



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 for new readers 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*.

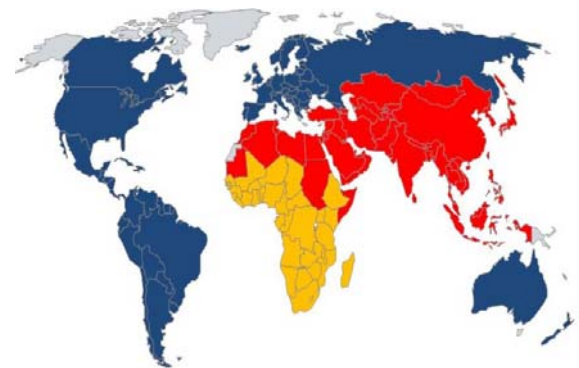
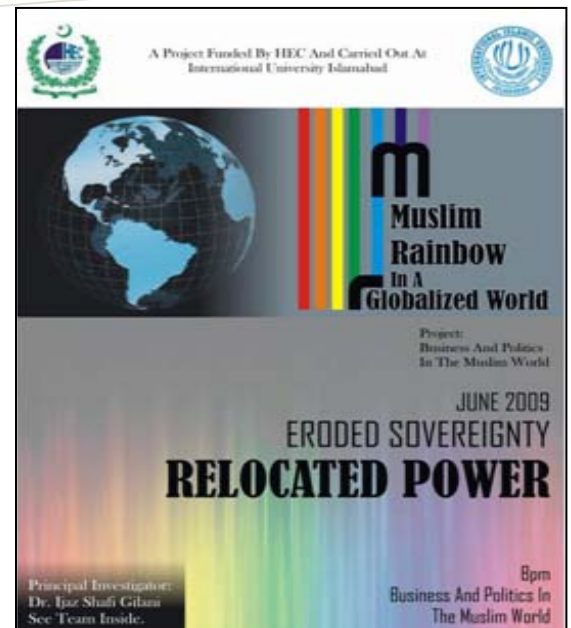
- ◆ We will make the e-letter a multi-layered presentation: in other words Friday on the Facebook will provide clicks to deeper levels of information; for comprehension (Maps and Data) as well as for elaboration



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.



Principal Investigator- DR. IJAZ SHAFI GILANI



Globalized Opinions

This week's report consists of 29 surveys. Two of these are multi-country surveys from the Arab world & North Africa while the rest are national surveys

Week # 108

Commentary on Gallopedia Polls

Dated 21-26 Feb 2010

Americans Continue to Support & Sympathies with Israelis

U.S. has been playing a major role in Middle East Since before the establishment of Israel. American Sympathies for Israelites have remained quite dominant. A recent Gallup USA survey shows that more than six in ten (63%) Americans say they feel sympathetic towards Israel in the conflict. This is a new high in the levels of support since the first Gulf war in 1991 when Iraqi missile hit Israel. Keeping in view such large number of sympathizers for Israel in the US, can one expect unbiased mediation of the peace process between Israel & Palestinians?

US's historic support for Israel has always been commensurate with a vast supportive public base in the U.S. Israel is among the most favored nations for Americans and Palestinians are the least on the same count. How did such perceptions come about? Do they collaborate with media reports and general awareness? To what extent is the Israeli lobby effective in stimulating this perception?

Some argue that a heavy Jewish influence over media has played a covert role in stimulating such sympathies for the Israelites. At the same time, given the media boom that transcends the main stream conventional sources and goes beyond guarded access to specific sources of information, would it be fair to consider this dominance a primary variable? Access to the internet is of course nearly universal at present and Americans remain the most ardent users of this source. What then could be the factors shaping such dominant pro Israel views among the American population? §



Zone 1
ASIA

WEST & CENTRAL ASIA
Fewer Afghans See Corruption Increasing in Their Country
Gallup surveys document some positive momentum in Afghans' views about the level of corruption in their country following the controversial

presidential election in August last year. The number of Afghans saying corruption levels were higher than they were five years ago continued to decline, dropping below 50% for the first time in Gallup's September-October survey.
February 24, 2010



Turkey's AKP Holds Slim Advantage

Turkey's governing Justice and Development Party (AKP) is the favourite political group in the country if only by a small margin, according to a poll by Sonar Arastirma. 29.5 per cent of respondents would vote for the AKP in the next legislative election, down 2.5 points since October.

February 22, 2010

MIDDLE EAST

Poor Ratings for Netanyahu Government in Israel

The administration headed by Israeli prime minister Benjamin



Netanyahu has been disappointing for many, according to a poll by *Maagar Mochot*. 20 per cent of respondents say Netanyahu's first year in office has been good or very good, while 33 per cent think it has been just average.

February 27, 2010

EAST ASIA

Villar Closer to Aquino in the Philippines

The next presidential election in the Philippines could be a tight contest after all, according to a poll by Pulse Asia. 37 per cent of respondents would vote

Continued...

for Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III in the May ballot, down eight points since December.

February 22, 2010

Zone 3
EURO-AMERICAS



EAST EUROPE

Top Two Czech Parties Gain as Election Nears

The Czech Republic's main political parties have gained public backing, according to a poll by Median. 32 per cent of respondents would vote for the opposition Czech Social Democratic Party (CSSD) in the next legislative election, up 2.7 points since mid-December.

February 23, 2010

WEST EUROPE

Swiss Want to Maintain Banking Secrecy Laws

Most people in Switzerland disagree with ending banking secrecy legislation, according to a poll by Isopublic published in *Le Matin*. 62 per cent of respondents oppose abolishing banking secrecy, while 35 per cent support this notion.

February 24, 2010

Greeks Agree with Need for Austerity Measures

Most people in Greece admit that recent austerity measures tabled by the government are both fair and necessary to get the country out of a deep economic crisis, according to a poll by Alco published in *Proto Thema*. 65 per cent of respondents share this point of view, while 24.9 per cent disagree.

February 22, 2010

NORTH AMERICA

Support for Israel in U.S. at 63%, Near Record High

For the first time since 1991, more than 6 in 10 Americans -- 63% -- say their sympathies in the Middle East situation lie more with the Israelis than with the Palestinians. Fifteen percent side more with the Palestinians, down slightly from recent years, while a combined 23% favor both sides, favor neither side, or have no opinion.

February 24, 2010

Americans See U.S. Military as No. 1 Now, But Not in 20 Yrs

While 64% of Americans believe the U.S. is the No. 1 military power in the world today, many fewer (36%) believe that the U.S. will be No. 1 militarily in 20 years. At the same time, most Americans believe the U.S. will continue to have combat troops regularly involved in fighting around the world over the next two decades.

