



**ASIA**  
 MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA; WEST ASIA; SOUTH ASIA; NORTH ASIA; EAST ASIA



**AFRICA**  
 WEST AFRICA; EAST AFRICA & HORN OF AFRICA; CENTRAL AFRICA; SOUTH AFRICA



**EUROAMERICA**  
 WEST EUROPE; EAST EUROPE; NORTH AMERICA; LATIN AMERICA



**GLOBALIZED OPINION...**



**GLOBALIZED FINANCE...**



**GLOBALIZED ELECTIONS...**

Trial Issue # 8  
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# Friday on the facebook

WEEKLY NEWS MONITOR OF OPINIONS & EVENTS IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

Based on weekly reports produced by the project 'Globalized Business & Politics: a View from the Muslim World.'

Using a rich data-base of news reports and opinion polls from all over the world we analyze and compile papers on global trends and patterns in the sphere of economics, politics and society. These reports and analytical summaries are uploaded online for discussion and are accessible on the [BPM Blog Page](#).

## WELCOME REMARKS What is FOF?

Dear Colleagues,

We are mailing to you the weekly e-letter of the project: Globalized Business and Politics: A View from the Muslim World". The e-letter is a snapshot of the detailed data gathering and analysis which our research team does each week.

Why should one add another e-letter to many similar exercises already underway? We have pondered this question and here is what we believe to be our possible contribution or *Competitive Advantage*.

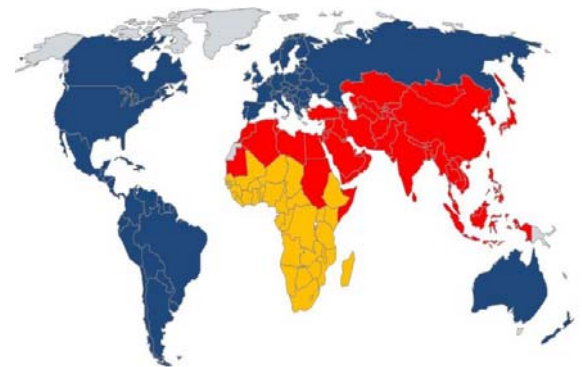
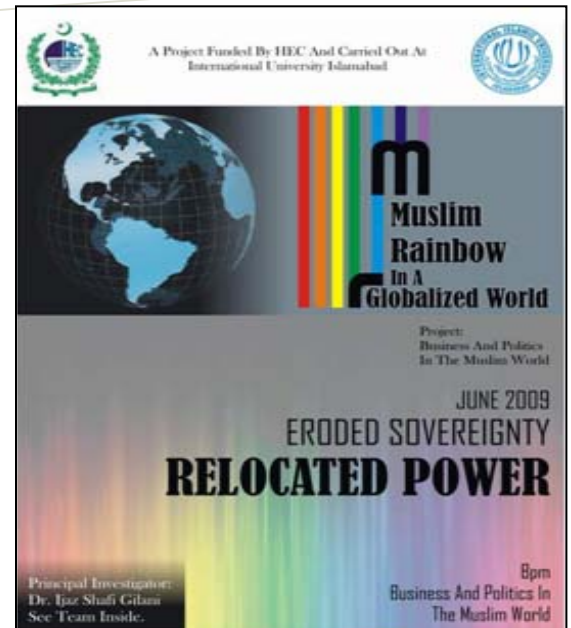
- ◆ We will make the e-letter a multi-layered presentation: in other words Friday on the Facebook will provide clicks to deeper levels of information; for comprehension (Maps and Data) as well as for elaboration



and analysis (complete weekly Events data, supplementary commentaries and related links).

- ◆ Our weekly e-letter will be grounded in a thorough Analytical framework of Relocation of Power in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
- ◆ Our weekly e-letter will be targeted to produce an annual synthesis of Global Trends. Each issue will serve as an input for the annual analysis.
- ◆ Our weekly e-letter will be designed to become a teaching tool for class-room instruction in courses dealing with global political sociology or related fields.
- ◆ Our weekly e-letter will also be designed to build a theoretically inclined community of political sociologists.

With best wishes and prayers we present our 'pilot weekly e-letter: *Friday on the Facebook. - A Weekly Monitor of Global Opinions and Events.* §



Business and Politics in the Muslim World (BPM) refers to a study funded by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan, and is conducted at the International Islamic University (IIU), Islamabad.



Principle Investigator- DR. IJAZ SHAFI GILANI



## Globalized Opinions

This week report consists of 26 surveys. 3 of these surveys are multi-country surveys while 23 are national surveys.

Week # 104

### Commentary on Gallopedia Polls

Dated January 24-30, 2010

Half of the surveys in this report are from North America raising various issues in United States and Canada. The dominant focus still remains on economic issues. *U.S. State of the union address* too got reasonable attention in last week's surveys. The Gallup review of the address shows that President Obama's speech focused on several of the important concerns shown in opinion polls. Does this depict a healthy respect for public opinion in the U.S. government? It seems true at least as regards domestic issues facing the nation.

Concerning the cross national issue of global warming, publics across the world seem willing to deal with this concern despite projections of a slowed down economy. In previous reports we have indicated the U.S. government's reluctance towards dealing with this concern. A look at Americans' priorities for the last several years provides us some insight. On the list of top priorities of the American citizens for 2010, global warming is at the bottom i.e. number 21.<sup>1</sup> Why is global warming such a low profile issue for Americans? The dichotomy between the balance of opinion and government priorities alongside a greater global concern is interesting to note.

