



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...

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*.

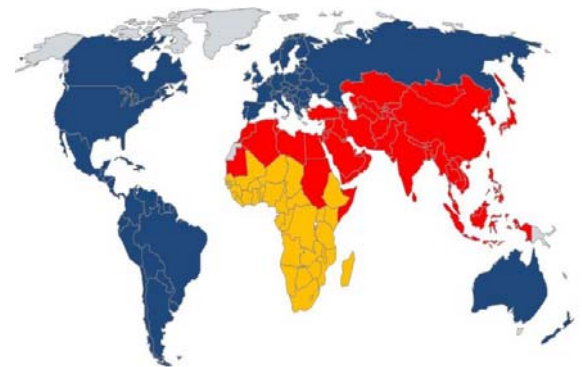
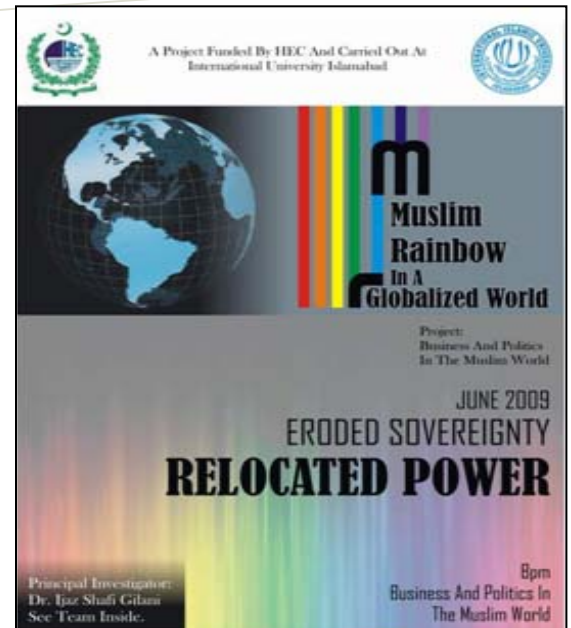
- ◆ We will make the e-letter a multi-layered presentation: in other words Friday on the Facebook will provide clicks to deeper levels of information; for comprehension (Maps and Data) as well as for elaboration



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 21st 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.



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Globalized Opinions

This week's report consists of 29 National surveys.

Week # 107

Commentary on Gallopedia Polls

Dated 14-20 Feb 2010

Will internet with all its resources make us more intelligent or stupid?¹

Cyber space is commonly espoused to be a mass source of information. But does it make us more intelligent? This was the subject of a Pew survey that sought future expectations as a result of increasing internet facilities. However with as a ubiquitous facility of an information bank, will the internet not render us all at a level standing. One may have easier access and more efficient employment of this knowledge source, but does that essentially constitute a higher degree of intelligence?

The definition of intelligence hence stands disputed. Also the human capacity to assimilate and absorb this knowledge poses new avenues of opportunity along with greater challenges in the face of a deluge of data. Furthermore the uncharted territory as to how information management has the capacity to influence poses yet another challenge. It may be employed as a tool in the direction and control of ideas.

Trends towards losing the ability to concentrate and seeking a generic superficial knowledge rather than a more responsible study of knowledge are posed as concrete arguments by the critics in this regard. Is then the question posed by the pew survey a rather superficial analysis of a more complex phenomenon? §

February 20, 2010

Likud Extends Lead Over Kadima in Israel

Israel's governing party is the most popular in the country a year after the last legislative ballot, according to a poll by Dialog published in *Haaretz*. A prospective tally of seats shows that the Likud party would garner 35 seats in the next election to the Knesset, up three since **July 2009**.

February 15, 2010

WEST & CENTRAL ASIA



-2-

Fewer Afghans Optimistic About Future

The number of people in Afghanistan thinking that their country is heading in the right direction has decreased since mid-2009, according to a poll by the International Republican Institute (IRI). 56 per cent of respondents say things are going well, down six points since last July.

February 14, 2010

Tajikistanis Expect Fair Election This Year

Most people in Tajikistan expect this month's legislative election to be fair, according to a poll by IFES. 68 per cent of respondents share this view, while only 11 per cent think the ballot will not be fair.



February 16, 2010

EAST ASIA

Cambodians Clearly Optimistic About Future

A large majority of people in Cambodia think their country is heading in the right direction, according to a poll by the International Republican Institute (IRI). 79 per cent of respondents share this view, while 20 per cent say things are not heading the right way.

February 18, 2010

Zone 3

EURO-AMERICAS

WEST EUROPE



Zone 1
ASIA

MIDDLE EAST

PM Netanyahu's Likud Still Favoured in Israel

The political party of Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu continues to draw high popular support, according to a poll by *Maagar Mochot*. A prospective tally of seats shows that the Likud party would get 32 seats in the Knesset in the next legislative election.

Continued...

