



**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.

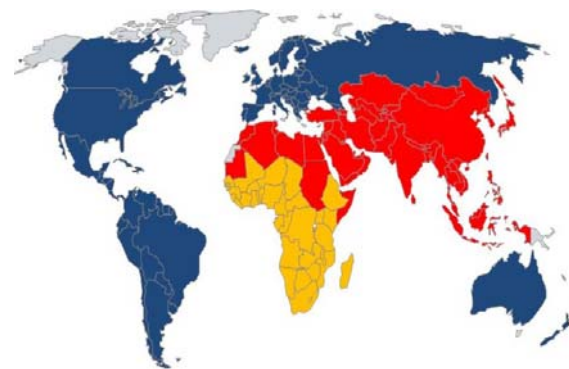
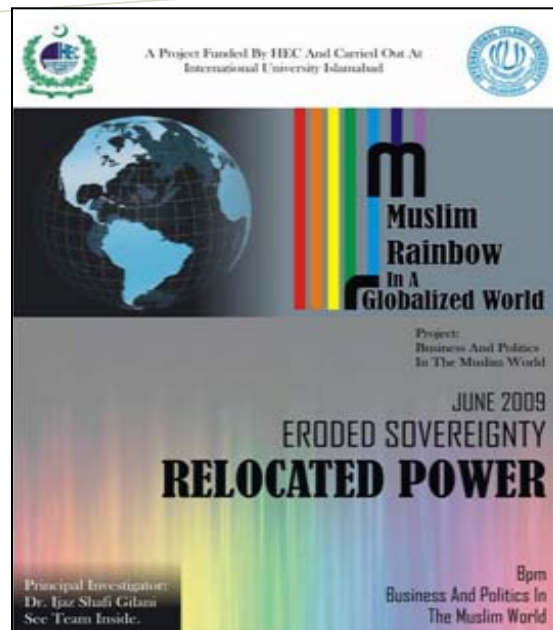
Why should one add another e-letter to many similar exercises already underway? We have pondered this question and here is what we believe to be our possible contribution or *Competitive Advantage*.

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

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



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



Principal Investigator- DR. IJAZ SHAFI GILANI



## Globalized Opinions

This week's report consists of 23 national surveys.

Week # 109

### Commentary on Gallopedia Polls

Dated 27 Feb-6 March 2010



### Christmas Day Attack and the Fate of Nigeria

On Christmas day a Nigerian made a failed attempt to blow Detroit bound airliner. This has been widely condemned across the world including Nigeria as well. Overwhelming majority of Nigerians condemned Umar Faruk Abdulmatlab and feel that this will have a negative impact on the image of Nigeria in the world.<sup>1</sup> Nigeria's extended leadership vacuum where the nation's premier until recently was out of the country for medical reasons, has not provided credible political and diplomatic interaction. Moreover the relations between Nigeria and US have been strained over the past year. This is coupled with the fact that Nigerian is the second Muslim country after Palestinian territories where there is a high support for suicide attack.<sup>1</sup> Eventually United States blacklisted Nigeria.

Nigeria's international image too has suffered a serious blow. The nature of terrorism these days is transnational just as the issue of climate change or financial crisis. Often states are not backing the terrorists which seem to be the case in Nigeria as well. But the states or nations have to pay for the acts that have been committed by groups or individuals associated with their territories.

Keeping in view the fact that U.S. blacklisted Nigeria for genuine apprehensions, how efficacious is this move in actuality. Will not isolating weak states actually aggravate the situation? §



March 02, 2010

Zone 1  
ASIA

#### NORTHEAST ASIA

##### *Japanese Cabinet Enters Negative Territory*

The administration led by Japanese prime minister Yukio Hatoyama has fallen out of grace with the public, according to a poll by *Kyodo News*. 46 per cent of respondents disapprove of Hatoyama's appointed cabinet, up 12 points since February.

Zone 2  
AFRICA

#### WEST AFRICA

##### *Nigerians Condemn Detroit Attack Attempt and Are Also Concerned About Their President*

Nigerians categorically condemned Umar Faruq for his alleged attempt to blow plane at Detroit. They also show high level of concern for the absence of President from the country for such a long period and perceive this will have dire consequences for the administration in the country.

January 2010



**Zone 3  
EURO-AMERICAS**

**EAST EUROPE**

***Putin, Medvedev Still Very Popular in Russia***

Four-in-five Russians are satisfied with the way their prime minister is handling his duties, according to a poll by the Yury Levada Analytical Center. 80 per cent of respondents approve of Vladimir Putin's performance.

March 06, 2010

**WEST EUROPE**

***Britons Choose Diplomacy in Falklands Dispute***

Many adults in Britain believe their government should engage in diplomatic negotiations with Argentina to seek a solution to the recent dispute over oil exploration in the Falkland Islands, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 65 per cent of respondents favour this course of action.

March 07, 2010

***Poor Ratings Continue for French Leaders***

Public support for French president Nicolas Sarkozy remains low, according to a poll by CSA published in *Le Parisien*. 40 per cent of respondents have confidence in Sarkozy to face the country's problems, down one point since January.