An interesting comparison may be made if similar reports regarding China, India, Russia and the EU are reviewed.

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**THAILAND'S MINISTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH WITTHAYA KAEWPARADAI RESIGNED LAST MONTH AFTER BEING IMPLICATED IN A CORRUPTION SCANDAL OVER A HEALTH CARE**

**SCHEME  
Zone 1  
ASIA**

#### EAST ASIA

##### *Half of Thais Support No-Confidence Motion*

Half of people in Thailand want opposition parties to table a no-confidence motion in order to clear questions about an alleged corruption scandal in the Public Health Ministry, according to a poll by Suan Dusit University. 49.5 per cent of respondents

share this view.  
January 26, 2010

#### JAPAN & KOREA

##### *Japanese Cabinet Reaches Tipping Point*

For the first time since it was elected, more people disapprove than approve of the performance of the government led by the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), according to a poll by Kyodo News. 41.5 per cent of respondents are content with the sitting cabinet, while 44.1 per cent are disappointed with its work.

January 28, 2010



## Zone 2 AFRICA

### SUB SAHARAN AFRICA *Kenyans Prefer Pure Presidential System*

A pure presidential system is the political structure of choice for people in Kenya, according to a poll by Synovate. 49 per cent of respondents would prefer to have this system in the country.

January 30, 2010

## Zone 3 EURO-AMERICAS

### EAST EUROPE *Romanians Say Country on Wrong Track*

Most people in Romania are pessimistic about their country's future, according to a poll by



IRES. 70 per cent of respondents say Romania is headed in the wrong direction.

January 26, 2010

### *Devastating Lead for Ruling United Russia*

Russia's ruling party is practically the only powerful political group in the country, according to a poll by the All-Russian Public Opinion Research Center. 55 per cent of respondents would vote for United Russia (YR) in the next election to the State Duma, up two points since December.

January 25, 2010

## WEST EUROPE

**Britons Send Mixed Messages on Islamic Veils**

Most people in Britain hold a critical opinion on the veils worn by some Muslim women, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 67 per cent of respondents say that garments that conceal a woman's face represent an affront to British values, while 25 per cent disagree with this notion.

January 27, 2010



**French OK with Fillon, Critical of Sarkozy**

People in France are content with the leadership of their prime minister but remain critical of their president, according to a poll by Ifop published in *Le Journal du Dimanche*. 53 per cent of respondents are satisfied with the performance of François Fillon, up three points since December.

January 26, 2010

**NORTH AMERICA**

**The State of the Union Speech and Public Opinion**

Gallup looks at how a number of key points and policy proposals that President Barack Obama made in his State of the Union address Wednesday night relate to the views of the American people.

January 29, 2010

**Americans Lean Against Letting More Haitians Into U.S.**

With the situation in Haiti still dire after the Jan. 12 earthquake, and with a growing number of Haitians reportedly seeking entry into the U.S., a new USA Today/Gallup poll finds that the majority of Americans do not think the U.S. should increase the number of Haitian immigrants it accepts.

January 25, 2010

**In U.S., Religious Prejudice Stronger Against Muslims**

More than 4 in 10 Americans (43%) admit to feeling at least "a little" prejudice toward Muslims -- more than twice the number who say the same about Christians (18%), Jews (15%) and Buddhists (14%).

January 25, 2010

**Obama Falls Below 50% Mark in U.S.**

Public support for United States president Barack Obama is at the lowest point of his tenure, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 47 per cent of respondents approve of Obama's performance, down three points since December.

January 26, 2010

**AUSTRALASIA**

**New Zealanders Endorse Ruling Conservatives**

Most people in New Zealand would vote for the governing National party, according to a poll by Roy Morgan International. 53 per cent of respondents would support the conservative party in the next election to the House of Representatives, down one point since mid-December.

January 28, 2010



**GLOBAL POLLS**

**As Asian Economies Falter, Trust in Gov't Remains High**

Citizens living in developing Asian countries have generally become less positive about the economic conditions in their countries since the onset of the global economic crisis. This drop is accompanied by increase in the confidence in the national governments.

January 28, 2010

**Yemenis' Economic Situations Among Worst in Region**

Gallup surveys show the economic situation in Yemen is one of the most dismal in the Middle East and North Africa and many Yemenis expect it to get worse. Only Palestinians (64%) are more likely than Yemenis (59%) to say economic conditions in their country are getting worse.

January 26, 2010

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## Zone 1- *Asia: Summary*

### *Asia, Middle East & North Africa*

#### Zone 1- Asia Summary- Week # 104

##### **TURKEY**

**Political Front:** PM Erdogan has asked all anti-democracy elements to stop their efforts to illegally topple the democratically elected regime. In the meantime thousands of people throughout **Turkey** took to the streets to condemn recently uncovered military action plans. In response to the allegations against armed forces; the military chief has out rightly denied all allegations. Meanwhile the Constitutional Court has annulled a law that allowed military officers to be tried in civilian courts, a move that legal experts believe is unlikely to affect ongoing investigations of military officers suspected of having planned an alleged coup. Meanwhile militant PKK has reportedly plans to launch violent demonstrations on 15 Feb (marking the arrest of their top leader) to be continued till 25 March.