February 26, 2010

Six in 10 Underemployed Not Hopeful About Finding Work



Gallup Daily tracking during January reveals that 61% of the underemployed are not hopeful they will find a job within the next four weeks, while 39% are hopeful.

February 23, 2010

Half of Americans Reject Waterboarding

Most people in the United States are against the use of a procedure known as waterboarding on suspected terrorists, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 49 per cent of respondents disapprove of the U.S. military and intelligence agencies relying on this practice, while 39 per cent approve.

February 25, 2010

More Americans Support Afghanistan Mission

More adults in the United States are now in favour of the ongoing military operation in Afghanistan, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 54 per cent of respondents support the mission involving American soldiers, up five points since December.

February 23, 2010



Canadians Divided on Afghanistan Mission

Adults in Canada hold differing views on the mission in Afghanistan, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 47 per cent of respondents support the military operation involving Canadian soldiers, while 49 per cent oppose it.

February 24, 2010

LATIN AMERICA

Castañeda, Fujimori Lead Presidential Race in Peru

The mayor of Lima and the daughter of a jailed former president are currently the frontrunners in the race to become the next head of state of Peru, according to a poll by Ipsos, Apoyo, Opinión y Mercado published in *El Comercio*. 22 per cent of respondents would vote for Luis Castañeda Lossio of the National Solidarity Party (PSN) in next year's ballot, down one point since January.

February 26, 2010

Three-in-Four Brazilians Satisfied with Lula

Public support for Brazilian president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva is still high in the last year of his tenure, according to a poll by Ibope. 76 per cent of respondents approve of the president's performance, down seven points since November.

February 25, 2010

AUSTRALASIA

New Zealanders Reject GST Hike

Most people in New Zealand oppose a plan to increase the Goods and Services Tax (GST) while reducing income taxes at the same time, according to a poll by UMR Research. 56 per cent of respondents reject the idea, while 33 per cent support it.

February 26, 2010

Australians Reject Abbott's Comments on Virginity

The majority of Australians condemn recent comments by opposition leader Tony Abbott suggesting that women should try to preserve their virginity until marriage, according to a poll by Essential Research. 70 per cent of respondents think Abbott should not be giving advice on moral issues related to sex and marriage.

February 21, 2010

GLOBAL POLLS

Entrepreneurial Goals Common Among Young in Arab States

In Arab League countries, there appears to be no shortage of entrepreneurial aspirations among young people. Across 20 countries and the Somaliland region of Somalia, a median 27% of young Arabs who were not already business owners said they intended to start a business in the next 12 months. Intent to create a business ranged from a high of 45% in Sudan to a low of 9% in Jordan.

February 26, 2010

In Arab Countries, Emigration Appeals More to the Employed

Young Arabs who have a job are more likely than those who do not to express the desire to emigrate permanently. Across Arab League member countries surveyed, 31% of respondents who already work full time compared with 17% who are not in the workforce say they would like to leave their country permanently, if they had the opportunity.

February 23, 2010

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Zone 1- Asia: Summary

Asia, Middle East & North Africa



TURKEY

Political Front: The ruling regime held various conferences to brief about the ‘democratic initiative’ in order to make it successful. PM Erdogan has also asked artists to support his efforts to resolve **Kurdish** issue.

Turkish President has emphasized the need for judicial reforms in its bid for the EU. Meanwhile on the issue of the coup plot; eleven retired Generals and many other colonels have been detained for their suspected involvement in anti regime coups. Also Chief of General Staff Gen. İlker Başbuğ has been at the center of fierce criticism over his stance regarding recently exposed military plots to overthrow the AK Party government. Though various actors have called on the government to remove Chief of General Staff from office, AK Party seems reluctant to make such a move for a number of reasons, including a lack of government confidence in the democratic line of candidates who would replace the military chief.

Geo-strategic Front: Various diplomatic visits have been in order to enhance ties with different countries. **Turkey** has strongly condemned terrorist attacks in *Pakistan*. Meanwhile Al-Qaeda criticized **Turkey** for its involvement in *Afghanistan*.

Turkish parliaments’ failure to ratify various agreements being signed by *Armenia* and *Turkey* has irked Armenian government. **Turkey** meanwhile stands by its offer to play a potent role in resolving the *Iranian* nuclear issue. Also **Turkey** has called on *Israel* to refrain from taking a “unilateral and provocative” step with its plan to renovate two contested West Bank holy sites.



Regarding EU, **Turkish** PM has expressed positive hopes while claiming that *Spain* would understand **Turkish** issues and concerns.

Social Front: Two earthquakes rocked eastern **Turkey** this week. However no damage has been reported. Meanwhile **Turkish** police seized 124 kg of hashish and 37 kg of heroin in five operations across the country.

Economic Front: **Turkish** growing economic ties with *Russia*, *Syria*, *Kazakhstan*, *EU* and *Tanzania* remained significant. Meanwhile a negative impact of coup plans has been observed in **Turkish** Stock Exchange. Meanwhile **Turkish** visa removal policy with various countries has helped attract a large number of tourists.

CENTRAL ASIA

Political Front: A military court in **Kazakhstan** sentenced an *Israeli* businessman and a local defense official to 11 years in jail on corruption charges.

Meanwhile two **Kyrgyz** opposition parties have declared their support for calls to release former Defense Minister Ismail Isakov from prison.

Upcoming elections in **Tajikistan** have increased political activities in the

country. Five out of 153 candidates for lower house of Parliament have withdrawn from their candidacies for Parliamentary elections. Meanwhile Election observers from China have reached **Tajikistan** to monitor elections. Above all 36 polling stations have been set up in the CIS and various other countries to allow **Tajik** citizens residing abroad to vote.

In the meanwhile leader of **Turkmenistan** has expressed his readiness to create an opposition party.

Geo-strategic Front: The US has expressed great desire to boost ties with **Azerbaijan**. Meanwhile **Armenian** military officials in *Nagorno-Karabakh* have denied **Azeri** reports regarding violation of cease-fire. **Azerbaijan** has also held talks with *Turkey* to further enhance military ties.

Kazakh Foreign Minister paid an official visit to China.

Kyrgyzstan too enjoys cordial ties with Russia. Meanwhile **Kyrgyzstan** has confirmed that Iran forced one of its planes to land and arrested two of the passengers.

U.S. envoy Richard Holbrook has declared **Tajikistan** an important country in the *Afghanistan* war. Also the US has claimed that it has no intention to reopen its base in **Uzbekistan**.

