



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*.

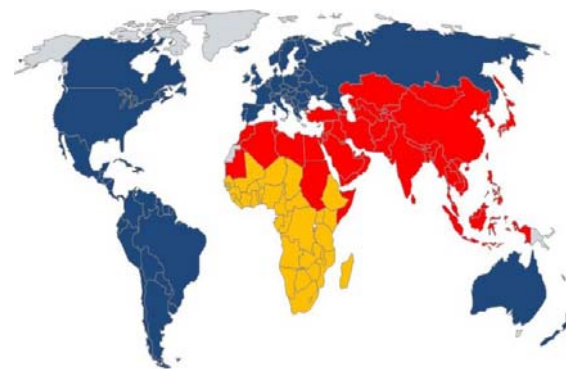
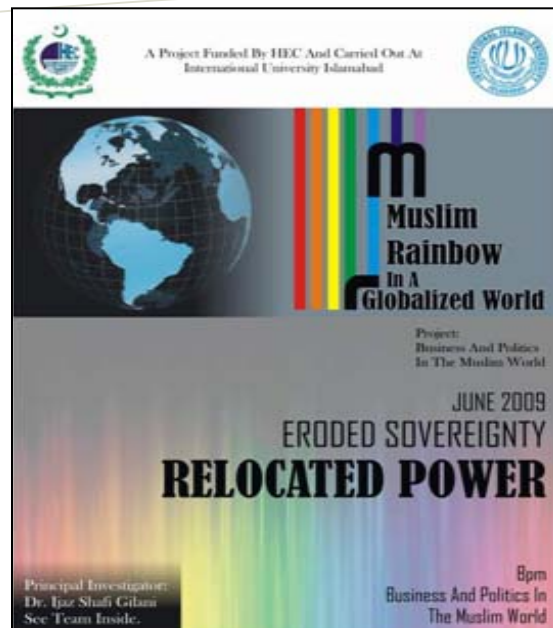
- ◆ We will make the e-letter a multi-layered presentation: in other words Friday on the Facebook will provide clicks to deeper levels of information; for comprehension (Maps and Data) as well as for elaboration



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 25 surveys. Two of these surveys are multi-country while the rest are national surveys.