March 05, 2010

***French Dissatisfaction with Sarkozy Keeps Growing***

Just under two thirds of people in France are disappointed with the leadership of Nicolas Sarkozy, according to a poll by Ifop published in *Le Journal du Dimanche*. 63 per cent of respondents are dissatisfied with the president's performance, up two points since January.

March 03, 2010

***Most Greeks Endorse Government Fiscal Measures***

Most people in Greece trust that recent emergency measures implemented by the government will lead the country out of a fiscal crisis, according to a poll by MARC published by *Ethnos*. 51.3 per cent of respondents share this point of view, but 43 per cent disagree.

March 02, 2010

**NORTH AMERICA**

***Age Groups Differ on Obama More Than on Bush, Clinton***

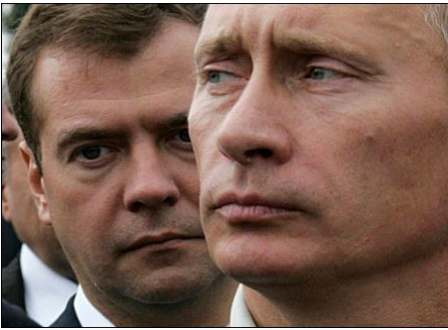
Barack Obama's job approval rating averages 66% among young adults during his presidency, 15 percentage points higher than for senior citizens and at least nine points higher than for any other age group. During their presidencies, George W. Bush's and Bill Clinton's approval ratings showed much less variation by age.

March 4, 2010

***The New News Landscape: Rise of the Internet***

The overwhelming majority of Americans (92%) use multiple platforms to get news on a typical day, including national TV, local TV, the internet, local newspapers, radio and national newspapers. Some 46% of Americans say they get news from four to six media platforms on a typical day. Just 7% get their news from a single media platform on a typical day.

March 1, 2010



***Almost Half in U.S. Would Expand Nuclear Power***

People in the United States appear to favour a proposal to build more nuclear power plants, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 48 per cent of respondents support this idea, while 34 per cent are opposed.

March 04, 2010

***Three-in-Four Americans Disapprove of Congress***

More Americans are expressing dissatisfaction with their legislative branch, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 73 per cent of respondents disapprove of the performance of Congress, up eight points since January.

March 03, 2010

***President Obama Gains a Point in U.S.***

Public support for Barack Obama is stable in the United States, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 48 per cent of respondents approve of their president's performance, up one point since January.

March 01, 2010

***Half of Canadians Think Economy is Good***

For the first time this year, a majority of Canadians are satisfied with the country's financial standing, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 52 per cent of respondents rate the economic conditions in Canada today as good or very good, up four points since January.

February 28, 2010

**LATIN AMERICA**

***Resilient Chile Well-Poised to Recover After Quake***

When Gallup surveyed Chileans in July-September 2009, majorities expressed confidence in the country's national government (58%) and military (54%) -- more confidence than the median for Latin America and the Caribbean and far more confidence than residents in Haiti.

March 5, 2010

***Half of Mexicans Content with President Calderón***

Public support for Felipe Calderón remains stable in Mexico, according to a poll by Consulta Mitofsky. 53.4 per cent of respondents agree with the way the president is governing, up one point since January.

March 07, 2010

***Lula Keeps Extraordinary Rating in Brazil***

Brazilian president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva heads to the final months of his tenure with impressive numbers, according to a poll by Datafolha published in Folha de Sao Paulo. 73 per cent of respondents rate Lula's performance as good or very good.

March 06, 2010

***Columbians Not Happy With The Political Parties***

Poll results reveal that although Colombia's political parties are viewed as very important to democracy, but they receive the worst rating among the country's public institutions and authorities. Respondents identified a lack of engagement with citizens, lack of transparency, corruption and the lack of ideology as some of the major problems

currently faced by political parties.

March 04, 2010

***Haitians Express High Resolve, Community-Mindedness***

Despite the oft-reported challenges facing Haiti's recovery process, Gallup polling in the country before the earthquake suggests its people have much to offer toward building a new future. More than 8 in 10 Haitians (81%) surveyed in December 2008 said they have a particular talent of some kind -- easily the highest proportion among 12 Central American and Caribbean populations of which the question was asked.

March 1, 2010

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## Zone 1- Asia: Summary

### Asia, Middle East & North Africa



#### TURKEY

**Political Front:** **Turkish** Parliament has recently approved the referendum bill. Turkish government has promised to take various steps in different aspects of life under the ‘democratic initiative’. Meanwhile PM Erdogan claimed that his last week’s remarks about media that led columnists to launch a protest against him, were misunderstood and misinterpreted by media.

Investigations are still underway in the case of the alleged **coup plot**. Some reports indicate that coup planners intended to ban all kinds of religious activities in the country. In this regard an Istanbul court has arrested former 1st Army commander retired Gen. Çetin Doğan and retired Lieutenant General Engin Alan under the probe regarding "Balyoz Plan" allegations.