French Socialists Ponder Options for 2012 Ballot

Current International Monetary Fund (IMF) chief Dominique Strauss-Kahn and current Socialist Party (PS) leader Martine Aubry are the most popular candidates for the PS presidential nomination ahead of France's 2012 election, according to a poll by Ifop



published in *Le Journal du Dimanche*. 27 per cent of PS supporters would like Aubry to be the candidate.
February 15, 2010

A Third of Italians Say Immigrants Cause Crime

Some people in Italy believe foreign-born residents are the main cause of crime in the country, according to a poll by Ispo published in *Corriere della Sera*. 35 per cent of respondents share this view.

February 18, 2010

NORTH AMERICA

Americans OK with Obama Meeting Dalai Lama

The majority of people in the United States have no problem with Barack Obama convening with the Dalai Lama, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public

Opinion. 64 per cent of respondents agree with the planned meeting between the U.S. president and the Buddhist spiritual leader.

February 16, 2010

In U.S., 6 in 10 View Iran as Critical Threat to U.S. Interests

A Gallup poll finds 61% of Americans viewing the military power of Iran as a critical threat to U.S. vital interests over the next 10 years. An additional 29% say Iran is an important, though not a critical, threat to the United States. The findings come as Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is seeking the support of several Arab nations for additional sanctions on Iran in a trip to the region this week.

February 16, 2010

Most People Believe Osama bin Laden Is Alive and Many Believe He Is in Pakistan

A new Harris Poll finds that more than three-quarters (78%) of adult Americans believe Osama bin Laden is alive. A plurality (37%) believes that he is living in Pakistan, but many people (32%) do not feel able to even guess where he is.

February 10, 2010

Americans More Divided on Strength of National Defense

Americans are more likely now (45%) than they were a year ago (37%) to say the United States' national defense is "not strong enough." At the same time, fewer believe the nation's defense is "about right."

February 18, 2010

Does Google Make Us Stupid?

Respondents to the fourth "Future of the Internet" survey, conducted by the Pew Internet & American Life Project and Elon University's Imagining the Internet Center,



were asked to consider the future of the internet-connected world between now and 2020, majorities believe that by 2020 internet search engines would enhance human intelligence instead of decreasing their IQs.

February 19, 2010

LATIN AMERICA

Mexicans Evenly Split on Abortion

The legal status of abortion divides opinions in Mexico, according to a poll by Consulta Mitofsky. 48.8 per cent of respondents agree with allowing women to seek an abortion on a voluntary basis, whereas 45.3 per cent disagree.

February 20, 2010

AUSTRALASIA

Australian Political Scene Becomes Tighter

Australia's main federal parties are virtually tied, according to a poll by Newspoll published in *The Australian*. 40 per cent of respondents would vote for the governing Australian Labor Party (ALP) in the next election to the House of Representatives, while 39 per cent would support the Coalition of Liberals and National.

February 17, 2010

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Zone 1- **Asia: Summary**

Asia, Middle East & North Africa

TURKEY

Political Front: In *Turkey* strong opposition by various political groups has stalled the implementation of the Kurdish democratic initiative beyond certain cultural aspects. Meanwhile a group of 500 PKK members demonstrated in Istanbul last week to mark the 11th year of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan's capture.

Main Opposition Republican People's Party plans to submit a censure motion against PM and Interior Minister alleging that the government pressured judges not to arrest a group of terrorist.

Geo-strategic Front: Turkish high officials paid diplomatic visits to Dhaka and India in a bid to enhance cooperation. Meanwhile *Turkey* and Bahrain signed an agreement for inter-parliamentary cooperation. Turkey has reiterated its intention to normalize ties with its Armenian neighbor. Meanwhile Kazakhstan has voiced its support for Turkey's efforts towards stability in the region.

Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos has assured his nation's support towards speeding up *Turkey's* EU accession. Spain is the current EU presidency holder.

Economic Front: *Turkey* has signed agreements with Bahrain and Tanzania to enhance economic cooperation.

Social Front: Mehmet Erdoğan, the Turkish PM's nephew has been convicted on charges of drug trafficking and sentenced to prison. Meanwhile Twenty-six people, including a high-level police officer, have been arrested in operations targeting human trafficking in Istanbul, Ankara and

the southern province of Malatya.

A number of nongovernmental organizations in Diyarbakir protested a decision by the 8th Chamber of the Council of State to retain a university admission system that uses a lower coefficient to calculate the university admission examination score. In the meantime storms and rainy weather have paralyzed life for nearly two weeks in Turkey's northwestern



provinces.

CENTRAL ASIA

Political Front: Trial of 31 alleged members of an Islamic insurgent group accused of terrorist activities in the North Caucasus and *Azerbaijan* commenced last week.