Week # 111

Commentary on Gallopedia Polls

Dated 14-20 March 2010

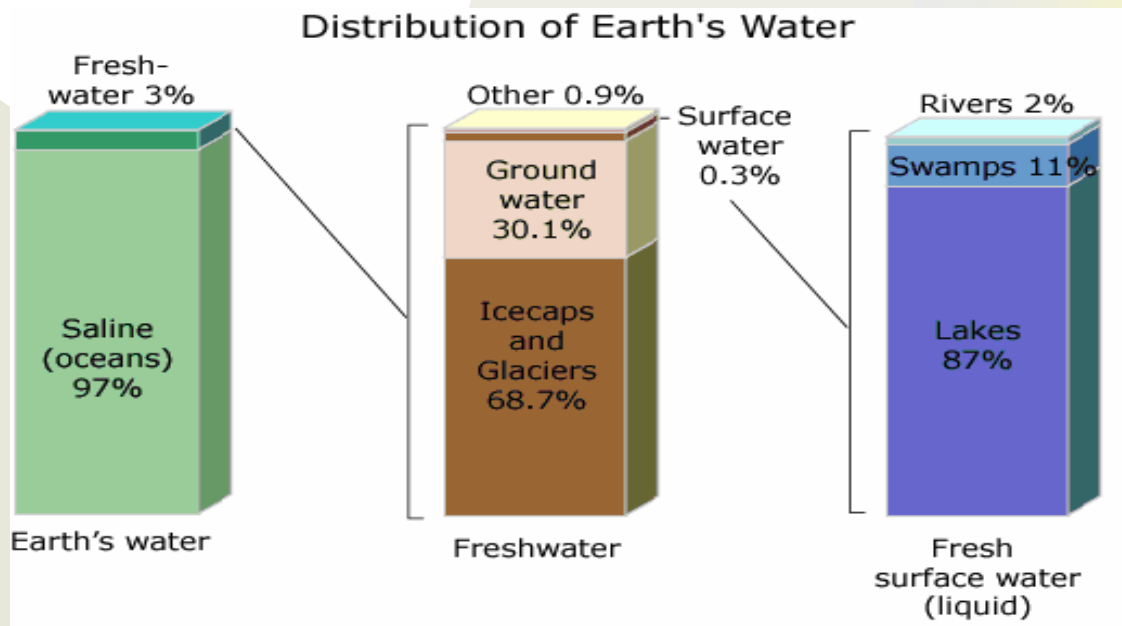
Water Scarcity and Future of the World



Population growth, urban development, farm production, and climate change is increasing competition for fresh water and producing shortages so acute that virtually every industry in the world anticipates sweeping systemic transformation over the next decade in their strategic planning, production practices, and business models. This is the conclusion of a Globescan leaders survey on water scarcity.¹

It suggests that water scarcity will have profound impacts on global businesses. Other than business and economy the water crisis will have significant political and social consequences as well. It can be easily comprehended that increasing gap between fresh water supply and demand will lead to several issues with in nations and conflicts between neighboring nations. These conditions possess potential to bring world wide changes; Industries locations might change towards places where fresh water supply is ensured, hydro power projects might suffer resulting in energy disorders and severe impact on economies, farming cycles disorder will lead to famines, drastically effecting social life styles. These conditions spell catastrophe and perhaps may even perpetuate an end to the modern world as we know it.

The situation definitely demands a more responsible reaction from all institutions involved as well as citizens at an individual level. Is the degree of awareness and effort (including the recent *Copenhagen conference* that widely disappointed the world) commensurate with the degree of attention that it demands? §



Zone 1- ASIA
WEST ASIA

Pakistanis, Afghans Unconvinced by Gov't Anti-Terror Efforts

Despite Pakistan's major military offensives against the Taliban last year, Gallup surveys show Pakistanis' evaluations of their government's efforts to fight terrorism didn't improve -- or change much at all -- in 2009. Nearly half (49%) of Pakistanis surveyed in November and December said their government isn't doing enough, similar to the 47% who said so in May and June.

March 17, 2010

SOUTH EAST ASIA

Indonesia's Place along the Spectrum of Global Religious Restriction

Restrictions on religious practice are far from uncommon in today's world. The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life has found that 64 nations, about one in three among the countries and territories covered by its Global Restrictions on Religion study, have high restrictions on religion either because of government restrictions, social hostilities or both. Indonesia is among the top such countries where such restrictions are very high.

March 18, 2010



Aquino Leads, Estrada Gains in the Philippines

Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III is the most popular presidential contender in the Philippines, according to a poll by Pulse Asia. 36 per cent of respondents would vote for Aquino of the Liberal Party (PLP) in the May ballot, down one point since January.

March 16, 2010

NORTH EAST ASIA

Almost Half of Japanese Disapprove of Cabinet

Japan's cabinet continues to lose public support just six months after taking office, according to a poll by Kyodo News. 49 per cent of respondents disapprove of the government led by Yukio Hatoyama, up 15 points since December.

March 15, 2010

Zone 3

EURO-AMERICAS

EAST EUROPE

Romanians Pessimistic About Country

A large majority of people in Romania think the country is heading in the wrong direction, according to a poll by CURS. 77 per cent of respondents share this opinion.

March 19, 2010

WEST EUROPE

Britons Doubt Afghanistan Will Be Stable in 2015

Many adults in Britain believe foreign soldiers will still be needed in Afghanistan five years from now, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 58 per cent of respondents think the Government of Afghanistan will not be able to run its affairs without the assistance of international troops.