**Geo-strategic Front:** A **Turkish** school in *Sudan’s* capital of Khartoum has been contributing to the development of relationships between Turkish and Sudanese people.

Meanwhile Turkey has expressed profound grief for the *Chilean* earthquake. Also the **Turkish** Foreign Minister has claimed that Turkey intends to resolve Iranian issue.



The Turkish Foreign Ministry has expressed “regret” over the calling of a US House of Representatives committee to vote on a resolution that would recognize the World War I-era killings of *Anatolian Armenians* as genocide, while voicing its expectation that the resolution would be rejected, saying the approval of the resolution would bring ongoing normalization efforts between Ankara and Yerevan to a “standstill.”

As far as **Cyprus** issue is concerned **Turkey** has announced to withdraw its troops from there after having reached a peace deal. **Turkey** has also extended full support to *Yemen*. Meanwhile **Turkish** effort to join EU and the growing Turkish ties with Central Asian Republics also remained significant.

**Economic Front:** Turkey’s foreign trade deficit increased by a record

160.6 percent in January. The consumer price index (CPI) increased by 1.45 percent in February due to recent tax hikes. Meanwhile unemployment has emerged as a key challenge in the country.

**Turkey** and Iran have signed a MoU to enhance cooperation in industrial development. Boosting economic ties of **Turkey** with *Japan, India, Africa, Philippines* and *Pakistan* have also been observed.

**Social Front:** Participants at a meeting organized by the Women’s Rights Association against Discrimination (AKDER) in Istanbul has criticized the *headscarf* ban in **Turkey**.

#### EAST ASIA

**Political Front:** **Indonesia’s** president has decided to address the nation soon in a bid to save his fragile coalition after parliament called for a criminal probe into a controversial bank bailout two years ago. Meanwhile **Thailand’s** ruling party urged deposed premier Thaksin Shinawatra to leave the political stage after the top court ordered the seizure of more than half of his US\$2.3-billion fortune.

**Geo-strategic Front:** Obama’s expected visit to **Indonesia** in the second half of March has led analysts to develop positive hopes for the future of **US-Indonesian** ties.

**Cambodia’s** military mounted a rare public test of rockets amid a lingering troop standoff over disputed territory with neighboring **Thailand**.

**Economic Front:** The **Indonesian** government has recently announced its list of 93 power plants to be built under the second 10,000-MW power generation scheme. Annual inflation in **Indonesia** rose in February, but remained manageable. However the prices of several food items dropped, such as sugar, beef, chicken and eggs. The government of Malaysia has been trying to promote private investments. Meanwhile the government of **Thailand** has signed an economic agreement with *Japan* to boost their bilateral ties.

**Social Front:** **Indonesian** police have charged 14 suspected Islamist militants arrested in restive Aceh province with planning terrorist attacks and shot dead another. Meanwhile **Malaysia's** reputation as a progressive, tolerant and moderate Muslim state seems to be at stake now as the country's best known democratic leader *Anwar Ibrahim* stands trial for alleged sodomy and risks being jailed for many years if declared guilty. Civil society has expressed serious concern regarding this issue.

## CENTRAL ASIA

**Political Front:** in **Azerbaijan** an opposition leaders denied any chances of a coalition of various opposition parties. Meanwhile the **Tajik** President's ruling party retained parliamentary majority in recently held elections. **Tajikistan's** opposition has threatened to call street protests to challenge the result of the parliamentary election. In the meantime international monitors also declared elections to be unfair.

**Uzbek** President expelled two top education officials last month over corruption charges.

**Geo-strategic Front:** **Azerbaijan** has strongly condemned American Congress for voting over a resolution in favor of *Armenians* against *Turkey*.

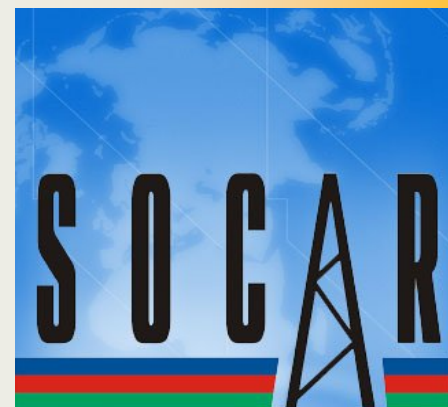
**Kazakhstan**, home of the space base used to launch rockets to the International Space Station (ISS), has started interfering with *Russian* space missions. Meanwhile Japan has recently signed a civil nuclear agreement

with **Kazakhstan**.

Uzbekistan announced to close **Kyrgyz-Uzbek** border, in a bid, according to media reports, to regulate the movement of **Kyrgyz** across the border according to a new limiting policy. Later on an **Uzbek** was shot dead by **Kyrgyz** border forces while he was attempting to cross the border.

**Russian** Deputy Prime minister paid his first visit to **Tajikistan**. Meanwhile a telephonic conversation between **Turkmen** President and his *Russian* counterpart took place that focused on strengthening *Turkmen-Russian* ties.