Meanwhile **Turkmenistan** hosted the second consultative meeting on preparation of the International Conference on Disarmament in Central Asia and the



Caspian basin.

Economic Front: *Iran* has expressed readiness to buy 10bn cubic meters gas from **Azerbaijan**.

Meanwhile *Japanese* investors have offered to build a nuclear power plant in eastern **Kazakhstan**.

Some 600 people in the central **Kyrgyz** city of Naryn protested against a price increase for electricity.

Meanwhile **Turkmenistan** has discovered a new oil deposit with flow rate of 300 tons per day. Also South Korean firms are making efforts to explore oil and gas market in **Uzbekistan**.

Social Front: Dozens of **Kazakh** journalists and human rights activists have urged senior government officials to allow unimpeded publication of the opposition weekly "Republika".

Meanwhile an increase in the number of suicides of **Uzbek** women has been observed.

GCC

Political Front: The **Yemeni** army has been redeployed at the borders with **Saudi Arabia** where Al Houthi rebels were positioning before the war stopped earlier this month.

Geo-strategic Front: **Saudi Arabia's** foreign minister has expressed doubts about the usefulness of more sanctions against *Iran* claiming that the threat posed by Iran's nuclear ambitions demands a more immediate solution. In the meantime **Saudi Arabia** and **Qatar** have signed several agreements on the sidelines of the second meeting of the *Saudi-Qatari* Joint Coordination Council in Doha, further boosting bilateral ties in various fields.

The **United Arab Emirates** has reiterated its support to the international and regional efforts aimed at resuming the *Palestinian-Israeli* negotiations.

Economic Front: *Turkey* and **GCC** have agreed to sign a free trade agreement by the end of this year.

Social Front: **GCC** states have been successful in their efforts to curb trafficking of children for employment as camel jockeys.

The *National Society for Human Rights* has claimed that an existing "ban" on **Saudi** women to vote or run in elections is a blatant violation of international conventions signed by **Saudi Arabia**. Meanwhile a primary court in the southern region of Saudi Arabia sentenced a Saudi religious policeman for keeping six wives at the same time.

Saudi religious figure Sheikh Abdul Rahman Al Barrak has said that the mixing of genders at the workplace or in educational institutions was religiously prohibited while demanding that those who refuse to abide by strict segregation should be put to death. In

response to this leading religious scholars in **Kuwait** have rejected a fatwa or religious edict seeking such harsh punishment. **Kuwait** has also expressed its determination to end discrimination against women in the workplace.

At the environmental front, heavy rainfalls over *Makah* submerged some districts and streets in the city. Meanwhile in **UAE**, thirty small-scale solar-powered desalination plants would be operational in the next 15 months to provide animals with watering holes in Abu Dhabi's desert environment. Two of the plants are already in use desalting brackish water from underground aquifers into fresh potable water.

EAST ASIA

Political Front: **Indonesian** Government allies Golkar and the Prosperous Justice Party have joined the opposition in calling for a probe into the finance minister and vice president over the rescue of PT Bank Century.

Malaysian PM has been emphasizing greatly the 1 Malaysia concept.

Negotiators of the **Philippines** government and a separatist group have intensified their

respective campaigns in the country's south.

Geo-strategic Front: The US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has expressed keen interest in close **Indonesian** cooperation against terrorism. Also the US embassy in Manila has praised **Philippine** authorities for their arrest of a Filipino Muslim militant wanted for the kidnapping and murder of American tourists.

Economic Front: **Thailand's** industrial production rose for a fifth straight month in January as the global economic recovery helped boost demand for the nation's automotive parts and electronics. Also the **Singapore** government has outlined two key focus areas to help grow capabilities for companies and boost the nation's status as a global business hub.

Social Front: UNESCO's statistics for 2009 placed **Malaysia** at 11th out of 137 nations that allocated a huge budget for education.

Meanwhile hundreds of Muslims staged a protest calling for closure of a 600-member church in West Java.

Malaria has been regarded as a potential challenge being faced by **Cambodia**.

SOUTH ASIA

Political Front: A massive government crackdown on activists and supporters of the opposition Islamic parties has fueled unrest in **Bangladesh**. Meanwhile one of the **Bangladeshi** ministers has assured to restore secularism as a state principle in the constitution.

Ministry of Finance and Treasury has submitted a case to **Maldives** Police Service, accusing the Civil Service Commission (CSC) of attempting to overthrow the government, by indirectly influencing and preventing the government from implementing its financial policies.

People's life in **Nepal's** capital was affected by general strike and shutdown that was called by Rastriya Prajatantra Party Nepal (RPP-N) as part of its agitation demanding timely promulgation of constitution and referendum on some key issues like republicanism, secularism and federalism. **Nepal's** three major parties have agreed to resolve the present political impasse through a joint resolution. They have also discussed ways to include Maoists in the government.



Meanwhile nomination period for April's parliamentary votes has ended in **Srilanka**.

Geo-strategic Front: **India** and **Bangladesh** have decided to set up a joint-venture 1,320-megawatt power plant as a mark of co-operation. Meanwhile **China** has decided to resume suspended bus service between **Tibet** and **Nepal**.

Economic Front: The **Dhaka** Stock Exchange suffered its biggest fall in a decade after regulators placed restrictions on trading in the shares of a local mobile phone group.

Meanwhile **Maldives** has opened up its economy and invited **Indian** investment in sectors like infrastructure projects, airports, ports, renewable energy, healthcare, tourism and education.

Political instability badly affected stock markets in **Nepal**. While inflation in Sri Lanka hit a one-year high in February as low interest rates spurred consumer demand for goods and commodity prices rose.

The latest data provided by the Tea Board of **Kenya** indicates that the country has usurped the throne of **Sri Lanka** for the first time as the biggest tea exporter in the world.

Social Front: **Bangladesh** deployed its army at another southeastern hill town after 100 houses were burnt in fresh clashes between Buddhist tribal and Bengali Muslim settlers. Later on a curfew was imposed in the area as violence prevailed.

Bangladeshi Prime minister has urged the global Internet body to allow millions of Bengali-speaking people around the world to browse the Internet in their own language.

Maldives has expressed serious concerns regarding Environmental challenges. Meanwhile **Nepal's** education minister has been sacked over corruption charges.

INDIA

Political Front: The **Indian** Union Cabinet has cleared the women's reservation bill after a long wait of 14 years, according to which 33% of all seats in Parliament and state assemblies are being reserved for women. All the while the Bharatiya Janata Party has opposed reservation for Scheduled Caste Muslims and Christians recommended in the Ranganath Mishra Commission. They justified their stance by saying that the Christian and Islamic faiths do not recognize the existence of caste in their communities. They further condemned such suggestion by declaring it as a move to divide the country. In the meantime Sushma Swaraj formally took over as the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, replacing senior BJP leader L K Advani.