March 17, 2010

Swedes Want Senior Monarch to Stay Put

Few people in Sweden believe the current monarch should abdicate after he turns 65, according to a poll by Synovate published in *Dagens Nyheter*. 62 per cent of respondents want King Carl XVI Gustaf to stay on.

March 14, 2010



NORTH AMERICA

The Return of the Multi-Generational Family Household

This report documents major changes in family household living arrangements that have unfolded over the past three decades and accelerated during the Great Recession. Its principal focus is on the revival since 1980 of the multi-generational family household.

March 18, 2010

Obama Not Meeting Americans' Lofty Expectations on Issues

Americans' ratings of the job President Barack Obama is doing in three key areas are much less positive than their expectations were for him shortly after he took office. Americans give Obama the best review for protecting the environment and the worst for making America prosperous.

March 17, 2010

Americans Firm in Prioritizing Economy Over Environment

For only the second time in more than two decades and the second straight year, Americans are more likely to say economic growth should take precedence over environmental protection when the two objectives conflict (53%) than to say the reverse (38%).

March 18, 2010

82% of Public Believe Wall Street Should Be Regulated More Toughly

American attitudes towards Wall Street are ambivalent. Most people believe that Wall Street benefits the country and that what it does is "absolutely essential." However, attitudes towards the people who work on Wall Street are overwhelmingly negative and are far lower than they were before 2008 and the bail-out of large banks and other financial institutions, with little or no improvement over the last year. The net result? Fully 82% of all adults believe that Wall Street should be regulated more toughly.

March 11, 2010

Americans Split on Placing Reagan on \$50 Bill

A proposal to place Ronald Reagan's likeness on all \$50 bills has divided views in the United States, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 41 per cent of respondents support the idea, while 39 per cent oppose it.

March 14, 2010

LATIN AMERICA

Chileans Expect a Good Piñera Government

People in Chile have high expectations for their new government, according to a poll by Adimark Gfk. 59 per cent of respondents expect the country to do well under new president Sebastián Piñera.

March 15, 2010

Chile's Bachelet Leaves with Enviably Rating

A large proportion of adults in Chile are satisfied with the performance of their outgoing president, according to a poll by Adimark Gfk. 84 per cent of respondents approve of Michelle Bachelet's performance.

March 13, 2010

GLOBAL POLLS

Indonesia: The Obama Effect

When President Barack Obama finally takes his twice-delayed trip to Indonesia, where he lived for several years as a child, he will visit a country where his personal popularity has dramatically transformed America's image. Of course, Indonesia is not alone in this pattern -- Obama's election led to better ratings for the United States in many

nations around the globe. However, Indonesia -- the world's largest predominantly Muslim country -- is an outlier in the Muslim world, where opinions of the U.S. remain mostly negative.

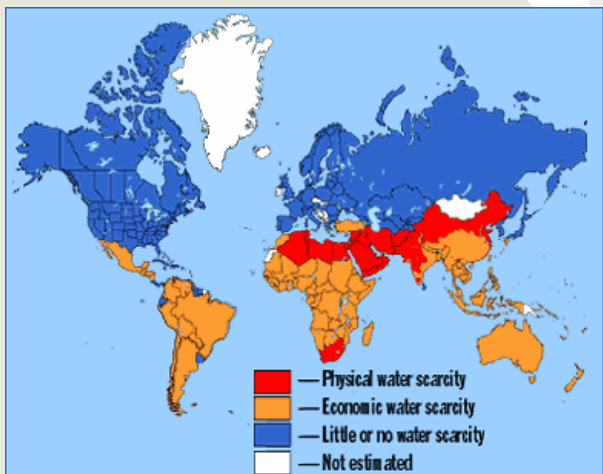
March 17, 2010

Coming Era of Water Scarcity Will Prompt Global Industrial Transformation, Experts Poll

Population growth, urban development, farm production, and climate change is increasing competition for fresh water and producing shortages so acute that virtually every industry in the world anticipates sweeping systemic transformation over the next decade in their strategic planning, production practices, and business models, say sustainability experts.