**Economic Front:** **Azerbaijan** exports crude oil and oil products via various routes to 30 countries of the world. Meanwhile the State Oil Company of



**Azerbaijan** (SOCAR) increased volumes of gas exports from the country by 17.9 percent against last December.

**Kazakhstan** has invited *Finland* to cooperate in high technologies and scientific research. **Kyrgyzstan** and *Russia* have signed an agreement on economic cooperation program for 2010-2013. The European Union has decided to allot more than € 50 million to the **Kyrgyz** Republic. The European Union has also supported the reformist policies of **Turkmenistan** mainly in energy sector.

**Uzbekistan** and Japan have signed agreements to boost their economic ties.

**Social Front:** Landslide has activated in Gusar region of **Azerbaijan**. OSCE officials have asked **Kazakh** government to loosen media groups in order to promote freedom of expression. Meanwhile **Kyrgyz** human rights activist Nematillo Botakoziev has been reported missing.

## GCC

**Political Front:** **Bahrain's** largest Shi'ite parliamentary bloc has started asking for new mode of power sharing in the parliament, sparking a row with Sunni politicians that have drawn in foreign missions as well. The Al Wefaq bloc, with 17 of 40 seats in the assembly, said during its annual assembly last month that the power sharing envisioned in **Bahrain's** constitution had not yet been sufficiently brought to life.

**Geo-strategic Front:** **Saudi** King Abdullah and Indian Prime Minister Man Mohan Singh signed the Riyadh Declaration that aims to strengthen their bilateral ties at all fronts. Meanwhile **Saudi-Arabia** has recently signed nine agreements with **Yemen** to boost ties with the later. Growing **Saudi** ties with **Qatar** also remained in focus.

UAE has strongly condemned **Israeli** use of force against Palestinians. The **Yemeni** government has apologized to families of 42 civilians killed in an air strike that targeted Al Qaeda figures in southern Yemen in December.

**Economic Front:** **Saudi Arabia** has started considering the option of building a new port in the Red sea city of Jeddah to handle rising imports such as wheat and barley under a food security plan.

**Social Front:** **Qatar** has been regarded as one of the countries' with maximum number of traffic accidents in the region.

## SOUTH ASIA

**Political Front:** **Bangladeshi** PM intends to convert her country into a digital country by 2021. Meanwhile arrest warrants of two sons of opposition leader have been issued for their involvement in various criminal cases. **Sri**

**Lankan** player Jayasuriya has been criticized for refusing to quit cricket after entering into politics.

**Economic Front:** **Bangladesh** has agreed to have tri-nation gas pipeline linking **India** and **Myanmar** to it. Meanwhile the US has announced to launch a US\$210 million recipe for feeding the poorest and most vulnerable people in **Bangladesh** under a greater food-security agenda.

**Bhutan** intends to create 7000 more jobs opportunities via construction of two hydro-power projects. Meanwhile the **Nepalese** economy has not grown in accordance with the expectations of the government; still positive hopes have been associated with it in the year 2010. Also **Nepal** has agreed to compensate Indian investors for any losses they might suffer from non-



commercial factors -- like change in tax structure and other policy decisions -- in a bid to lure more investments from the southern neighbor.

**Social Front:** Taslima Nasreen's article has caused strong protests in **Bangladesh**. All the while EU has strongly condemned various acts of violence against Christian and Buddhist population in **Bangladesh**.

A panel of experts has presented a report regarding absence of social justice in **Maldives**. Meanwhile malnutrition has been regarded as the key challenge being faced by **Nepal**.

## INDIA

### Political Front:

**National Level:** Shashi Tharoor's remarks on *Saudi Arabia's* potential as a mediator in **India's** ties with *Pakistan* provoked criticism from BJP and other political parties including Congress. Meanwhile BJP's senior leader L.K Advani criticized government on holding talks with *Pakistan* and stated it a response on US pressure. All the while responding to Maoist leader's truce offer; the government asked them to ensure ceasefire for 72 hours to facilitate talks.

**Geo-strategic Front:** Man Mohan Singh received warm welcome from Saudi King and declared his visit very successful. During his visit India and Saudi Arabia finalized 10 pacts, including an Extradition Treaty and agreements in the economic sphere.

**Economic Front:** **Indian** foreign exchange reserves fell by USD 528 million for the week ended February 19 to USD 278.672 billion compared to USD 279.2 billion in the previous week.

**Social Front:** US report on International Narcotics Trade released by the state department said that most of the drug transiting through the country is bound for Europe. The report, however, noted that the bulk of heroin seized in the past two years has been of domestic origin, was seized in South **India**, and was apparently destined for *Sri Lanka*. Meanwhile according to the latest data by the Ministry of Home Affairs for three years, cases of child rape continue to rise as a total of 4,721 cases were registered during 2006, 5,045 in 2007 and 5,446 in 2008 across the country.

Continued...

Madhya Pradesh registered 892 such cases.