Meanwhile reiterating his strong support for the democratization initiative launched by the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) government, Iraqi Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani has encouraged the Kurdish people of **Turkey** to support initiatives seeking solution to the decades old dispute.

**Geo-strategic Front:** Key developments occurred in *Turkish-Armenian* relations after the release of latter's court's ruling terming the killing of Armenians in 1915 a genocide and claiming some parts of Turkey as Armenian. In the wake of these developments Foreign Ministers of both countries held meeting in the UK.

Besides that Turkey also hosted a trilateral summit that included Pakistan-Afghanistan & Turkey, primarily focusing on stability in the region. Also Turkey has strongly warned Israel to end settlements in Gaza.

**Social Front:** This week life in Istanbul remained paralyzed amidst snowfall and extreme cold weather.

**Economic Front:** Turkish Stock exchange has increased remarkably while its reserves have decreased.

**GCC:**

**Geo-strategic Front:** Various accords have been signed between **Saudi** and **US** universities. Meanwhile strong **Saudi-Pak** ties and growing ties with China and Africa also remained significant.

Recently held **Kuwait-French** talks have led to capping of a cooperative peaceful nuke- deal.

**Social Front:** Swine flu vaccine has been made available in 15 **Saudi** centers. Meanwhile the Diplomatic Corps has lauded **United Arab Emirates** for its role in protecting rights of the migrant workers, offering them the best available milieu and opportunities to work in.

**Economic Front:** **Saudi** IT market intends to touch \$4.8 billion mark by 2013. A recent consumer survey indicates that consumer confidence in **Kuwait** has remarkably increased despite the global, regional and local economic challenges.



**Bahrain** and **Russia** have expressed their keenness to enhance co-operation in trade, industrial, economic and financial fields.

##### **CENTRAL ASIA**

**Political Front:** Appeal of detained **Kazakh** Journalist for parole has been rejected by the court. Meanwhile the pro-presidential Adilet (Justice) party has proposed to abolish the post of prime minister diverting most of its powers to **Kazakh** President.

**Kyrgyz** PM has strongly condemned his Interior Minister for making wrong appointment of deputy police chief and has cancelled the appointment. All the while Parliament has endorsed constitutional amendments made by the **Kyrgyz** President. A **Tajik** official claimed that many prisoners convicted of drug offenses have paid

bribes in order to be released in a recent amnesty.

In three **Tajik** constituencies elections were held to replace old parliamentarians with new deputies. Dilorom, **Uzbek** speaker since 2008 has taken charge of the Parliament under same designation.

**Geo-strategic Front:** NATO has finalized an agreement with **Kazakhstan** on the transit of supplies to Afghanistan, in order to reduce its reliance on a route through Pakistan.

Also **Kazakhstan** has threatened to rewrite key Western-run energy projects in order to implement new tax rules.

**Social Front:** NGOs have accused the government of **Kazakhstan** for blocking 14 websites. Meanwhile the **Kyrgyz** opposition party continued its hunger strike against detention of former Defense minister.

Nine religious groups in **Tajikistan** failed to file documents for registration by the January 1 deadline and have been declared illegal. Meanwhile **Turkmen** students banned from studying at universities abroad have been allowed by the government to resume their studies at the *American University in Bulgaria*.

A prominent **Uzbek** sports journalist has been arrested under the allegation of creating an illegal religious group. Also authorities in the **Uzbek** capital have started renaming some 150 streets and residential areas to deemphasize the city's Soviet heritage. Meanwhile Human Rights Watch has asked the government to drop *baseless* charges against prominent photographer Umida Akhmidova.

**Economic Front:** Inflation is expected to reach 5-7 percent in **Azerbaijan** at the end of 2010, compared to 1.5 percent in 2009. Meanwhile in **Kyrgyzstan** the number of officially registered jobless has increased by 8.5 percent and reached 9,651. However, **Kyrgyz** PM expects remarkable economic growth via investments in 2010.

According to the World Bank figures **Uzbek** economy would grow by 6.5% in the year 2010.

#### **SOUTH ASIA**

**Political Front:** At the end of its first year of governance most analysts have agreed that **Bangladesh's** AL has successfully achieved some of its set targets till now. Some of its achievements include its efforts in the 'war against terror', curbing poverty and active diplomacy. Democratic spirit in the country's politics however has been deemed lacking.

The sixth Presidential elections were successfully held in **Sri Lanka** on 26 January. Rajapakse retained his position after winning 57% of the total votes cast. International monitors have expressed satisfaction with the elections despite a few shortcomings. On the day of elections four explosions occurred in Jaffna Peninsula.

**Nepali** PM has asked Maoists to leave extreme thinking in order to resolve the issue of constitution making before deadline i.e. 28 May. Meanwhile Three **Nepalese** princesses have been summoned to appear before a judge in a dispute over their father's estate, in what would be the first court appearance by a former royal.

**Geo-strategic Front:** Some of the analysts and journalists have strongly condemned **Bangladeshi** Prime Minister's recent visit to India terming it as weakening of the nation's sovereignty. However India has decided to settle some of its dues with Bangladesh, by agreeing in principle to cede control over some 17,000 acres of territory as part of a larger, comprehensive agreement, in which the remaining part of the 4,096 km-long boundary would be demarcated. Several pockets of adverse possessions and enclaves claimed by both sides are likely to be settled on an "as-is-



where-is" basis.