The Shiv Sena has criticized new BJP chief Nitin Gadkari for asking Muslims to give the disputed plot of land for the Ram temple and promising to help build a mosque elsewhere. According



XIONG GUANGKAI (R), DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF OF THE PLA, AND VISITING GENERAL N.C. VIJ, INDIA'S CHIEF OF ARMY STAFF

would rise further over next few months.

Social Front: The **Indian** Election Commission informed the Supreme Court that wearing a burqa by a Muslim woman was a mere religious custom, and not an integral part of Islam. In its response to a special leave petition to restrain it from publishing photographs of veil clad Muslim women in the electoral rolls, the Commission said: "Article 25 of the Constitution does not confer unfettered rights to religious practice, but merely protects the essential or integral practice of any religion."

The United Nations narcotics watchdog, International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), has blamed **India** for the rising drug abuse in its neighborhood, particularly in **Bangladesh** and **Bhutan**.

Punjab farmers seem quite enthusiastic to explore the vast barren tracts of land in Africa for agriculture prospects as some African countries opening up farming activities to **Indian** farmers. Meanwhile five deaths due to swine flu have been reported in Gujarat.

CHINA

Political Front: **China's** top Legislature has started amending Administrative Laws in order to enhance supervision of the country's civil servants.

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Geo-strategic Front: While commenting on a U.S. report on the weakness of **Taiwan's** air force, a *Chinese* mainland spokesperson stressed peaceful development across the **Taiwan** Strait. The report was speculated as a move of Pentagon to provide justification for Washington to grant the sale of relatively advanced F-16 jet fighters to **Taiwan**.

Chinese newspaper has strongly condemned America for launching an on-line warfare to create unrest in *Iran* after elections. Meanwhile **Chinese** growing ties with *South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Cambodia, Japan, Pakistan* and *Slovakia* also grabbed attention.

The *Danish* Prime Minister has expressed his appreciation for **Chinese** Premier's important and constructive role in the Copenhagen conference.

Economic Front: Foreign direct investment (FDI) in **China** rose for the sixth consecutive month in January, up 7.79 percent year on year to 8.13 billion U.S. dollars. In the meantime **China's** tourism revenue rose 26.9 percent to 64.62 billion Yuan (9.46 billion U.S. dollars) during the Spring Festival.

The flow of oil from *Saudi Arabia* to **China** rose to more than 1 million barrels per day (bpd) last year, just as demand in the *United States* fell below that level for the first time in more than two decades. All the while **Chinese** Premier has urged the United States to open the exports of hi-tech products to **China** and acknowledge its market economy status.

Many scholars and economists claimed that the **Chinese** government's insight and the adjustment of the economic pattern were



the two major factors helping China ride out the global economic downturn.

Social Front: *American* authorities have reportedly identified a **Chinese** computer hacker believed to be behind attacks on Google last year. The **Chinese** government however denied these reports. Meanwhile a senior Chinese military officer has called for a new national body to enforce Internet controls.

China's National Bureau of Corruption Prevention has announced to explore ways to fight corruption in non-public commercial entities and "new social organizations" in 2010.

Some 64.15 million people reportedly traveled on **China's** roads on the 22nd day of the Spring Festival traffic rush.

Hong Kong & Macao: A Legislative Council by-election would be held on May 16 to fill one vacant office in each of the five geographical constituencies in **Hong Kong**.

Macao's foreign exchange reserves amounted to 18.43 billion U.S. dollars at the end of January 2010.

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Zone 2- Africa:

POLITICS OF SECURITY AND CONFLICT ISSUES

West Africa: Last week the top United Nations envoy in **Côte d'Ivoire** met with the African mediator seeking to end the political crisis threatening the much-delayed elections in the divided West African country.

Ambassador J. Anthony Holmes, Deputy to the Commander for Civil-Military Activities to AFRICOM, condemned last week's **Niger** coup, insisting that AFRICOM's role is to professionalize the various militaries of Africa and assist them to know their roles in the democracies of their countries

As its promised transition to democratic rule begins, the military junta that overthrew **Niger's** president Mamadou Tandja on February 18 has named a former information minister, Mahamadou Danda, as the new prime minister while retaining legislative and executive powers for itself.

Meanwhile West African states are expected to provide a multinational force to help police next month's elections in **Togo**, where violence during a 2005 vote left at least 400 dead.

Britain on last week threw its weight behind **Nigeria's** acting president, Good Luck Jonathan after the surprise return from a hospital abroad by ailing President Umaru Yar'Adua sparked fears of a fresh leadership crisis.

Liberia's Anti-Corruption Commission last week called for the support of **Nigeria's** anti-graft body, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, in its efforts to fight the menace of corruption in **Liberia**.

Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Alain Le Roy is expected to travel to **Chad** this week after the African country called for the withdrawal of the military component of the UN mission that was set up over two years ago after tensions increased along the border with **Sudan's** war-torn *Darfur* region.

Mauritania has temporarily recalled its ambassador to Mali, angered over the release of four militants from al-

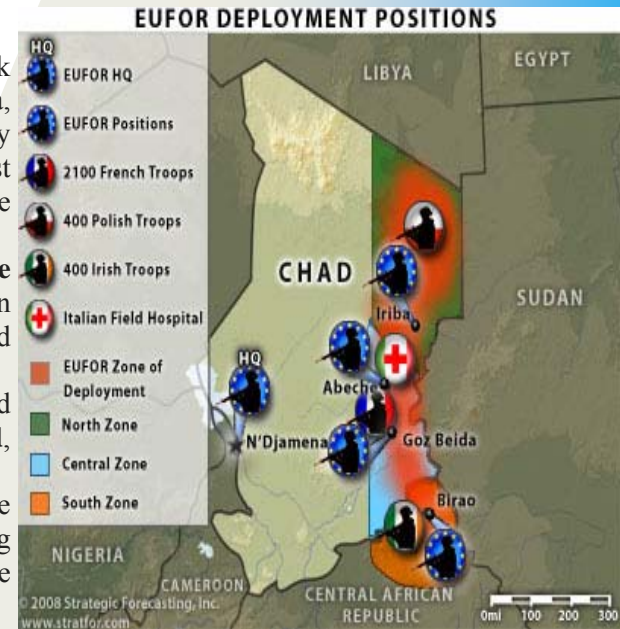
Qaeda's North African branch.