**Regional Front:** A new swine flu case has been reported in Himachal Pradesh after a gap of over a month, with this, the number of Influenza (H1N1) cases in the state has risen to 45. In the assembly of Andhra Pradesh opposition parties staged a protest on price rise issue. In the meantime two persons died and eight others were injured in Karnataka following violent protests over the publication of an article by *Bangladeshi* writer Taslima Nasreen on the burqa in a vernacular daily.

## CHINA

**Political Front:** **Chinese** Parliament has expressed serious concern regarding growth, development and welfare of the poor living in under developed regions of the country. In this regard top **Chinese** political advisor Jia Qinglin delivered a report and presented it at the opening meeting of advisory body's annual full session. **China** has announced to reduce defense budget yet many analysts claim that reduction has just taken place on papers and not practically. World media has paid close attention to **Chinese** Premier's government work report to the annual



THE THIRD PLENARY MEETING OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE 11TH NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS (NPC) IS HELD AT THE GREAT HALL OF THE PEOPLE IN BEIJING, CAPITAL OF CHINA, MARCH 10, 2009.

session of the National People's Congress (NPC), focusing on China's fiscal and monetary policies in particular. **Chinese** PM has promised stable growth in this year.

**Geo-strategic Front:** **Chinese** PM has expressed keenness to bridge gap between Mainland and **Taiwan**. Both have signed economic agreements in order to improve ties.

The US Deputy Secretary of State visited China to mollify strained ties and held meeting with **Chinese** PM. But Chinese difference of opinion over the issue of imposition of new sanctions against *Iran* has been regarded as another source of tension between the two. China has favored negotiations to resolve *Iranian* nuclear issue. Meanwhile UN acknowledged **Chinese** efforts in *Haiti*.

**China** and *Pakistan* have agreed to hold joint anti-terrorism training this summer.

**Economic Front:** **China** has frozen the Yuan exchange rate at about 6.83 per dollar since mid-2008 to preserve the international competitiveness of its exporters, causing dismay in Washington and Brussels. This has led Western countries to exert pressure on China to appreciate its currency.

**China** has also enhanced industrial restructuring in order to achieve stable economic growth, while announcing to further open its agricultural market for **Taiwan**. China has set out to build "an international gateway to South Asia". The grandiose plan involves trade routes connecting *India*, *Bangladesh*, *Myanmar* and *Nepal* with three Chinese provinces.

Meanwhile the U.S. Commerce Department said it would slap preliminary anti-dumping duties on imported magnesia carbon brick from **China**, the latest move that adds tension to the trade relations between the two countries.

**Hong Kong** stocks ended down 301.01 points, or 1.44 percent, weighed by loss on **Chinese** mainland market which tumbled 2.4 percent.

**Social Front:** People from different parts of the country have got an opportunity in the form of websites to participate in recently started legislative session in **China**. Meanwhile **Chinese** from all across the country have been asking for reforms to end existing gap between rich and poor classes.

The appointment of the 11th Panchen Lama, the second highest **Tibetan** spiritual figure, to the **Chinese** People's Consultative Conference though largely symbolic still has political significance. Meanwhile lawmakers from ethnic minorities in northwestern **China's** Qinghai Province have urged for more favorable policies for the minority groups with small population.

At environmental front, **China's** Yellow River Conservancy Commission (YRCC) defeated 50 other nominees to win this year's Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize. The Prize recognizes outstanding contributions towards solving global water problems by either applying technologies or implementing policies and programs which benefit humanity.

## Zone 2- Africa:

### POLITICS OF SECURITY AND CONFLICT ISSUES

**West Africa:** The United Nations and European Union have condemned a call from Libya's leader Gaddafi for Muslims to carry out jihad against Switzerland over a recent vote to ban the construction of minarets in the European country.

A two day national workshop on ECOWAS Cross-Border Cooperation, the first of its kind, was held last week in collaboration with the government of Gambia.

In his testimony Charles Taylor told the Special Court for **Sierra Leone** last week that he did not work for the United States' top spy agency while he was a rebel leader in Liberia, but did receive sophisticated communication equipment from the agency in the hope that



Mr. Taylor's forces could help protect American citizens and property during **Liberia's** brutal civil conflict.

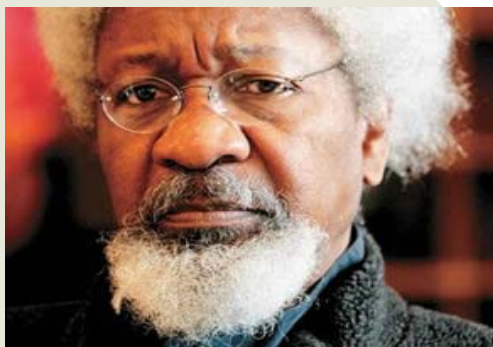
**Niger's** military junta has named a new transitional government of 20 ministers, including five soldiers, after seizing power from former President Mamadou Tandja on February 18. Junta leaders have promised to hold democratic elections in the future.