Top **Nepali** leadership has asked India to provide them assistance in constitution writing. **Japanese** assistance to **Nepal** and **Turkish-Nepalese** air services agreement also remained significant. **Maldives** has asked **India** to increase trade and investments in the island nation. India in response has promised to invest worth \$1 billion in corporate houses. **Maldives** has also expressed keenness to work for up gradation of its environment.

**Social Front:** Last week annual religious gathering in **Bangladesh** were attended by 4 million Muslims.

Health experts in **Bangladesh** have pointed out HIV Aids as a potent emerging threat to the society of the country. Meanwhile people in **Nepal** have been facing electricity cut for 11 hours daily due to power shortage in the country. The 2010 Environmental Performance Index has ranked **Nepal** 38th among 163 countries on 25 performance indicators tracked across 10 policy categories covering both environmental public health and eco-system vitality. Only Japan (20) and Singapore (28) are the other Asian countries that have performed better than the Himalayan nation.

**Economic Front:** **Bangladesh's** food and disaster management ministry has issued an international tender to buy 50,000 tones of white rice. Stock exchange in **Sri Lanka** remarkably fell soon after Presidential elections. First month of the year has witnessed sharp increase in inflation in **Sri Lanka** mainly due to a low base effect, rising consumer spending on the back of low interest rates, and high food prices.

#### **INDIA**

**Political Front:**

**National level:** TRS has asked the government to take appropriate measures to

resolve Telangana issue. Meanwhile BJP President has claimed that his party regards RSS but does not follow its dictations. A member of Shiv Sena has defeated SP leader's son in a closely-contested by-election. Meanwhile security remained on high alert for Republican day.

At the **Kashmiri** front Omer Abdullah has invited freedom fighters to resolve their issues via negotiations.

**Geo-strategic Front:** UN envoy for nuclear non proliferation criticized **Indo-US** nuclear deal as it weakened the efforts for a nuclear free world. Meanwhile an RSS chief claimed that **India** should teach a lesson to **Pakistan** and take strong steps against **China**. Meanwhile **India** has announced 100 fellowships for training **Afghan** students in agricultural field every year.

**Social Front:** In a recent attack Maoists killed 4 people in Orissa and blew up a railway track in Assam. A significant development is that gender based discrimination in **India** has remarkably decreased in the last decade. A survey by the Navsarjan Trust and the Robert F. Kennedy Centre for Justice and Human Rights indicates that the practice of *un-touchability* is still prevalent in rural areas of Gujarat. Meanwhile the West Bengal government has announced plans to create one lakh jobs by March 2010 in different department.

**Economic Front:** **India** has expressed determination to achieve 7% growth rate in 2010 while IMF has predicted 7.9% growth rate in 2010-11.

#### **EAST ASIA**

**Political Front:** Amidst declining popularity **Indonesian** President has launched his third pop album entitled 'I am certain I'll make it'. Meanwhile thousand of protestors have launched demonstrations

Continued...

against President Susilo for his inability to end corruption.

Protests of red-shirt protestors have increased problems for the **Thai** regime. Meanwhile the **Philippine** government and Muslim separatists held two days of talks in **Malaysia** working towards a peace deal to end decades of conflict.

Sam Rainsy, the leader of **Cambodia's** largest opposition party, has been sentenced in absentia to two years in jail on charges of racial incitement and destroying demarcation posts on Cambodia's border with Vietnam.

**Geo-strategic Front:** A **Cambodian** cargo ship has been hijacked by Somali pirates.

**Social Front:** **Indonesia**, the world's third largest greenhouse gas emitter, has announced plans for a \$1bn fund to invest in emission reduction projects across the country.

The **Indonesian** Migrant Workers Union (SBMI) lambasted the government for failing to protect **Indonesian** workers overseas, saying more than 1,000 of them had died while doing their jobs last year. **Malaysian** prosecutors have also charged three Muslim men in the firebombing of a church.

**Economic Front:** Growth in **Philippines** gross domestic product faded to 0.9 percent in 2009 from 3.8 percent in 2008 -- the weakest since the economy shrank 0.6 percent in 1998 in the wake of the Asian financial crisis.

**Malaysian** PM slammed the International Monetary Fund (IMF) prescriptions' asserting that there was no universal recipe to financial crises. Meanwhile the **Malaysian** Institute of Economic Research (Mier) has maintained its gross domestic product (GDP) growth forecast of 3.7% for **Malaysia** this year in view of the improving macro-economic indicators.

#### CHINA

**Political Front:** Chinese officials have directed various departments to handle public complaints. Meanwhile a senior official with the Civil

Aviation Administration has been dismissed from the *Communist Party of China* (CPC) and his public office for "serious violations of discipline and laws."

**Geo-strategic Front:** Cyber issue has exacerbated tension between **China** and **USA**. In response to the US criticism China claimed that its policy of internet regulation is in line with Chinese laws and does not intend to block flow of words or ideas. Meanwhile a national agency that handles **China's** Internet security issues said it hasn't received any detailed report from Google Inc. (GOOG) regarding a series of cyber attacks the company believes were originated from China. The US has asked China to carry investigations of the attack while China strongly condemned US interference.