The younger brother of *Kyrgyz* President has created an elite military unit on the basis of President's recommendations for amending the constitution. Meanwhile *Tajikistan's* ruling National Democratic Party has nominated the president's eldest son, to be a candidate for Dushanbe's city council.

Geo-strategic Front: Three *Azerbaijani* soldiers were killed in an exchange of fire with *Armenian* armed forces near the disputed *Nagorno-Karabakh region*. Meanwhile *Armenian* Foreign Minister has warned *Azerbaijan* against disregarding the principle of self-determination in negotiations to resolve the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. Meanwhile *Kazakhstan's*

President has presented a package of measures to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to his *Azeri* counterpart.

Azerbaijani President received former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert last week where both exchanged views on issues of mutual concern. Meanwhile *Kazakh* PM held a meeting with *Turkish* FM focusing on *Kazakh-Turkish* trade and economic relations in the framework of the Treaty on Strategic Partnership, signed by the presidents of the two countries. Also the *Kazak* PM held telephonic talk with his *Russian* counterpart and discussed a bilateral trade and economic cooperation.

Uzbek officials have introduced new regulations that limit the number of visits *Kyrgyz* citizens can make to *Uzbekistan*.

Also *Uzbekistan's* President recently paid a visit to Korea.

Economic Front: The State Oil Company of *Azerbaijan* Republic (SOCAR) has expressed its intention to build a new pipeline to export gas to Iran. Meanwhile as part of its new medium-term cooperation strategy for 2011-2014 financial years, the World Bank has made a plan to provide USD 1 billion in loans to *Azerbaijan*. All the while *Azerbaijani* Tax Ministry has announced revenue of 4.114 billion manats in 2009.

Global economic crisis also affected *Kazakhstan's* economy as its gross domestic product grew 1.2 percent last year, i.e. down from 3.2 percent in 2008. Meanwhile the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has appreciated efforts of the Government of *Tajikistan* to build

Continued...

hydropower plants on its territory that will allow tackling many problems resulting from electricity shortages. Also the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has completed its first power rehabilitation project in the country.

Turkmen geologists have found new evidence of huge gas reserves in the country.

Social Front: The attorney for arrested **Azerbaijani** blogger Adnan Hajizade has requested that new judges be named to preside over his client's appeal in a Baku court. Meanwhile the jailed **Kazakh** human rights defender Yevgeny Zhovtis has begun publishing a blog on the Internet.

Kyrgyzstan has reinforced environment protection measures within oil and gas facilities exploitation. Meanwhile Oxfam has released its report on climate changes and poverty in **Tajikistan** claiming that frequent droughts and heightened extreme weather conditions are hitting poor communities, eroding their resilience. Meanwhile the country's glaciers are melting raising fears of future water shortages and potential disputes in the wider region.

EAST ASIA



Oil fields in Baku



Political Front: While talking to Chinese community at the commemoration of their New Year; **Indonesian** President promised to protect their civil rights. Meanwhile effecting a smooth transition of power through a stable political process is a major challenge facing the Philippine president.

Thousands of pro-Thaksin protesters forced **Thailand's** biggest bank to close its headquarters under accusations of having links with the **Thai** royal family.

Economic Front: **Indonesian** economy fueled by exports and investment grew at the rate of 5.4% in the last quarter of 2009 with overall growth at 4.5%. Likewise, positive growth was also observed in the fourth quarter in **Singapore**.

Cyclones and droughts have badly affected **Philippines'** crops further deteriorating its economy. Meanwhile projections regarding the **Thai** economy remain divided amidst an uncertain political environment.

Malaysia is making efforts to join the group of high income economies in the region. Meanwhile the biggest garment industry in **Cambodia** discarded 3,000 jobs amidst the economic crisis, while 106 factories were closed leaving 45,500 people out of work. The Government of

Vietnam is also taking measures to avoid an economic slump this year.

Social Front: Islamic police in the **Indonesian** province of Aceh patrol daily to arrest people involved in anti-religious activities. Meanwhile three women in **Malaysia** were canned for engaging in illicit sex. The issue of caning the women has ignited a fierce debate in various circles of the country.

Last month a group of **Philippine** politicians called on the country's government to ban domestic workers from going to the Middle East and Gulf states. According to a recent survey 44% of the population approved the proposal. 23% however claimed that government should avoid involvement in such affairs. According to a recent study an alarming number of government servants in **Brunei**, around 55 per cent, are struggling with obesity and another 60 per cent suffer from high blood sugar and high blood pressure.

INDIA

Political Front-National Front: BJP's President has declared the ruling regime to be the main cause of rising inflation in the country. BJP has also opposed an open-ended dialogue with Pakistan and has strongly criticized Home Minister's recent statement regarding **Kashmiri** youth. Meanwhile President of VHP has asked political parties to avoid interference in religious matters such as the reconstruction of Ram Temple at the place of Babri Masjid.