South Africa: South Africa told a U.N. Security Council committee last week that it intercepted a North Korean weapon shipment bound for Central Africa, which diplomats said was a violation of a U.N. ban on arms sales by Pyongyang. Meanwhile members of the National Assembly approved a request by Defence Minister Charles Namoloh to send 800 soldiers to **Chad** and the **Central African Republic (CAR)** for a UN peacekeeping mission.

Meanwhile China announced last week that its embassy in **Zimbabwe** had thrown a birthday party for President Robert Mugabe, a rare sign of foreign support for a leader reviled by many **Zimbabweans** and criticized by the United States and Europe.

Pro-democracy groups from several southern African nations gathered last week in South Africa to launch a campaign for democracy in **Swaziland**, considered one of the few remaining absolute monarchies in the world.

Central Africa: A leader of the Mai Mai Kifufua armed group in the Democratic Republic of **Congo** has voiced discontent at his group being excluded from President Joseph Kabila's latest cabinet reshuffle. In response



the Information Minister has stated that they must register their party to enter the political arena.

Meanwhile French Premier Sarkozy visited **Rwanda** last week for the first time since the 1994 genocide. Previously Rwanda has accused France of aiding the perpetrators of the genocide, in which some 800,000 ethnic Tutsis and Hutu moderates were killed.

A United Nations war crimes court sentenced a former **Rwandan** officer to 25 years in prison for crimes related to the 1994 genocide.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL ISSUES IN DOMESTIC POLITICS

West Africa: At least 24 people including a number of civilians and one soldier were injured in **Cameroon** during clashes last week involving members of the BIR Delta (a rapid response unit in charge of security in the region) and civilians. Meanwhile according to officials the **Cameroonian** security forces have been deployed in the economic capital Douala, to keep the opposition and civil society from holding demonstrations to mark the second anniversary of the February 2008 hunger riots in which forty people were killed.

The Committee to Protect Journalists has voiced its concerns regarding 'politically' motivated censorship in **Ivory Coast** after authorities banned international French broadcaster France 24 last week against allegations of unprofessionalism over coverage of political unrest in the West African nation.



THE IVORY COAST GOVERNMENT IS LED BY PRIME MINISTER GUILLAUME SORO (CENTRE)

Meanwhile several people have been killed in **Ivory Coast** during clashes between security forces and demonstrators. The violence in the town of Gagnoa is the latest in a series of protests against President Laurent Gbagbo. Last week, Mr Gbagbo dissolved the government and the electoral commission following a row over voter registration. The opposition accuses him of stalling on presidential elections, which have been delayed every year since 2005. However in a latest development **Ivory Coast** announced the formation of a new electoral commission, a key step towards resolving a political crisis. Opposition leaders in **Ivory Coast** too have voiced their consent to join a new unity government, ending a standoff that has threatened the country's peace process.

Twenty-six people, mostly women and children, were killed in a crush at the famous Djinguereber mosque in **Timbuktu**, in a stampede during the festival to mark the birth of the Prophet Muhammad.

The United Nations health agency warned last week that more than 7 million people in **Niger**, which last week saw its Government overthrown in a coup d'état, are facing food insecurity.

South Africa: According to a new report by a United Nations independent expert

Botswana's Government must step up efforts to tackle the challenges faced by many indigenous communities, such as land rights.

Meanwhile Human Rights Watch demanded last week that the Angolan government should promptly release three human rights defenders who were arrested on apparently political grounds following the January 8, 2010 attack on **Togolese** footballers.

Meanwhile according to reports on 23 February 2010 the High Court of **Swaziland** ruled that some married women will be allowed to register property in their own name.

Last week a **South African** High Court confirmed a ruling made by a Southern African Development Community Tribunal that the farm seizures of white farmers were illegal. The decision came with efforts of a South African civil rights group, AFRIFORUM.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND DOMESTIC POLITICS

West Africa: In **Nigeria** a meeting of the Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, environment and Water Resources, comprising Ministers responsible for Agriculture, Livestock, Health and Trade of ECOWAS Member States was held last week to validated three draft Regulations and one Directive on plants and animal health safety as well as the management of veterinary drugs.

Meanwhile the 2009 AIDS Update has reconfirmed Africa as the epicenter of the HIV/AIDS global epidemic. The continent represents 10 percent of the global population but accounts for 67 percent of all individuals living with HIV/AIDS, 68 percent of all new adult infections in 2008 and 91 percent of all childhood HIV infections.

Ghana has been selected to host the second working group meeting on World Health Organization (WHO)

Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) in April this year.

The **Nigerian** Federal Government has announced intentions to establish experimental medicinal plant farms in the six geo-political zones to provide raw materials for the research and production of traditional medicine.

South Africa: In **Malawi** unofficial figures estimate that due to the drought, over 30,000 hectares of crop fields have been affected and that up to 120,000 families (an average of 720,000 people) could need food assistance in the region. Government has now allocated 76 million dollars in the annual budget for food relief.

Central Africa: According to a recently published study by United States Pharmacopeia (USP) Sub-standard ant malarial medicines are still sold widely in **Madagascar, Senegal, and Uganda.**



POLITICAL ECONOMY

West Africa: The African Development Bank (ADB) has received applications from regional financial institutions for about 1bn of trade finance since launching its new facility a year ago to stimulate African trade flows after the global financial crisis.

Ghana's Minister of Justice and Attorney-General, Mrs. Betty Mould-Iddrisu has announced that the Economic and Organized Crime bill is currently before Parliament awaiting approval to be passed into law. The bill, when passed, will lead to the establishment of the Economic and Organized Crime Centre to fight organized crimes and other business-related crimes in the country.

The university Students Association of **Ghana** (USAG) has called on the government and other institutions related to the country's oil find, to come out and explain to the people of Ghana, how much revenue, in percentage terms, will accrue to the state. Meanwhile a consortium, LUKOIL Overseas, (56.66%), US Vanco (28.34%) and **Ghana** National Petroleum Corporation, GNPC (15%), has discovered a significant hydrocarbon accumulation in the Dzata structure of the Cape Three Points Deep Water Block in the Gulf of **Guinea** offshore the Republic of **Ghana**, Lukoil said in a press release.

Meanwhile in **Nigeria** the Federal Government disclosed last week part of the sweeping reforms it plans in the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) to make it a viable business concern.

Also according to company officials Victoria Oil and Gas has signed offtake agreements with 14 **Cameroonian** firms for gas from its Logbaba project, due to begin production later this year.

South Africa: South African trade unions are threatening strikes after the country's government allowed state-owned power

firm Eskom to raise prices by 24.8%.