**China** has decided to suspend scheduled visits between the Chinese and U.S. armed forces, in response to Washington's plan to



sell a package of arms worth nearly 6.4 billion U.S. dollars to Taiwan. Meanwhile **China**, **South Korea** and **Japan** held a meeting to launch joint research on free trade pact. In the meantime time **Chinese** growing relations with Brunei, Uganda, Kazakhstan, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Switzerland and Africa remained significant indicating Chinese role as an active global player.

**China** has asked EU to immediately lift an arms embargo as it would affect their strategic partnership. **China** has also urged international community to play its role in resuming the *Palestinian-Israeli* peace process.

**China** has further increased humanitarian aid to 18 million Yuan

for the victims of Haiti. **China** has also decided to send humanitarian aid to Mongolia while promising to continue support for Afghanistan's reconstruction.

**Social Front:** A top judge has been convicted in **China** as a result of anti-corruption drive.

A total of 770,000 deaths from tuberculosis (TB) have been avoided over the past eight years in **China** because of a large-scale TB control project. Also **China** has started taking strict measures to curb environmental pollution. In this regard various industries causing pollution have been pointed out. Emissions of sulfur dioxide, a major pollutant in China has also dropped 10.4 percent last year compared with that of 2008. The Government has also allocated funds to deal with drought situation. More than three million people faced water shortage as the worst drought in 50 years hit parts of south and southwest China.

In 2009 Beijing received 170 million tourists at home and from abroad.

**Economic Front:** **China** and Switzerland have voiced their opposition against trade protectionism amid the ongoing global financial crisis. Chinese shares declined for first four days of the weak but increased after that lessening tension of the economists. Chinese wine industry has got golden opportunity in the international market as world has started looking for low cost wine. Its private sector too created 11.4 million new jobs in 2009. ADB has announced to provide China with a grant of 1 million U.S. dollars to help it develop large-scale concentrated solar thermal (CST) power use. Investments have also remarkably increased in **Hong Kong**. §

# Zone 3- Euro-America: *Transatlantic Community*



## Zone 3- Euro-Americas Summary Week # 104

### WESTERN EUROPE

The **UK** economy has come out of recession, after figures showed the economy had grown by 0.1% in the last three months of 2009. The economy had previously contracted for six consecutive quarters. The **UK** recession began in the April-to-June quarter of 2008. Europe's two biggest economies - **Germany** and **France** - came out of recession last summer. Japan and the US also exited recession last year.

On the political front **Britain's** far-right British National Party has been issued a final warning to scrap its whites-only membership policy or face a possible court injunction.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2010, a one day conference in *London* was convened titled the '*UK Afghanistan summit*'; The conference was called amid rising U.S. and NATO casualties and falling public support.

Defending the most controversial decision of his career former **British** Prime Minister Tony Blair declared last week before an investigative panel that he had no regrets over going to war in Iraq, calling it the right decision in a post-Sept. 11 world. The proceedings were televised nationwide.

**France's** prime minister asked a government body last week to study the legal possibilities that would allow banning face-covering veils in France. Meanwhile **Denmark's** center-right government has said the burqa — an all-covering dress — and the niqab face veil are "diametrically opposed" to **Danish** values; it called for the use of existing rules to counter the practice without imposing a ban. Schools, as well as both public and private employers by law have the right to demand that students, teachers and workers show their faces.

Pope Benedict XVI decried last week what he called "growing aversion" to the Christian faith in the world. His worry

about the plight of the Christian minority in the Middle East is expected to shape discussions of the Mideast bishops later this year.

In **Greece** Leftist demonstrators and ultra-right activists clashed in Athens last week (January 23rd) during a rally against racism and discrimination of immigrants. On the geopolitical front **Greek** Prime Minister George Papandreou is urging his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan to re-launch efforts to improve bilateral ties. Meanwhile the nation's Finance Minister George Papaconstantinou rejected last week any notion of his country leaving the Euro zone

### SOUTH-EAST EUROPE

The new head of the **Serbian** Orthodox Church has urged dialogue to overcome long-standing divisions with Roman Catholics in the region.

Meanwhile in a record voter turn-out, the Democratic Party (DS) led coalition won local elections in **Serbian** regions Odzaci, Vojvodina, traditionally a stronghold of the Serbian Radical Party (SRS).

A new strategy formulated by the International Civilian Office (ICO) and the **Kosovo** government hopes to extend the authority of local state institutions to the northern part of the country. The EU reportedly plans to remain neutral toward the Belgrade-backed "parallel structures" in the north.

The European Parliament's (EP) Foreign Policy Committee approved last week amendments to **Macedonia's** EU progress report. Under the document, the country is to receive a date for starting EU accession talks in March at the EU's foreign ministers summit.

The *Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)* has urged the **Albanian** government and the opposition to



end their stalemate and begin necessary reforms.

### RUSSIA

According to reports the US and **Russia** are to resume negotiations on nuke reductions. In the meanwhile Iran's chief nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili's visit to **Russia** which was to start this week has been postponed, reportedly to effect better coordination.

In the Thomson Reuters report an analysis of research papers published by **Russian** scientists shows an almost across-the-board decrease, which reflects Russia's shrinking influence not only in science but also in science-based industries such as nuclear power.

*Turkmenistan*, Central Asia's largest supplier of natural gas, has resumed supplies to **Russia**. Meanwhile the Interior Ministry's Investigative Committee revealed an almost eightfold rise in economic crime (428,000 crimes) for the year 2009.