As far as **Maoist** insurgency is concerned at least 20 Eastern Frontier Rifles (EFR) personnel

Continued...

were killed in the biggest attack yet launched in West Bengal. Meanwhile in Bihar Maoists assassinated 12 civilians.

Regional Front: Muslim leadership of Andhra Pradesh has announced to protest against a court decision on reservation of 10% quota for Muslims denouncing the government's inept handling of the issue. Meanwhile nearly a week after setting up a five-member committee on the Telangana issue, the Union government has announced the panel's seven-point terms of reference seeking to examine the situation in Andhra Pradesh with reference to the demand for a Telangana State against demands for a united Andhra Pradesh. The committee is to submit its report by December 31, 2010.

Fourteen MLAs from the Telangana region handed over their resignation letters to Speaker on a call by the all-party Joint Action Committee (JAC) to protest against the terms of reference of the Srikrishna committee.

Geo-strategic Front: Indo-Pak talks are currently a hot issue, where India wants to stick to the issue of dealing with terrorism while Pakistan wants resumption of dialogue process that was halted after 26/11. Congress government has expressed determination to resume talks even after the Pune blasts while BJP has strongly criticized this initiative.

Meanwhile **India** and **Nepal** have decided to sign an agreement to provide railway connectivity and expand existing lines between the two countries. Apart from this **Russia** and **India** have decided to firm up two major pacts on nuclear energy and a fifth generation fighter plane; they have also resolved to step up trade ties and develop closer cooperation in the energy sector.

Economic Front: India has started putting efforts to conclude

comprehensive trade opening pact or the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the European Union by the end of this year. Meanwhile inflation has marked another 120 basis points (1.2 percentage points) and surged to 8.6 per cent in January setting a record high in the last 13 months.

Social Front: At least nine people died and over 50 were injured in a blast in a German Bakery in **Pune**. Some analysts and politicians doubted the involvement of extremist Hindu outfits in the tragedy. Meanwhile violence erupted in some parts of the Darjeeling Hills where life



came to a halt due to a 24-hour strike by the students' wing of the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM). The strike was called to protest against the refusal of the authorities to allow its supporters to hold a pro-Gorkhaland rally in Siliguri and other parts of the Dooars earlier this month.

CHINA

Political Front: Communist Party of **China** (CPC) has called for better law enforcement of law to ensure national security, social harmony and the country's sound economic growth.

Geo-strategic Front: China remained active in enhancing

collaboration with various countries of the globe including; *Tanzania, Syria* and *Singapore*.

The US President went forward with a controversial meeting with the Dalai Lama despite warnings from **China**. In the case of cyber attacks against Google it is suspected that Chinese students and military were involved in the incident. The Military however has denied these allegations.

Economic Front: Despite the fact that China's natural gas output rose by 7.7 percent last year, it fell short of ever rising domestic demand. The country produced 83 billion cubic meters of natural gas last year, while consumed 87.45 billion cubic meters, up 11.5 percent year on year.

Taiwan has expressed positive hopes regarding economic cooperation with **China**. **China, Japan** and **South Korea** have also launched a joint study on trilateral Free trade deal. Meanwhile stock exchange of **Hong Kong** remained fluctuating.

Social Front: **China's** operational high-speed railways have exceeded 3,300 kilometers, leading the world in both length and technologies. Police and other authorities in northwest **China's** Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region detained 1,795 people suspected of dealing drugs in 2009. Meanwhile Chinese Premier visited Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region over the weekend, spending the Spring Festival, or Chinese lunar New Year, with local villagers.

Zone 2- Africa:



**Niger junta leaders
have not yet set a date
for elections**

POLITICS OF SECURITY AND CONFLICT ISSUES

West Africa: Following the recent coup in **Niger** the country is now being led by a group called the Supreme Council for the Restoration of Democracy (CSRD). Meanwhile the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa as well as representatives of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) lead a joint mission last week that met with relevant parties regarding the recent coup d'état.

More endorsements came last week for Acting **Nigerian** President Goodluck Jonathan. Former Head of State and All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) presidential candidate in the 2003 and 2007 presidential elections, General Muhammadu Buhari (rtd); former Vice-President, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, and other politicians under the aegis of the National Democratic Movement (NDM) backed Jonathan's emergence and called on him to confront the challenges facing the country.

The recent resignation of former presidential candidate of the All **Nigeria** Peoples Party (ANPP,) General Muhammadu Buhari (rtd), from the party, has significantly affected Nigerian politics. The relationship between Buhari and the ANPP leadership went sour immediately after the 2007 presidential poll, when Buhari challenged the outcome of the election won by Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) presidential candidate, President

Umaru Yar'Adua in court, while his party chose to form an alliance.

Ghana's National Identification Authority (NIA) noted last week that its registration data could help to put to rest disagreements over the credibility of electoral polls, which have been a major challenge to elections in Africa.