Following Presidential polls in **Togo** Faure Gnassingbe, son of a late dictator, had reportedly beaten opposition challenger Jean-Pierre Fabre. Meanwhile the opposition party has claimed widespread irregularities in the country's presidential election.

**South Africa:** Last week British Prime Minister Gordon Brown rejected a proposal from **South Africa's** Jacob Zuma to soften travel and financial restrictions against **Zimbabwe's** President Robert Mugabe and his inner circle. Mr. Mugabe and his ZANU-PF party charge that the measures are holding back the country's economic recovery. Many, however, in the streets of Harare say the restrictions should remain until there is more political progress. U.S. President Barack Obama too has extended sanctions against Mugabe and his key supporters for another year. Meanwhile **Botswana** has rescinded her decision to recall her defence and intelligence attaches from **Zimbabwe**.

**Central Africa:** **Burundi** is approaching elections designed to cap the country's democratic transition after years of civil conflict, however there is growing concern about worsening security and limits to political freedom.

### HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL ISSUES IN DOMESTIC POLITICS



**NIGERIA'S NOBEL LAUREATE, PROF. WOLE SOYINKA**

**West Africa:** Strike action was taken last week in **Ghana** by the National Association of Graduate Teachers (NAGRAT) over demands for payment of vehicle maintenance allowance arrears and supervision. The strikers have said they will return to the class rooms only after the formal acceptance by the ministry is carried through.

In **Nigeria** Nobel Laureate, Prof. Wole Soyinka has called for criminal proceedings against First Lady Turai Yar'Adua while opining that the Inspector General of Police (IGP) and security chiefs in the country should be held responsible for the renewed Jos crisis which claimed around 200 persons.

**Nigeria** last week put security forces on red alert after a new outburst of sectarian violence left at least 100 people dead, mainly women and

children, as machete wielding gangs burned down villages. Meanwhile according to local authorities the unusually large-scale migration of southern **Nigerien** farmers and pastoralists, heading north to look for work, has prompted concerns about food shortages in the northern Agadez region.

UN Deputy Envoy to **Liberia**, Ms. Henrietta Mensa-Bonsu has described an agricultural training pilot

project for inmates at the National Palace of Corrections “as a bold step towards institutionalizing active programs for rehabilitation of inmates.”

In **Mali** Legislative efforts to update a decades-old family code sparked nationwide protests from Muslim associations, which say the new code would threaten religious values.

**South Africa:** A delegation of **Mozambican** gays and lesbians visited **Malawi** on a solidarity mission over the arrest of Tiwonge Chimbalanga and Steven Monjeza. The two were arrested on December 28 last year, two days after staging **Malawi's** first-ever public gay engagement in the country's commercial city, Blantyre.

A recent court ruling has given **Swazi** women the right to own and administer property in their own names.

**Central Africa:** **Rwanda** is seeking the extradition of a former first lady who was arrested by French authorities last week on genocide-related charges. France has detained Agathe Habyarimana, the widow of the former **Rwandan** leader whose death in 1994 set off the ethnic slaughter which killed 800,000 in just 100 days.

A top peacekeeping official reported that the first group of United Nations troops could leave the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** by the end of June, as requested by the Government. Amnesty International however has opposed the **DRC** government's call for U.N. forces to withdraw from the country by the middle of next year.

A senior United Nations official last week sought to raise awareness of the "forgotten tragedy" of

ethnic Mbororo refugees from the **Central African Republic (CAR)**, who are seeking refuge in **Cameroon**.



## HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND DOMESTIC POLITICS

**West Africa:** a joint campaign by the Red Cross and United Nations has been launched to eradicate polio in west and central Africa, targeting 85 million children.

**Ghana's** National Disaster Management Organization, (NADMO) has intensified its anti-bushfire campaign in schools to create the necessary awareness among school children on the dangers of setting fires

indiscriminately.

United Nations agencies are ramping up efforts to assist around 2 million **Chadian** who will require food aid this year because of poor rainfall and lean harvests. Meanwhile Nutrition experts in **Guinea** are studying options for treating moderately malnourished children, as funding shortages disrupt normal programmes using fortified flour.

**Liberia's** Deputy Health and Social Welfare Minister, Dr. Bernice Dahn, has disclosed that there is no Swine Flu virus in the country.

## POLITICAL ECONOMY

**West Africa:** The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is reviewing its prescriptive fund disbursement method in Africa for a quicker, country-specific process. The new programme dubbed the Rapid Credit Line, is expected to provide less conditionalities and ease access to funds at lower interest rates.

**Ghana** announced last week the discovery of a significant accumulation of oil and gas on the Cape Three Points Deep Water Block located offshore the West African nation.

The Administrator of the **Nigerian** Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC), Mallam Imamudeen Talba has blamed the collapsed state of the nation's energy sector on the lack of discipline and inefficiency in the usage of electricity. The Minister of Petroleum Resources, Dr. Rilwanu Lukman, has disclosed that the nation's oil and gas behemoth, the **Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC)** is currently running at a loss of more than N200

billion, with contingent liabilities of more than N146 billion and \$277 million.

