighbours

Political Issues

Komorowski, the new Polish president had been sworn in, vowing to build the nation and setting it on the track of economic development. Mr. Kaczynski, the brother of the late president who now leads the opposition boycotted the inauguration.

The funeral of controversial Milan Paumer rekindled the debate over the Czech leader, whom some see as anti-communist hero and other believes he was a murderer. His funeral was however graced by top Czech politicians.

The four party, centre-right coalition led by Slovak Prime Minister Iveta Radicova is still struggling to streamline issues troubling the country. The government is challenged by domestic economic, inter-ethnic, political issues and at the same time trying to straighten relations with Hungary.

In Hungary, Prime Minister Viktor Orban's Fidesz is bent at redirecting the bearing of the country as he vows to keep his country from foreign aid in order to avoid bankruptcy and an ability to make independent economic policies. His foreign policy is also making headline, he irked Slovakia when he extended the right to citizenship to all ethnic Magyars living beyond the country's borders. Meanwhile, newly elected Hungarian President Pal Schmitt has been officially inaugurated.

Supreme Council of Ukraine's parliament with a majority votes agreed that local parliamentary elections should be held in autonomous Crimea concurrently with local legislatures throughout Ukraine.

Economic Issues

The increasingly growth of the Russian economy has been added a flavour by IMF, predicting a further growth owing to increase of household incomes and decrease in unemployment. Meanwhile, Russia is interested in Russia-Kuwait economic partnership believes to be vital for both economies.

One man's problem is another man's joy, as Russia faces drought and wildfire affecting its grains and has forced the government to stop export of grains; Asian importers of Russian's wheat are turning towards United States as alternative.

Reducing public spending and deficit are part of the plans of Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk, whose country enjoys a better economic in the neighbourhood. Although latest report shows a jump in borrowing cost on Polish bonds and that might fuel inflation and influence central bank to raise interest rates.

A comparison of unemployment level across Europe by Eurostat, indicates that the Poles are the least unemployed, further explaining the healthy Polish economy.

The Czech koruna dropped from its strongest level in 21 months against the euro on speculation the Czech central bank will try to talk down the currency to protect economic growth and prevent disinflation. The world's best-performing currency in July weakened 0.4 percent.

Czech's koruna is acclaimed to be the world's best-performing currency in July, but the currency saw a drop against the Euro. Similarly, the Slovak economy experienced a boost even without International Monetary Fund backing. Slovakia meat and poultry sector is currently enjoying the patronage of Hong Kong and Vietnam as export of frozen foods shoot up.

As it prepares to be the next Eurozone member, Estonia economy is still daunted by economic fluctuation, although Standard & Poor rated the economy as viable for having moved out from a severe recession.

Similarly, Latvia's economy is reported regaining strength from last year's 18 percent slump as manufacturing and exports advance.

The European Union's executive has given the green light to a Lithuanian scheme for supporting troubled banks, saying that it was necessary to overcome the financial crisis.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

In Slovakia, the far-right 'Our Slovakia People's Party' (LSNS) staged a nationalist protest in front of a castle in Bratislava, demanding the government to make Slovakia only for Slovaks. LSNS displayed their anti homosexuality, liberalism and Zionism during the protest.

Could there ever be world peace and harmony, this is the aspiration of Hungary's Two-Tailed Dog Party allying with other likeminded across central Europe. The party promises voters with world peace, prosperity and free beer and creating a two-tailed dog with the aid of biotech.

European Humanities University is now known as University in Exile, banned from Belarus by the Lukashenko's government but accepted in Lithuania. The university since been in exile has continued to enroll many Belarusians.

Ukraine's interior ministry is reported to have busted and apprehended a ring of human organ traffickers headed by an Israeli. The ring recruits organs donors from former Soviet countries and the organs end in the hands of wealthy foreigners.

The Lithuanian Court of Appeals has set free on bail Egle Kusaite, a 21-year-old Muslim Lithuanian convert, accused of plotting to carry out a terrorist attack in Russia as vengeance for the death of her Chechen friend.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

Ghanaians would soon start feeling the influence of global oil companies on its soil as soon as exploration arrangement is finalized. Meanwhile Russia and Belarus have expressed their commitment to invest \$1 billion in the Ghanaian's emerging oil and gas industry. Belarus is alternatively looking at Venezuela for oil that could be reached through Lithuania.

The Estonian government is geared at dislodging Gazprom grip and monopoly from Estonia energy sector. The little Baltic state holds 37% while Russia carries the lion share.

Facing the worst heat wave in its history, Russia is urging Kazakh and Belarusian governments to halt grain exports because of drought conditions in the region.

Meanwhile, Ukraine and Estonia unilaterally offers Russia humanitarian help for its wildfires

Geostrategic Issues

Russia's Foreign Ministry released a report accusing the United States of violating dozens of provisions of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons treaties, apparently in a reply to American critics, who have been accusing Russia of violating past agreements.

Although Canada recently insinuate Russia as a threat, yet Russia, Canada and the United States will all be taking part in a historic military exercise tailored at battling airborne terrorism.

Czech Republic is ready to host the US missile defence but under the umbrella of NATO, the system will be jointly manned by personnel of both countries.

The new UN-EU sanctions on Iran deprive countries to trade with Tehran in many sectors, as measure to incapacitate and force Tehran to change its perceived obstinate behaviour. On this backdrop, Belarus has denied having arrangement of S-300 rocket missiles to Iran.

It might appear that the latest announcement of Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko explains the unpredictability of this man. Lukashenko and his Georgian counterpart have been critical of Russia in recent times, yet for him to have promised to recognize the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia during the summit of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) leaders is worth noting.