A week after **Ivory Coast's** President Laurent Gbagbo dissolved the government and the electoral commission, thousands marched in the city of Bouaké, damaging cars and shops. There have been almost daily demonstrations in cities across the country as **Côte d'Ivoire's** political crisis deepens.

South Africa: The African Union gave **Madagascar's** diplomatically isolated leader an ultimatum last week, saying he will face sanctions if previous power-sharing agreements are not in place by March 16.

The European Union's council of ministers met in Brussels, Belgium last week to endorse a proposal to extend the sanctions against **Zimbabwe** until 20 February 2011, a move that Mugabe has criticized as punishment against his land reforms.

Meanwhile according to embassy statements Iran and **Zimbabwe** are seeking to strengthen ties between the two countries.

According to a newspaper report **Mali** authorities have released four Islamist prisoners in an apparent deal with al Qaeda's North African wing to save a French hostage.

Central Africa: Last week Rwanda's Defense Forces RDF officially received a JMC 4000 weapons destroyer, a machine that will be used by the RDF to destroy illicit small arms.



**RELEASED FRENCH HOSTAGE
PIERRE CAMATTE**

HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL ISSUES IN DOMESTIC POLITICS

West Africa: Last week's reports indicate that archaeologists have unearthed dozens of clay figures in **Ghana**, shedding light on a sophisticated society which existed before the arrival of Islam. According to BBC News, experts from the University of **Ghana** found 80 sculptures believed to be between 800 and 1,400 years old.

Speaking at the opening of the 37th Summit of the Authority of ECOWAS Heads of State and Governments acting President of **Nigeria**, Dr Goodluck Jonathan, called on leaders of the West African sub-region to collectively fight against drug trafficking and terrorism.

Meanwhile last week **Nigerian** soldiers moved in to halt a confrontation between Christians and Muslims at a cemetery near the city of Jos, where religious tensions are high. Christians were trying to stop Muslims from burying a dead child in the disputed Naraguta area. More than 300 people died last month during days of rioting in Jos between the two religious groups.

Nigeria's House of Representatives has shot down a bill seeking to repeal the Child Rights Act of 2003. The bid to repeal the legislation was premised on the argument that there were procedural errors in the passage of the Act and that the said errors contravened certain provisions of the 1999 Constitution.

Human Rights Watch said last week that the arrest of a former **Liberian** warlord in the United States underscores the need for prosecutions of serious crimes committed during Liberia's civil war. George Boley, whose arrest was announced last week, is the former leader of the Liberian Peace Council, one of several armed factions implicated in heinous abuses during 14 years of armed conflict that ended in 2003.

Continued...

South Africa: The Human Rights Consultative Committee (HRCC), a civil society network of 91 NGOs in **Malawi** working to promote governance, accountability, and human rights has questioned the government provision of MK500 million (about 2,314,814 Euros) to president Bingu wa Mutharika as administration costs of chairing the African Union (AU).

Giving its final report on **Mozambique's** general and provincial elections held on 28 October, the European Union Observation Mission last week praised the organization of the polling, but condemned serious incidents of fraud, notably the significant number of polling stations that claimed an impossibly high turnout.

Meanwhile a **German** task force arrived at the Simon's Town naval base last week for a month-long exercise with the **South African** National Defence Force (SANDF).

Zimbabwe government workers marched through the capital last week, scaling up a job boycott against low wages, in a sign of growing impatience with the country's year-old unity government.

Central Africa: **Rwanda's** Victoire Ingabire, the embattled leader of the yet-to-be registered political party, FDU-Inkingi, was again summoned by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) last week following controversial remarks regarding a 'Double Genocide Theory' in the 1994 crisis.

Rwanda's Electoral Commission is expected to announce the list of candidates contesting for the forthcoming presidential seat on July 7 this year. Meanwhile in a press release Amnesty International has strongly condemned a worrying attack on a **Rwandan** opposition group as the country prepares for presidential elections in August 2010. Also **Rwanda's** National Human Rights Commission (NHCR) has dismissed a report recently published by Human Rights Watch (HRW) in which the organization claims that the government's policy on land may lead to increased poverty amongst the population.

Religious leaders, football stars and actors have been backing the 'Candles for Rwanda' initiative this week as **Rwanda** marks the 15th anniversary of end of 1994

genocide.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in **Congo-Brazzaville** has said it is expecting more displaced people to transfer in from the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo. The UNHCR said that more than 120,000 refugees escaping ethnic violence are already crammed into camps in Congo-Brazzaville and Central African Republic.

According to a UNICEF report youngsters are still being recruited within the ranks of both the rebels and the national army, despite efforts to end the use of child soldiers in the war-torn east of the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND DOMESTIC POLITICS

South Africa: While the **South African** government has reconfirmed its commitment to reducing its emissions trajectory - business in the country remain in the dark regarding detail on what they will be asked to do.