**South Africa:** A new **Zimbabwean** law that forces companies to sell a majority stake in their businesses to indigenous people has come into effect. President Mugabe says the new law is designed to correct historical imbalances, while the MDC claims it is 'null and void'.

A monitor from the Kimberly Certification Process, which was set up to end international trade in conflict diamonds, has arrived in Harare to check on output from controversial diamond mining in eastern **Zimbabwe**. §

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

### WESTERN EUROPE

The **U.S.** and **Europe** say they share U.N. fears that Tehran may be secretly working on developing nuclear missiles, expressing support last week for new sanctions if Tehran continues to defy Security

Council demands. Their comments reflected the International Atomic Energy Agency's change in tone under new director-general Yukiya Amano in its assessment of Iran's nuclear ambitions.

**Dutch** anti-Islam politician Geert Wilders returned to Britain on Friday, seizing the media spotlight and stirring up protest after winning a local election in the **Netherlands**. Wilders flew in to London to show his anti-Islam film "Fitna," a 15-minute short which associates the Muslim holy book, the Quran, with Islamist terror.

Two women who refused to go through a full-body scanner citing religious reservations were barred from boarding a flight at *Manchester* Airport.

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown said last week that he would block private groups from launching war crimes prosecutions against visiting foreign dignitaries, following a controversy inflamed by an arrest warrant for former Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni. Meanwhile at an Iraq inquiry Brown stated that Britain's backing for the US-led invasion of Iraq was "the right decision... for the right reasons,". He faced a backlash over his testimony to the public inquiry as ex-military chiefs questioned his claims that the army was adequately funded.

Meanwhile NATO's chief said that Afghanistan will serve as a prototype for future civil-military cooperation in handling crises in other weak or failing nations.

**Greece** announced painful new austerity measures last week, winning approval from the European Union as it tries to snuff out a financial crisis that threatens Europe's economy.

### SOUTH-EAST EUROPE

According to media reports authorities have complained to the European Commission (EC) about an influx of **Albanians** from **Macedonia** and southern **Serbia**.

**Albania's** Opposition Socialist Party (SP) leader Edi Rama said Friday (February 26th) that his party is again leaving parliament and threatened large public protests unless Prime Minister Sali Berisha agrees to open the ballot boxes of the June 2009 general elections.



About 500 people protested in front of a **Romanian** government building last week, demanding the resignation of Foreign Minister Teodor Baconschi. In public remarks on February 11th, he connected the ethnic minority to crime, on the basis of physiology.

European Parliament (EP) President Jerzy Buzek on Wednesday (March 3rd) backed **Bulgaria's** efforts to join the Schengen area and the Eurozone.

### RUSSIA & THE BALKANS

As the NORDSTREAM Gas Pipeline project being built under the



**Baltic** Ocean to carry gas directly from **Russia** to *Germany* has been modified at Poland's request so that it does not endanger shipping in the region.

**Slovakia** has adopted a law to crack down on income from crime and corruption, a frequent feature of **Slovak** politics, ahead of a June election.

Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich met with his **Russian** counterpart Dmitry Medvedev last week. One issue on the agenda included convincing Russian authorities to lower gas prices for Ukraine in exchange for a gas transit association consisting of **Ukraine**, Moscow and European member states. Around 80 percent of the **Russian** gas bound for Europe runs through Soviet-era pipelines in Ukraine currently.

A **Latvian** hacker, by the name Neo, has issued a call for rebellion against “fat cat” officials after stealing millions of **Latvian** government tax records to expose the salaries of several senior bureaucrats.

During a meeting between French and **Russian** Premiers last week some agreements have been reached including the sale of four French Amphibious Assault Ships to Russia, the largest-ever arms sale by a NATO member to Russia, and a massive contract of Russian natural gas to France. Meanwhile in a sign of strain **Russian** pilots working in Iran have been asked to leave the country as their services are no longer required.

According to the Federal Customs Service, **Russia's** foreign trade surplus rose to \$15.7 billion in January from \$9.1 billion in the same period a year ago. Meanwhile the government last week unveiled a plan to invest almost 20 billion dollars over the next decade to transform the embattled **Russian** car industry into a major global player. Some 584 billion rubles (19.6 billion dollars) of state funds will be invested in the car industry to 2020.

U.S., British and French soldiers will march on **Moscow's** Red Square to commemorate the defeat of Nazi Germany 65 years ago. **Russia's** Western allies against Adolf Hitler in World War II have confirmed their participation in the annual May 9 parade. Meanwhile Human rights activists and allies of Prime Minister Vladimir Putin have attacked plans by the city of Moscow to allow portraits of Soviet leader *Josef Stalin* to be displayed during the commemorations.

#### **US/CANADA**

President Obama, beginning his final push for a health care overhaul, called last week for Congress to allow an “up or down vote” on the measure, and sketched out an ambitious timetable for his party to pass a bill on its own within weeks.