According to an official statement The International Monetary Fund (IMF) last week restored voting rights to **Zimbabwe**; however any new loans for the cash-strapped country will only be considered once its arrears of about US\$140 million to the Poverty Reduction & Growth Trust (PRGT) are paid.

Central Africa: The Paris Club of creditor nations has agreed to restructure the external debt of the Democratic Republic of **Congo** amounting to nearly \$7 Billion.

Meanwhile the Governments of **Rwanda** and the Republic of **Congo** (Brazzaville) signed an agreement last week to cooperate in the Energy sector at the ministry of infrastructure. According to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning Rwanda's trade balance widened by over 20 percent in 2009 and more than tripled in the last five years, increasing aid dependency. §

Zone 3- Euro-America: *Transatlantic Community*

WESTERN EUROPE

According to officials **Israel's** foreign minister sidestepped questions at EU headquarters last week about his country's alleged role in the recent assassination of a top Palestinian Hamas operative in Dubai.

Meanwhile the **Swiss** Foreign Ministry revealed last week that a Swiss businessman detained in Libya for more than 19 months has left the country, easing a diplomatic row that began with the 2008 arrest of Moammar Gadhafi's son in *Geneva*.

Denmark's prime minister announced a major government shake-up last week, changing more than a dozen Cabinet posts including the ministers of defense, justice and foreign affairs to build his own team 10 months after taking office. The reshuffle — which put women in charge of the defense and

foreign ministries for the first time — had been widely expected since Lars Loekke Rasmussen took over as leader of the center-right government in April 2009. Meanwhile The **Dutch** government has set June 9 as the date for general elections, nearly one year ahead of schedule, following the collapse of the center-right government in a dispute over the army's engagement in *Afghanistan*.

Last week Bank Mellat of *Iran* won a preliminary court ruling against sanctions imposed by the **British** government. The government has accused the privately owned bank of providing financial services to companies involved in Iran's nuclear and missile programs. The Treasury acted in October to forbid any **U.K.** financial companies from doing business with the bank.

Spain's prime minister as the current EU presidency holder has announced that the European Union wants a halt to all executions by 2015 as a step toward abolishing the death penalty. Meanwhile the United Nations has said that formal negotiations on an international treaty to control global warming will resume in *Bonn* in April, four months after the failed climate change summit in *Copenhagen*.



With economic recovery barely there and talk of austerity spreading, many European workers are pushing back. **French** air traffic controllers walked off the job last week just as Lufthansa pilots ended a strike and **British** Airways cabin crews voted to launch one of their own. **Greek** unions prepared to shut down much of their country with wide-ranging strikes. The walkouts are the latest signs of a broader unease about jobs and benefits, and what the future holds for a continent struggling to stay competitive on a global scale. Meanwhile a court in *Athens* last week ruled that a strike by the country's customs officials is illegal. The strike has caused fuel supply problems across the country.

German Finance ministry spokesman Martin Kreienbaum has denied media reports that Berlin is co-ordinating the actions of Eurozone members in providing financial aid to **Greece**. Meanwhile **Greece** has asked for support from



the EU bloc but says it is not looking for a loan.

Also **Germany** on last week rejected accusations by **Greek** Deputy Prime Minister Theodoros Pangalos, who said Berlin has failed to compensate Athens properly for the Nazi occupation during World War II. The **German** Foreign Ministry says Berlin has provided Athens with aid amounting to billions of euros.

SOUTH-EAST EUROPE

A delegation from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) arrived in Tirana last week to help end **Albania's** political stalemate. Following talks the opposition Socialist Party (SP) announced on Wednesday (February 24th) that its members are returning to parliament after nearly six months of boycott.

Bosnia and Herzegovina's (BiH) Justice Minister Barisa Colak approved last week (February 24th) the extradition of Serb Bojan Guduric to **Croatia**, where he is wanted in connection with the murder of prominent Croatian publisher and journalist Ivo Pukanic.

Meanwhile **BiH's** Ambassadors of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC)'s Steering Board have said that they are concerned by the worsening financial situation in the Federation of BiH (FBiH). The (FBiH) parliament's House of Representatives passed amendments last week to the law on war veterans, a key condition for the release of the next tranche of a 1.2 billion-euro stand-by arrangement with the IMF and additional funding by the World Bank and the European Commission.



The **Bulgarian** foreign ministry said in a statement last week that the country has held no official talks with Washington on hosting elements of the planned US missile defence shield. The statement came in response to Russia's request for an explanation on the revamped plans. Meanwhile according to the Russian Energy Minister Sergei Shmatko, **Bulgaria** and **Russia** have agreed to start building a nuclear power plant in the **Bulgarian** town of Belene this autumn.

Kosovo's Prime Minister Hashim Thaci last week appointed Ylber Hysa as oversee implementation of the strategy for northern *Kosovo*. The strategy seeks to put the Serb-dominated north under the control of **Kosovo** institutions, rather than Belgrade-backed parallel structures.

Romanian Economy Minister Adrian Videanu announced last week that Russian gas giant Gazprom has officially invited **Romania** to join the South Stream gas pipeline project. Meanwhile the IMF has announced it would give Romania \$3.32 billion as part

of a big loan to help the country recover from its deep recession.

In **Serbia** Masked policemen searched the house of genocide suspect Ratko Mladic last week in an effort to capture the war crimes fugitive as **Serbia** seeks EU membership. Also Serbia -- Justice Minister Snezana Malovic invited his Montenegrin counterpart Miras Radovic to meet last week (February 25th) in Belgrade to discuss problems that are hindering co-operation between their respective judicial institutions. Relations between the two nations have grown strained recently over the case of suspected cocaine trafficker Darko Saric, who is allegedly hiding in **Montenegro**.

Meanwhile President Boris Tadic's office stated that **Serbia** does not mind **Kosovo's** participation in regional meetings, as long as it is done in accordance with UN Resolution 1244 and if it is presented as *UNMIK-Kosovo*.

US/CANADA

President Barack Obama and Republican leaders fought forcefully for their competing visions of historic health care reform last week in a live-TV debate. Far from any accord, Obama signalled the Democrats were prepared to push ahead for an all-or-nothing congressional vote. Meanwhile **American** companies that hire the unemployed may claim new tax breaks under a jobs-promoting bill that's expected to pass the Senate this week.

Last week in a speech Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton called for closer cooperation between *Russia* and NATO, the trans-Atlantic alliance that Moscow views with suspicion as a relic of the Cold War and a potential threat to its security.