Central Africa: The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) announced last week that **Rwanda** will play global host to celebrations for the 2010 World Environment Day, observed annually on 5 June.

POLITICAL ECONOMY

West Africa: Last week a stakeholder's meeting in **Ghana** organized by International Business Event Management (IBEM) concluded with an agreement to seek better networking in order to boost business.

Meanwhile technology firm, Hewlett Packard (HP) has announced plans to step up its battle against counterfeits in **Nigeria** and the region this year, in response to the increasing incidents of fake printing supplies.

South Africa: International Monetary Fund member countries agreed unanimously last week to restore **Zimbabwe's** voting rights after a seven-year suspension, in a step toward normalizing relations with major donors.

The **South African** government

expects the country's economy to grow by 2.3% this year, helped by the football World Cup in the summer. Meanwhile the **South African** rand weakened last week after China toughened bank regulations aimed at reducing loan growth, raising concern that the measures would cool the world's fastest-growing economy and reduce demand for commodities.

Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe has threatened to quit the Kimberley Process (KP) - the body which ensures diamonds do not fund conflicts. Meanwhile Zimbabwe's two home affairs (Interior) ministers earlier this month told a gathering of successful **Zimbabwean** businessmen in Johannesburg that the government of President Robert Mugabe and Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai wants them to return to help revive the economy.

The cash-strapped government of **Botswana** has agreed to spend US \$150 million (P1 billion) in helping to cut De Beers' debts which currently stand at \$3 billion.

Malawi has launched an international tender for a fourth cell-phone operator, in a bid to reduce tariff rates that are among the highest in **Southern Africa**.

Central Africa: **Rwandan** Auditor General's (AG) report released last week, revealed very many loopholes within the Government financial procedures, with over Rwf 4.3 billion unaccounted for.

Meanwhile **Rwandan** farmers have adopted new varieties of climbing beans to replace bush beans, recognizing greater potential in this market. On 15 January, the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) released eight different climbing bean varieties to farmers. §

Zone 3- Euro-America: *Transatlantic Community*



WESTERN EUROPE

A **British** venture capital firm plans to launch Europe's first halal industrial park, tapping an under-served market worth up to \$6.27 billion a year.

The number of people claiming jobless benefits in the **United Kingdom** has hit a 12-year high meanwhile the bank of England remains uncertain regarding policy related to stimulus provision. Bank of England policymakers voted unanimously in a recent meeting to keep British interest rates at a record low level and to freeze radical credit-easing plans.

The finance ministers of the 16 members of the euro zone urged **Greece** on Monday (February 15th) to further slash spending and raise taxes or face possible sanctions next month. Meanwhile the German finance ministry has said that countries using the euro currency will together provide aid worth between 20 and 25 billion euros (\$27.2 and \$34 billion) for **Greece**. Last week at a government session Prime Minister George Papandreu accused the bloc of using **Greece** as a scapegoat to hide the 27-member group's own failures.

France's highest court last week overruled a lower court's acquittal of five former inmates at the Guantanamo Bay prison and ordered an appeals court to rehear the case centring on terrorism charges.

Britain's human rights watchdog called last week for an urgent independent probe into claims that the security services were complicit in the torture of more than 20 of its terror suspects. Meanwhile a probe into similar allegations regarding **Britain's** last remaining Guantanamo Bay detainee, continue.

British Diplomats met Israel's ambassador last week to discuss fake British passports used by alleged killers of a Hamas chief amid speculation its Mossad spy agency was behind the murder in Dubai. Meanwhile hundreds of peace protesters demonstrated last week outside a factory in southern **England** where warheads for Trident nuclear submarines are made.

Britain and France led a call last week for an international probe into the violence that followed last year's disputed presidential election in Iran. The demand, which Iran swiftly rejected, came during the U.N. Human Rights Council's first review of Iran's rights record since the organization was founded in 2006.

The **Dutch** coalition government collapsed last week over whether to extend the country's military mission in Afghanistan, leaving uncertain the future of its 1,600 soldiers fighting there. Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende announced that the second largest party in his three-party alliance is quitting, in a breakdown of trust in what had always been an uneasy partnership.

Following media reports a scandal has erupted regarding **French** military having purposely exposed soldiers to a 1961 nuclear test in the Sahara. The government has denied these allegations but reportedly did concede last year to compensate victims.

Several prominent Anglican **British** bishops are urging Christians to keep their carbon consumption in check this Lent a 40-day period of penitence before Easter where observant Catholics, Anglicans, and Orthodox Christians give up meat, alcohol or chocolates.

SOUTH-EAST EUROPE



A political stalemate continues in **Albania** as diplomatic efforts are under way to bring opposing parties to the table. Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) President Mevlut Cavusoglu is expected to head a delegation to assist President Bamir Topi in mediating political negotiations between the government and the opposition in the ongoing boycott of parliament.