2009 has been deemed a good year for the state's arms exporter, as sales of \$7.4 billion smashed its previous record, though weapons deliveries to Iran have been stalled under political pressure.

### US/CANADA

President Barack Obama's push to create jobs includes a new tax credit for small businesses that add employees, an idea that has appeal as the nation struggles with an unemployment rate topping 10 percent. Meanwhile embattled *Federal Reserve Chairman* Ben Bernanke won confirmation for a second term last week, by the closest vote ever for the crucial post and after withering criticism from lawmakers for bailing out Wall Street while other **Americans** suffered in recession.

Obama's state of union speech



Continued...

has been received as not just a critique of politics in Washington but also as an affront to the judiciary. The president jabbed the judiciary for its latest ruling allowing corporations to throw in money into US elections, an allegation some might argue is an infringement of judicial independence.

China suspended military exchange visits with the United States last week in protest over \$6.4 billion in planned U.S. arms sales to Taiwan and warned the U.S. ambassador that the sales would harm already strained ties. Meanwhile U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton warned China that it risks diplomatic isolation and disruption to its energy supplies unless it helps keep Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

According to polls the Canadian opposition Liberal party is now ahead of minority conservative ruling party, indicating that an election, favored by the opposition but unwanted by the government, might produce a deadlock.

## LATIN AMERICA

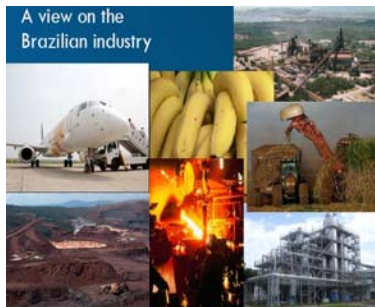
Argentina's president suffered a setback last week when a court upheld a freeze on her use of central bank funds to repay debt and said Congress must decide whether she was right to dismiss the bank's head.

Meanwhile Argentina's industrial production rose 10.4 percent in December from the same month a year earlier. The nation also registered a 2009 trade surplus of \$16.98 billion.

Brazil is looking to send hundreds more soldiers to its UN peacekeeping deployment in Haiti, potentially doubling the unit to 2,600 men.

Manuel Zelaya, who was ousted in June as president of Honduras and holed up for four months in the Brazilian embassy in Tegucigalpa, is reportedly set to leave for the Dominican Republic.

Brazil's public debt could grow



by as much as 16 per cent this year, according to the government's 2010 Annual Borrowing Plan, which analysts described as consistent with the administration's emphasis on slow but steady progress. Also according to the Agriculture Ministry coffee output in Brazil, the world's biggest producer, may unexpectedly drop this year as downpours hinder the development of the beans.

Mexican drug war continues with the arrest last week of reputed Mexican drug lord Teodoro (El Teo) Garcia Simental. Mexican soldiers have also detained Juan Carlos Tarabay Castillo alias "El 20," one of the top leaders of Golfo drug cartel. The "war on drugs" launched by President Felipe Calderón has added to the list of impediments deterring Mexican immigrants in the US from returning home. Also Canada's decision last summer to require visas for visitors from Mexico and the Czech Republic has curbed skyrocketing refugee claims from the two countries. In the meanwhile President Felipe Calderón's administration wants to dissolve Mexico's 2,022 city police forces, saying many of them are so badly educated and vulnerable to corruption that they are undermining the country's crackdown on drug cartels.

Mexico is to hold talks with India for a free trade agreement (FTA) in May this year.

Venezuela's President Hugo Chávez has criticized remarks made by Chilean president-elect Sebastián Piñera terming "the hemispheric rightwing" as overexcited; he accused the later of being undemocratic.

In his annual address to the National Assembly, Chavez announced a 25% increase in the minimum wage this year. He spoke of the influence of both Christianity and Marxism on his government's policies. The Venezuelan Bishops' Conference (CEV) too has

suggested a program to fight widespread violence and insecurity and has urged both the government and communities to join the move.

The Venezuelan government's payroll increased by 10.4 percent in 2009 and stood at 2,411,603 workers, according to data provided by the National Statistics Institute (INE). Last year, the government nationalized cement companies, rice-processing plants, ports, small banks, while the transfer of the steelmaker Siderúrgica del Orinoco (Sidor) to the State concluded.

Thousands of protesters have turned out in Venezuela, both in support of Hugo Chavez, and against him, signaling a heated political climate ahead of the 2010 elections. Last week one student was killed and nine police officers injured in violence linked to protests over the suspension of a TV station opposed to the President. Also thousands of Venezuelans opposed to Chavez took to the streets, blaming him for rolling blackouts, water rationing and widespread crime.

Foreign ministers of nine member nations of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA) met last week to discuss how to help rebuild Haiti. Meanwhile Venezuela's cut-rate regional energy alliance has announced to forgive quake-stricken Haiti's debt.

## AUSTRALASIA

Australians have been urged to consider changing their national holiday that commemorates the arrival of British settlers, a day of "pain and bewilderment" for Aboriginal people.

Australia has also set up a group to look into recent violence against Indian students that has threatened its ties with the South Asian giant.