Meanwhile according to media reports Iran has formally set out its terms for giving up most of its cache of enriched uranium in a confidential document — however the conditions fall short of what has been demanded by the **United States** and other world powers. .

LATIN AMERICA

Argentina pushed hard Saturday for a new diplomatic offensive aimed at pressing Britain to negotiate the status of the disputed and potentially oil-rich Falkland Islands. Meanwhile the Board of Directors of the World Bank approved last week a US\$229 million loan for the Republic of **Argentina** to support an emergency project for the prevention and management of influenza type illness and strengthening of the epidemiological system.

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula Da Silva said last week that the global community, in its quest for peace, should avoid isolating Iran over its controversial nuclear program. Also **Brazil** on Friday stressed the importance of **Honduras's** return to the Organization of American States (OAS) and said the government of Porfirio Lobo should adopt measures to ensure national reconciliation. Meanwhile according to Lula's spokesman the **Brazilian** President is to meet with **Cuban** leader Fidel Castro this week for a meeting of "friends" during which they will discuss aspects of international politics.

Mexican President Felipe Calderon said at a summit last week that Latin American and Caribbean nations have agreed to create a new alliance that would exclude regional neighbors *United States* and *Canada*. Meanwhile Carlos Navarrete, president of the **Mexican** Senate, called last week for the U.S. president to immediately lift the economic, commercial and financial blockade against **Cuba**.

Critics of Felipe Calderon, **Mexico's** president and his so-called 'war on drugs' have alleged that the *Mexican* government may be favoring the Sinaloa cartel, one of the country's most powerful drug-trafficking organizations.

Mexico's National Infrastructure Fund, designed to spur private investment in highways, waterworks and ports, will almost double the number of projects it helps finance this year as the government seeks to bolster economic growth and create jobs.

Monsignor Ovidio Pérez Morales, a top member of the **Venezuelan** Bishops' Conference, said last week that the system the national government wants to impose by destroying private property and merging all social classes into only one class "is leading to collective oppression, and to nationalization rather than socialization (sic)."

Meanwhile **Venezuela's** energy minister termed as suspicious **Colombia's** offer to supply **Venezuela** with electricity as it struggles with a severe energy crisis. He however added that his nation would consider a serious proposal. Later in the week President Hugo Chavez announced that **Venezuela** is evaluating a proposal to purchase electricity from **Colombia** and is buying power turbines from General Electric Co. amid nationwide rolling blackouts and a severe drought. **Venezuela**, which froze relations with **Colombia** last year, is seeking to avoid politicization of the issue. Also the **Ecuadorian** government has made a proposal similar to the **Colombian** offer to export electricity to Venezuela. Meanwhile President Hugo Chavez accused his adversaries on Sunday of sabotaging **Venezuela's** electricity grid as part of a broader plan aimed at bringing about the system's collapse - and his downfall.

The **Colombian** government estimates **Colombian** exports will total USD 37.5 billion in 2010 replacing **Venezuela** as top export market. Among other factors, it has managed to replace sales to **Venezuela** with exports to markets such as *China*, **Brazil**, **Chile** and *Canada*. Meanwhile Luis Eduardo Ataya, the governor of the **Colombian** department of Arauca has said that he has reports showing that Germán Briceño Suárez, also known as "Grannobles," a FARC guerrilla leader, is hiding in **Venezuela**.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said last week that *Britain's* "desperation" for oil was leading it to flout international law in the *Falkland Islands*, and called on the British to return the islands to **Argentina**. Meanwhile a group of technicians and assistants to the US Congress held a meeting with deputies of **Venezuela's** National Assembly last week seeking to improve bilateral relations.

In a statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs last week, **Venezuela** condemned the military coup against *Niger's* government, presided over by Mamadou Tandja, and urged the international community to support the "reinstatement of constitutional order" in the African country. Also Chavez insisted last week that the presidency of new **Honduran** President Porfirio Lobo was illegitimate.

Óscar Álvarez, **Honduras'** Minister of Security has said that authorities from the Central American country have detected between 250 and 300 drug trafficking routes, with most of the aircrafts departing from **Venezuela** and run by the **Mexican** cartels.

AUSTRALASIA

Australia has summoned the Israeli ambassador to explain why three new suspects over the Dubai killing of a Hamas leader used **Australian** passports. §

BPM Discussion Forum:

Summary- (part 3): Para States, Quasi states, and black spots: Perhaps not States but not 'Ungoverned Territories' Either

Case Study 2- Para-States in the Post-Soviet Area from 1991 to 2007

Katarzyna PeLczyNska-NaLEcz, Krzysztof Strachota and Maciej Falkowski

The disintegration of the Soviet Union triggered one of the largest experiments in state formation in modern times. 15 new states emerged with hardly any experiences in statehood and difficult geo strategic positions as well as social and cultural identity, subsequently bringing about a new range of para-state entities.



Four Forms of Para-State Entities in the Post Soviet Region

As-if States: Internationally recognized but lacking essential control over its territory.

Almost States: Aspirant state entities that enjoy control over territory but lack international recognition.

Black-Spots: Areas under local governance/control (clans, criminal organizations etc.) that are neither recognized as nor aspire for statehood.

States Within States: Regions that formally recognize central governments but maintain a high degree of independence that is tolerated by the former for various reasons. These don't seek international recognition and enjoy clearly defined institutions of power.

These para-state classifications are not necessarily mutually exclusive. In the 1990s in Chechnya *Black spots* existed in an *almost state* entity. Again in the case of Moldova and Azerbaijan, despite the existence of para state entities, the central governments continued to function relatively well and cannot thus be termed as *As-if States*.

These definitions are also not exhaustive. There may exist hybrid forms, consisting selective features of these classifications. For example in Georgia's Java-khetia or southern Kyrgyzstan certain spheres of activity are controlled by clan or criminal structures operating in parallel to state authorities.

As-if States:



GEORGIA'S ROSE REVOLUTION

Reduced effectiveness of the state has plagued all the post soviet countries except for Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. However deep incapacity that qualifies for as-if states is evident in regions with extended civil wars e.g. Georgia (1991-93) and Tajikistan (1992-97). Both these states faced problems in forming and legitimizing their central authorities and exercise monopoly over violence.

The Russian federation with its massive size and patch work of nationalities is a complex case. In its initial years with the legislative crisis the state authorities were completely paralyzed lacking any credible control. This eventually fomented the Fiscal crisis of 1992 where some entities, in a state of fiscal deficit, even issued surrogate money independent of the state. The process of state degradation reached its peak in the mid 90s.