The **US** Army chief of staff, General George Casey, told lawmakers last week that it was time to review the rules that bar women from ground combat in light of how women have served in the two wars. His comments came as the military unveiled plans to lift the ban on women serving in submarines, an all-male bastion that navy officers once insisted could never change.

A small group of **U.S.** lawmakers unveiled legislation last week to withdraw from the North American Free Trade Agreement in the latest sign of congressional disillusionment with free-trade deals.

Turkey says it is recalling its ambassador to the **U.S.** for consultations following a resolution declaring the killing of Armenians by Ottoman Turks around the time of World War I genocide.

#### **LATIN AMERICA**

**Argentina** received unprecedented support from Latin America in condemning Britain for exploring oil near the disputed **Falkland** Islands, which could give the South American nation a boost as it presses the issue with the United Nations. Meanwhile **Argentine** President Cristina Fernandez is trying to use billions of dollars in foreign reserves to help pay debt this year, but a court decision last week upheld a freeze on Fernandez's bid to transfer some \$6.6 billion from the country's foreign reserves into a fund managed by the Treasury.

The *Spanish* government last week gave the green light for the extradition to **Argentina** of a former senior police officer on charges of human rights violations during the Latin American country's 1976-83 military dictatorship.

**Argentine** Foreign Secretary Victorio Taccetti in a meeting with Federal Minister for Environment Hameed Ullah Jan Afridi has reaffirmed hopes of strengthening good relations between the two nations.

**Mexico** and **Brazil** are set to begin formal talks over a possible free trade agreement between Latin America's two biggest economies. Meanwhile **Brazilian** President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva during a trip **Haiti** has called all creditor countries and agencies to write off the nation's external debt hence allowing new loans to finance its post quake reconstruction. Later Da Silva also made an unexpected trip to **Chili** in a show of solidarity with the nation.

Hillary Clinton visited **Brazil** last week. Clinton's visit is a preparation for the first visit of President Barack Obama to **Brazil**, which is expected to occur in the second half of this year.

Meanwhile some 90 million people in **Brazil** are to be vaccinated against A/H1N1 flu in a nationwide campaign to start later this month.

Americans have been advised against traveling to **Mexico** where shootouts have left slain 19 people over three days.

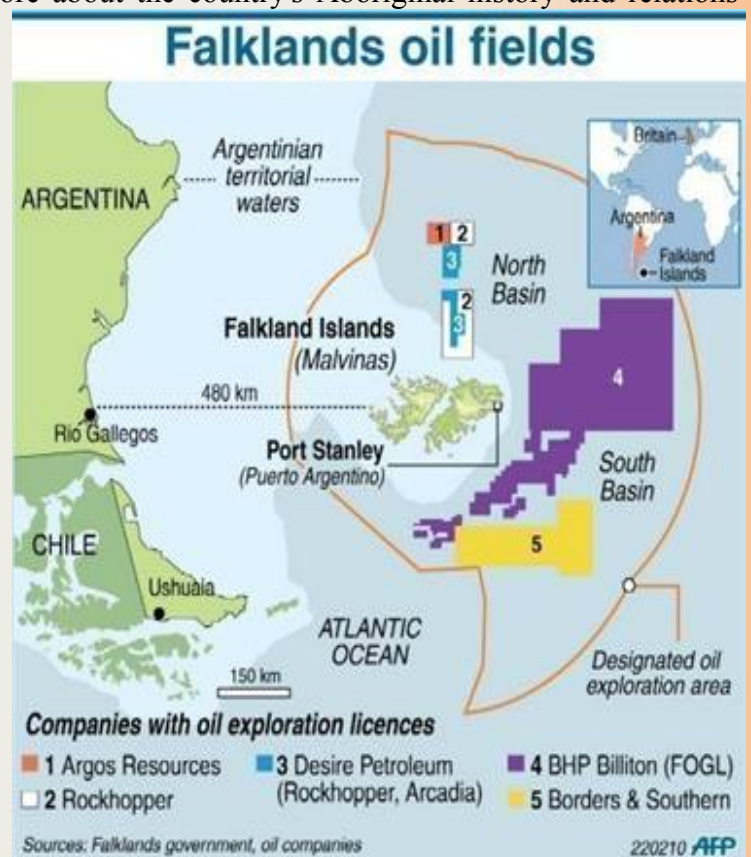
**Venezuelan** President Hugo Chavez said last week that he is willing to hold talks with his **Colombian** counterpart, Alvaro Uribe, on easing tensions between the South American neighbors.

Meanwhile according to a statement by the Spanish foreign minister, **Venezuela** has pledged to cooperate with a Spanish court that accuses the South American nation's government of collaborating with Basque separatist militants and **Colombian** rebels.

## AUSTRALASIA

According to a recent poll **Australia's** Labor government has lost the lead it has held over the conservative opposition since coming to power in 2007.

Foreign Minister Stephen Smith said last week that some of the recent attacks against Indian students in **Australia** were "racist" and that the country would have to work hard to repair its image. Meanwhile according to officials **Australian** school children will now learn more about the country's Aboriginal history and relations



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