Meanwhile according to Greenpeace climate change could more than triple the risk of catastrophic wildfires in parts of Australia, almost a year since savage firestorms that killed 173 people. §

*Microscopic Analysis: UK Summit on Afghanistan*  
*One-day international conference in London*  
*January 28<sup>th</sup>. 2010*

The London Conference on Afghanistan was held last month on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January, 2010. It was largely perceived as an opportunity for European leaders to showcase their civilian and foreign aid contributions to Afghanistan, convincing a highly skeptical public of the functionality of their Afghan policy and continued troop contributions. The Conference also marks a phase commencing plans for the transition of power, reconciliation and reintegration in the war ravaged nation. According to Gen Stanley McChrystal: "We're here to give time and space to the Afghan people to build a nation"



The conference was attended by regional leaders and representatives of the US led coalition. Iran however was missing from the meetings, reportedly because of its stance that the summit was primarily still aimed at increasing military action in the region. Critics too have pointed out the conspicuous lack of a time table despite ambitious targets for rapidly expanding the Afghan National Army and the police force. Since the American review of its afghan strategy under the Obama regime, a number of international interactions have been underway focusing on a way forward for the destabilized region.

Last year on June 11-12 an international conference entitled, "Afghanistan, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Eurasian Security and Geopolitics," took place in Kyrgyzstan. It focused on proposed participation of the Shanghai Cooperation

Organization in an Afghani crisis resolution and future development.

More recently, leading up to the London summit a one day regional summit was held in Turkey on the 25<sup>th</sup> of January 2010. The summit was the fourth in a series of high level meetings between the three nations and primarily focused on economic and security issues pertinent to regional stability. The summit was later extended to another cooperation initiative called the 'Summit of Friendship and Cooperation in the Heart of Asia'. High level officials from China, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Iran were in attendance; however India was excluded from the proceedings in lieu of Pakistan's reservations.

At an earlier date Ministerial level talks were also



held in Islamabad on January 16, 2010 where Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan affirmed their trilateral cooperation as a key to peace and stability in Afghanistan, while proclaiming that any regional arrangement for resolving the Afghan conflict should co-opt only immediate neighbors of the war-ravaged country.



U.S. GENERAL STANLEY MCCHRISTAL

Among the regional stake holders Iran's reserved stance towards the international summit and its refusal to participate has been attributed to the view that the event aimed at "focusing on more military action rather than exploring the real roots of the problem." British Foreign Secretary and conference chairman David Miliband criticized Tehran's decision and termed it "inexplicable."

However, according to one analyst Iran's stance towards the London Conference reflects the concerns of regional stakeholders who are deeply concerned about the ambitious policy of the US to encourage India,

marginalize Pakistan and use 'moderate' Taliban against 'hostile regional players' in Asia.

Meanwhile on the Indian front the national debate has been divided regarding the extent of Indian involvement in Afghanistan. One segment is of the view (reflected in the words of C. Raja in the Indian Express) that following India's great run in Afghanistan in Phase One (2001 till until recently), stasis has gripped India's security policy in recent months and maneuvering by the Pakistan army now threaten to 'marginalize Delhi in Phase Two.' Contrary to this view another analyst in the Indian daily 'The Hindu' opined that the London summit has exposed India's 'flawed Afghan policy'. According to him in 1997-98 Delhi perhaps made a 'strategic mistake' by regarding Afghanistan as a 'theatre of India-Pakistan rivalry'. Citing Pakistan's strategic location, he deems Afghanistan's priority ties with it a logical eventuality.

With the recent developments Pakistan has come forth as a pivotal player, openly asserting its reservations regarding Indian involvement in post war Afghanistan. Pakistan, according to Foreign Minister Qureshi, is of the opinion that the existing mechanisms in place are 'adequate and working well', hence there is 'no need for new regional architecture'. He added



that as India has no border with Afghanistan, it does not fit into the scheme, accept perhaps in assisting development. In the recent NATO Military conference in Brussels, COAS General Kiyani too stressed an openly India centric National stance while voicing Pakistan's willingness to reconsider and renounce its traditional understanding of 'Strategic Depth' in the region. The general said "if Afghanistan is peaceful, stable and friendly, we have our strategic depth because our western border is secure."

According to official sources the aim of the conference, co-hosted by the UK, UN and Afghanistan, was to agree on a clear international plan for the next 18 months in Afghanistan



and move forward towards an ultimate transition of power to established local authorities. Where it may have defined the parameters of success and failure and chalked out a co-operative path, critics have still voiced concerns regarding the efficacy of the new strategy in the face of ebbing western optimism.

The concluding communiqué declared the

conference as a "decisive step towards greater Afghan leadership to secure, stabilize and develop Afghanistan," an assertion that only time will test. §

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## Microscopic Analysis: Cyber Warfare- Tomorrow's Battles? China's Google Controversy

In a recent bold speech the U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton criticized China's policies on Internet administration and insinuated that China restricts Internet freedom. The remarks follow the unfolding Google controversy where in a most recent development Google has announced to end censorship and possibly pull out of China.

The issue revolves around a series of events the latest of which involves alleged 'highly sophisticated and targeted attack' on Google corporate infrastructure 'originating from China'. Further investigation apparently revealed that "a primary goal of the attackers was accessing the Gmail accounts of Chinese human rights activists,". Where the Chinese government has not directly been accused in these allegations, the implied responsibility is quite obvious. The shifting policies herald a major change for Google, which had originally abided by Chinese laws requiring some politically and socially sensitive issues to be blocked from search results in the country.

The Chinese Government has issued a stinging response to criticism that it is jamming the 'free flow of words and ideas' on the internet, accusing the US of damaging relations between the two countries by foisting its "information imperialism" on China.