According to **Bulgaria** Prime Minister Boyko Borissov's statements last week the US is expected to hold preliminary talks with the **Bulgarian** government on the possibility of hosting elements of the US anti-missile defence shield. Meanwhile **Russia** has demanded more details from **Bulgaria** regarding the deployment.

European Union aspirant **Croatia** will inaugurate its new president, leftwing intellectual Ivo Josipovic this week.

According to local media **Kosovo's** visa liberalisation process with EU countries is conditioned on the repatriation of thousands of **Kosovo** citizens living illegally across Europe. The government says it has already reached a repatriation agreement with several EU countries, including France, Belgium and Switzerland, and is in the process of hammering out agreements with Germany and Scandinavian countries.

RUSSIA AND THE

Russia's war with **Georgia** in August 2008. In the mean time **Georgian** President Mikheil Saakashvili has criticized French plans to sell a warship and armored vehicles to **Russia**.

Meanwhile four civilians were killed during anti-militant operations in the volatile southern Russian republic of **Ingushetia**. Also a **Russian** group that advocates for human rights, Memorial, said last week that four civilians who were killed during recent operations against Islamist militants in the North Caucasus region had not been accidentally caught in a cross-fire, as Russian authorities have contended.

Top managers of a popular Scandinavian retail chain IKEA have been fired for alleged bribery of state officials. Dmitry Medvedev also launched a purge of **Russia's** interior ministry last week, firing 18 senior police officers as part of a drive to root out rampant corruption plaguing the country's law enforcement system. On the environment front Some 2,000 people rallied in the Siberian city of Irkutsk last week to protest the opening of one of Russia's dirtiest factories, the Baikalsk Paper and Cellulose Plant.

With Iran's announcement that it has enriched uranium to 20 per cent, **Russia's** policy towards the Islamic state is reflecting a shift. Officials have suggested **Russia** could support a new round of crippling UN sanctions against the Ahmadinejad regime, and now there is a new line of confrontation over its delay in delivering a batch of anti-aircraft missiles.

On the economic front in **Russia** oil for February delivery rose \$2.15, or 3%, to close at \$81.51 a barrel, the highest settlement since Oct. 9, 2008. Meanwhile Finland's decision last week to give its final environmental approval to the Nord Stream gas pipeline came as **Russia** signaled a concession on another key issue for its Nordic neighbor - a further delay in imposing prohibitive export tariffs on raw timber.

US/CANADA

US President Barack Obama is expected to sign an executive order establishing a bipartisan commission to find ways to reduce the gaping US budget deficit. Plans for a congressionally mandated fiscal



commission earlier failed to pass through the Senate. The budget deficit is expected to swell to a record 1.556 trillion dollars in fiscal 2010.

Last week President Barack Obama hailed the one-year-old economic stimulus law as an accomplishment that staved off another Great Depression and kept up to 2 million people on the job. Many however remain sceptical.

Muslim scholars have criticized the use of body scanners for security in **US** airports as a violation of religious teachings on decency in all faiths, asserting a need for respecting people's religious convictions.

In a recent report two former high-level Bush administration officials who provided legal justification for harsh interrogations of overseas terror suspects have been vindicated against any legal responsibility and may avoid formal punishment.

According to a new poll **Canada's** Liberals have failed to gain any ground on the Conservatives, despite discontent with the government's decision to suspend Parliament until early March.

LATIN AMERICA

Argentina said last week that boats sailing between it and the **British**-ruled Falkland Islands will need a government permit, deepening a row over oil exploration in the disputed archipelago.

Last week the first round of **Pakistan-Brazil** Bilateral Political Consultations was held in Brasilia where the two sides exchanged views on regional and global issues of mutual concern.

As the **Mexican** war on Drugs continues, the murders of 12 teenage students in Ciudad Juárez is igniting calls for an overhaul of the drug-war crackdown on which President Felipe Calderón has staked his presidency. President Felipe Calderon has promised a new strategy against drug-related violence in **Mexico**

amidst rising public sentiment.

Last week **Mexico's** lower house of Congress approved a constitutional amendment that formally establishes the separation of church and state after religious leaders criticized legislation on gay rights and abortion.

On the climate front, **Mexico**, which will host the United Nations' main annual climate change meeting in November and December, has proposed two further negotiating sessions to prepare for the talks.

On the economic front **Mexican** auto production is expected to rise 20 percent this year as demand locally and in the neighboring U.S. rebounds after the global economic crisis, according to Ana Ruth Solano, the Economy Ministry official who oversees the industry.