The condition of states in the region began to stabilize in this decade, where a gradual shift towards state legitimacy was observed and state control over territory considerably increased (Russia, Georgia and Tajikistan being prime examples). In Russia reforms were implemented by President Vladimir Putin, but were not necessarily democratic in nature. The 2003 'Rose revolution' resulting in the resignation of president Shevardnadze and democratic election of his successor

Saakashvili in Georgia was the turning point. The pro NATO/EU reforms affected were supported by the west and the effectiveness of the state was thus not brought about by any credible democratic process.

Tajikistan however was not able to recover from its catastrophic civil war on its own. The Afghanistan war forced the external supporters, including Russia, Iran and Afghanistan, of the infighting Tajik Clans to reconcile. An unprecedented compromise ensued that admitted the opposition into the political structures of power moving the conflict to a political level. Control over Karategin Valley (black spot), refuge to the Islamic movement of Uzbekistan however remained elusive. Ultimately the war on terror freed Tajikistan from threats engendered by the Afghan conflict, and its accession to the anti terror coalition strengthened the Tajik government and entailed external assistance.

Almost-States:

This category includes South Ossetia and Abkhazia, the two separatist republics in Georgia, as well as Nagorno Karabakh, nominally part of Azerbaijan, and Transnistria in Moldova. The first three had enjoyed some autonomy during the soviet era. To a greater extent in Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and Chechnya and to a lesser extent in Transnistria, separatist tendencies came about through ethnic conflict that turned violent. Russia was a key factor that prevented disintegration of the nominal state in Transnistria, Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Armenia with Russia's support was involved in Nagorno Karabakh and at present maintains it as a defacto part of its own territory. All these states in the presence of external influence exist as de-facto satellites. In all these cases, though to some degree democratic institutions exist, however they are not functionally democratic, where political

freedoms are restricted by deep rooted influences. Abkhazia perhaps has developed the most pluralist system but even there Bagpash, elected in 2004 against Moscow's will had to accept, under pressure, his political rival as vice president.

States Within States:

This form of 'deficit of the state' was most common in the Russian federation of the 1990s, and even before the dissolution where such entities were common along ethnic lines. Tatarstan and Bashkortostan were the republics that achieved the highest degree of separation, adopting constitutions and legislation often in contradiction with the central government. Putin's first phase of reform, introducing uniform legislature pretty much did away with such entities.



Another example is Georgia's Ajarian Republic (1991-2004), where for 13 yrs power remained in the hands of Aslan Abashidze, a member of the local communist *nomanklatura* and chairman of the supreme council of Ajaria. Following the collapse of USSR he took over absolute control with the help of his own police force. Following the 'Rose revolution' however, owing to the support of the people of Ajaria it was integrated back into Georgia.

Nakhichevan in Azerbaijan and Chechnya in Russia are two exceptions of *states within states* that did not disappear in the post soviet reformation. Nakhichevan is an autonomous enclave of Azerbaijan, with the status of a republic. The conflict in Nagorno Karabakh has isolated this entity from direct roots to the central government. The political ties with Azerbaijan however remain strong, where the dominant political clan originates from this region. The 'vicegerent' who has ruled there since 1993 maintains an authoritarian hold over the region and is loyal to the government in Azerbaijan. The entity enjoys in turn support from both Azerbaijan and Turkey, where it shares a direct border with the latter.

Black Spots:

These are difficult to describe because of a lack of borders and defined institutions. In the post soviet era many such 'black spots' emerged in connection with long term armed conflict (Georgia, Tajikistan and Chechnya)

however most disappeared soon after the end of conflict and introduction of reforms.

In Georgia the Kodori Valley bordering Abkhazia and the Pankisi Gorge bordering Chechnya are two examples. Apart from armed conflict difficult geographic access too isolated these regions contributing to their status as ‘black spots’. Pankisi Gorge populated by Kist-Chechens was a natural refuge for Chechen rebels, was a major point of contention with Russia. Over time it came to be associated with Arab Mujahideen supporting the Chechens. Eventually with the pressures stemming from the War on Terror, this black spot disappeared between late 2001 and early 2002.

Kodori Valley, situated between the separatist regions of Abkhazia and Mingrelia, remained rebellious throughout the 1990s. it became a shelter for paramilitary and criminal organizations like the White Legion and the Forest Brothers, and even Chechen Rebels. Following the ‘Rose Revolution’ the upper part of the valley was finally incorporated into Georgia. This black spot however was transformed into a scene of conflict between Georgia and Abkhazia.

Javakhetia, an Armenian populated region in Southern Georgia is yet another example of a geographically isolated potential black spot. Distrust between the Armenians and the local government fueled separatist tendencies. Armenia, that did not wish to get involved with the already ongoing Nogorno Karabakh conflict with Azerbaijan, tried to mitigate the situation. Russian presence in the region was also potent as it was viewed as a protector of the Armenians.



At one time in the region, Armenian and Russian currency actually dominated the Georgian lari. The situation in Javakhetia was not far from conditions in a ‘black spot’, however following the ‘Rose Revolution’ the dynamic changed and the region is now gradually being integrated into mainstream Georgia.

In Tajikistan, the most marginalized region in the soviet era, Karategin Valley became a strong hold of Islamic opposition, was home to the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), base of operations that attempted instigating an Islamic revolution in Uzbekistan in 1999-2000. Also Tajik Mujahedeen with strong links with Afghanistan (including criminal networks) were based in this region. The region was gradually pacified on one hand with Russia’s complicated game in the region that played the instability card to put pressure and seek agreements with regional neighbors. Also the shifting interests of powers such as China, Russia and the United

States in an evolved global security environment played a role in pacifying the region that at present seems to be a stable part of Tajikistan.

The ‘Wahhabi Republic’ in Dagestan (1998-99) is another example of a black spot, that was established by Islamists from several villages, independent of outside influences, that effectively dismantled Russian state structures, introduced *Sharia* law, and brought some order to a previously chaotic region. Later however the republic developed links with Chechen rebels. The Republic ceased to exist following the attack of federal troops in September 1999, at the same time when the Chechen intervention triggered the second Chechen war.

Tajikistan’s Gornobadakhshan Autonomous Region of the 1990s is another special, paradoxical example of a black spot. Poverty and inefficiency exacerbated by isolation were festering in the region. Imminent crisis was averted by the intervention of the fourth Agha Khan, spiritual leader of the Ismaili communities of the region. The Agha Khan Foundation became a central entity in the governance and development of the region independent of Tajikistan. Alternative institutions replaced the state and even established cross border relations with non-state entities, characteristic of a ‘black spot’. When the Tajik state gained strength it reestablished ties with the region, integrating it back into the mainstream.

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