Cyber warfare has increasingly attracted attention at the diplomatic front in the twenty first century. Issues of regulation of the World Wide Web as well as offensive attacks on sensitive government information have been in the spotlight as has been highlighted in this most recent incident.

China, a stringent enforcer of censorship and regulation argues that all nations including the United States, that has in its opinion hypocritically projected a higher moral argument in the matter, takes necessary measures to administer the Internet according to its own laws and regulations. It cites events in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks when the U.S. Congress approved the Patriot Act to grant its security agencies the right to search telephone and e-mail communications in the name of anti-terrorism.

Russia too has been highlighted as another active entity in international cyber warfare. Secretary of Defence Robert Gates noted in a Foreign Affairs article last year that Russia employed a relatively crude but brutally effective conventional offensive in Georgia



which was augmented with a sophisticated **cyber attack** and a well-coordinated propaganda campaign.

The recent threat assessment reports of the US intelligence also highlight the evolving arenas of warfare and the US efforts to counter attacks. Reportedly the U.S. offensive cyber war capabilities have been focused on getting into Chinese government and military computers outfitted with less secure operating systems like those made by Microsoft Corp.

In the meanwhile China has developed more secure operating systems meant for government and military systems, hoping to make Beijing's networks impenetrable to U.S. military and intelligence agencies. Officials described it as a growing war in cyberspace which they allege is often disguised as civilian hackers on government payrolls.

Internet's domain name systems too are a vital resource of the digital age. Because of an historical accident, a California-based nonprofit organization, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), oversees the administration of generic suffixes (such as .com or .info). Many countries believe such important functions should not be in the hands of a private-sector body. Many nations



are wary that the U.S. government, which created the Internet, is ICANN's ultimate supervisor. They believe that the Internet, as a global resource, should be managed by the international community rather than by a single country, no matter how well intentioned. Hence the debate seeking a modified global regulatory system continues.

At present according to Mr. Coleman, a computer security specialist consultant to the office of the director of national intelligence and U.S. Strategic Command-China, the United States and Russia are matched equally in this new type of warfare. According to another analyst Mark Hosenball the U.S. government isn't that worried about all-out cyber warfare from China or Russia at all. He opines that it would not be in these nations' economic interests. The primary concern at present is the threat of a nongovernmental actor such as Al Qaeda developing the required expertise. Such an evolved battle would be one in which, Gates notes, "The United States cannot kill or capture its way to victory".

In June last year, Defense Secretary Gates issued an order to establish a new military cyber command dedicated to coordinating the Pentagon's efforts to defend its networks and conduct cyber warfare. The command was expected to be fully operational by October this year. In this stead the Secretary of Defence decisively notes that the Pentagon has to do more than modernize its conventional forces, "it must also focus on today's unconventional conflicts -- and tomorrow's." §

**Discussion Question:**  
*Is the potential threat for global cyber warfare involving rogue nongovernmental actors well founded?*

## Google's turbulent five years in China: a timeline

*Google's threat to quit China because of increasing censorship caps a turbulent relationship between the world's dominant search engine and the Government.*

### July 2005:

Google China launches. The company poaches [Kaifu Lee](#) to head the business from Microsoft. Microsoft immediately sues Google, alleging that Mr Lee will disclose information about Microsoft's business in China to their competitor. The lawsuit is settled in December.

### January 2006:

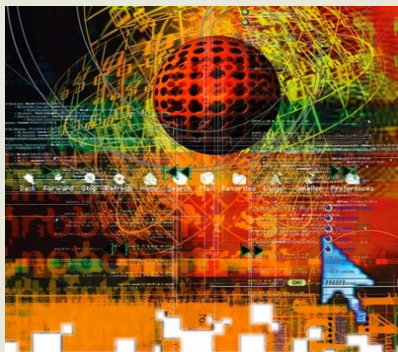
Google launches [Google.cn](#), a Chinese-language search engine using technology it developed in 2000 to read Chinese characters. Google admits that it will censor search results on the site in accordance with Chinese law. The company, however, puts a disclaimer on the site to warn users that they are not getting total access.

### January 2007:

Google admits that its decision to censor its Chinese site had damaged the company, after a series of attacks from web users. "On a business level, that decision to censor was a net negative," said Sergey Brin, one of Google's founders.

### April 2007:

A Google spokesman admits that the site's pinyin input method was not entirely built



by Google following complaints from Sohu, a Chinese internet portal, that Google had pirated its software code.

### August 2008:

Google launches free music downloads for Chinese users to compete with Baidu, the market leader.

### March 2009:

China blocks YouTube, which is owned by Google.

### June 2009:

China blocks Google.com and Gmail briefly as it accuses Google of spreading obscenity over the internet.

### September 2009:

Kaifu Lee resigns, amid rumours that pressure from the Chinese government had become intolerable. John Liu is appointed to replace him.

### October 2009:

A group of Chinese authors accuse Google of violating their copyright by reproducing their work on its Google Books service.

### December 2009:

Rumours suggest Google had heavily reduced its staff in China.

### January 2010:

Google announces it will stop self-censoring and that it may pull out of the country after a series of cyber attacks <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/google/6981171/Googles-turbulent-five-years-in-China-a-timeline.html>

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Principle Investigator- DR. IJAZ SHAFI GILANI



BPM- Business & Politics  
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