Amidst a growing energy crisis, the **Venezuelan** Ministry of Electric Energy has banned the use of electric power in billboards and indoor and outdoor advertising displays. Also **Venezuela** awarded last week the largest oil investment of President Hugo Chavez's 11-year rule, drawing tens of billions of dollars of much-needed foreign finance to the Orinoco Belt just three years after the leftist leader nationalized operations there.

Meanwhile Chavez said last week that he wanted to govern the country till 2030, to consolidate his socialist project against capitalism. His statement came during the closing celebration of Youth Day, which was celebrated last week with a march of thousands of his followers.

AUSTRALASIA

According to reports Britain's far-right BNP has welcomed news that controversial **Australian** politician Pauline Hanson is emigrating and offered her the chance to restart her stalled career among its ranks.

Five Muslims were sentenced last week to 23 to 28 years in prison in **Australia** for stockpiling explosive chemicals and firearms for terrorist attacks on unspecified targets. §

BPM Discussion Forum:

Summary- (part 2): Para States, Quasi states, and black spots: Perhaps not States but not 'Ungoverned Territories' Either

Case Study 1- Dark Corners: The Western African Joint Criminal Enterprise

By David M. Crane

Throughout history certain parts of the world have been left to wallow in neglect, where endemic bad governance, corruption and unrest, becoming flash points for conflict. Kosovo, Rwanda, Cambodia, Burundi, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire are some recent modern day examples of this phenomenon. Illicit activities are carried out in these vacuums under the fabric of international order.

This article discusses one such example, that of the West African endemic criminal enterprise. The 20 years of turmoil has affected the suffering and displacement of over 5 million West Africans.

A Bloody Century:

Estimates reveal that over 200 million people died in the 20th century as a result of domestic as well as international conflicts. The author professes that atrocities carried out under Mao, Stalin, Leopold II of Belgium, Hitler, Turkish Pashas, Pol Pot of Cambodia, Charles Taylor of Liberia and Saddam Hussain account for around another 12 million fatalities. Cloaked behind the concept of state sovereignty these violations continued without check.

Post the Second World War the world chartered Rights recognizing the essential right of existence thus affecting a fundamental paradigm shift. The Nuremberg Principles, the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Geneva Convention and the Genocide convention established in theory a



new world order.

The 'First Cold War', preceded by the emancipation of the Southern Hemisphere from their Colonial masters, gave way to a scramble for these nascent states on an ideological agenda. These new states took advantage of the polarized world and combinations of artificially propelled traditional societies incubated endemic unrest. At the end of this ideological war these cast aside, barely functioning states with sham political traditions became the 'dark corners' of the world.

Dark Corners- The New Battlefields:

In this arena the second major ideological battle has been bred, essentially an ideological struggle that in the writer's opinion



has now laid the ground for a Second Cold War, involving the West vs. the Islamofascists. He ponders whether the rules of civilization created 6 decades ago by the international community hold enough strength to deal with this evolved threat.

A Case Study- The West African Joint Criminal Enterprise:

In the 80s Libya's Khadafy, a self proclaimed 'Emperor of Africa', sought to control a string of states on the resource rich West African coast, classic examples of 'Dark Corners'. His attempts were directed through a consortium of war lords, politicians, criminal cartels and terror cells that came to be known as the West African Joint Criminal Enterprise.

Crane alleges that following the cold war West Africa fell into a planned state of chaos supported by Kadafy (Libya), Blasé Campare (Burkina Faso) and Chales taylor (Liberia). The latter two were graduates from Kadafy's terror training camps from the late 80s, along with some other major players in the criminal

enterprise. They waged a 10 year long campaign that witnessed the destruction of 2 nations along with suffering and displacement of millions.

In the wake of such turmoil other shady entities like Hamas, Hezbollah and Al Qaeda used the West African base to support their covert operations ranging from illicit diamond trade to fund conflict to seeking refuge in the shadows of the world. A direct consequence of these activities was the decade long civil strife in Sierra Leone where ultimately UN peacekeeping forces were called in and a special court was set up, ultimately bringing an end to the war on January 22, 2002. Efforts by the international community thus checked the nefarious intents of

tyrants in this part of the world.

Lessons Learned:

Among the lessons learned, firstly Dark Corners form when insecure parts of the world with potential for conflict are ignored by the international community. Secondly unnatural post colonial solutions set the stage for such crises. Thirdly sustainable peace is only possible through a mechanism of justice and reconciliation.

Engagement and long term efforts by the international community may thus be the only viable solution to deal with dark corners, as was done in the West African case.

Conclusions and Reflections:

In the modern day world the concept of sovereignty and the role of nation state faces a challenge. In an increasingly globalised set up propelled by the information age, the widening gap between the developed and the developing world is troublesome. Weakened state and social structures hold the potential to metamorphose into endemic threats to international peace. Force however should not be employed as a quick fix, but as a last resort. Engaging these vulnerable spots of the world and creating the opportunity for social, political and economic development is perhaps the only viable long term solution. §