March 16, 2010

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Zone 1- Asia: Summary

Asia, Middle East & North Africa

TURKEY

Political Front: **Turkish** ruling party has finalized a draft package to bring amendments in the Constitution. The ruling party is seeking support from the opposition. Meanwhile a referendum is also being considered as a possible option to seek approval for the package.

As regards the issue of the *coup plot*; a **Turkish** top General has denied allegations against his soldiers being involved in planning a coup to topple the ruling regime. He also condemned police for blocking a military truck loaded with ammunition on the basis of some e-mail and for not keeping the army in the loop. All the while he claimed that military-civilian relations would never be severed.

Meanwhile the Council of Europe's advisory body has recommended that **Turkey** introduce legislation making it possible for religious communities to acquire and maintain a legal personality.

Geo-strategic Front: **Turkish** PM has taken a harsh position against undocumented Armenian workers in **Turkey**, threatening to expel thousands amid tensions over allegations that **Armenians** were victims of "genocide" during the last days of the Ottoman Empire.

The **Turkish** PM stated that news about *Iranian nuclear program* should be considered a 'rumor'.

European Union's commissioner for enlargement said that the visa procedures between EU and **Turkey** might be lifted "some day". Meanwhile President of **Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus** (TRNC) has announced to hold meeting with **Greek** Cypriot leader to discuss various issues.



Turkish President has termed *Africa* an important strategic partner. Meanwhile the **Turkish** public has strongly condemned *Israeli* acts of aggression against Palestinians.

Economic Front: The partners in the planned *Nabucco* natural-gas pipeline to *Europe* are to conclude a production-sharing agreement in April.

Recent figures on industrial production index (IPI) in **Turkey** have indicated slow recovery in the country's macroeconomic outlook. Meanwhile **Turkey** and the IMF failed to reach an agreement on a loan stand-by deal because of projected distribution of extra income in case

Turkey grows more than 3.5 percent in 2010. Besides that unemployment in **Turkey** has increased remarkably.

Turkish close economic ties with *Britain*, *South Korea*, *Africa* and *Iraq* remained important.

Social Front: 'Nevruz', an ancient festival marking the start of the *Iranian New Year*, has been warmly welcomed by thousands of **Turkish** people.

Turkey's Higher Education Board has overruled its earlier decision to grant Turkish students who study abroad the right to transfer to Turkish universities without taking the university entrance exam.

GCC

Political Front: Last week **Yemeni** air force launched strikes against Al-Qaeda hide outs for two consecutive days that reportedly resulted in certain Al Qaeda casualties. Meanwhile **Yemen's** northern rebels have freed 178 soldiers and civilians as part of a cease-fire agreement with the government.

A conservative lawmaker in **Kuwait** pledged to bring up in the parliament the issue of making the veil mandatory for elected and appointed officials, a move that threatens further divisions in the **Kuwaiti** parliament.

Bahrain's business community has started thinking in terms of making a political society in order to enter the parliament and help promote its views and interests.

Geo-strategic Front: **Kuwaiti** and **Saudi Arabian** citizens would soon be able to travel between the two countries using their identity cards instead of passports.

Meanwhile a society dedicated to resisting the normalization of ties with **Israel** has urged the upper chamber of the bicameral parliament to endorse a draft law to criminalize contacts with **Israelis**.

Economic Front: Aggregate earnings of **GCC** companies showed a second consecutive year of decline. With 67 percent of companies declaring results so far, aggregate results show a decline of 5 percent for **GCC** as a whole for 2009 versus an 18 percent expansion in MSCI EM EPS, and a 9 percent contraction in S&P 500 EPS for the year.

Meanwhile the **United Arab Emirates** University (UAEU) has signed three Memorandums of Understanding with three different specialized companies to transfer technology of date palm tissue cultivation.

Social Front: Private recruitment offices in the Eastern Province have increased the waiting time for *Indonesian* housemaids from seven weeks to three months.

A **Kuwaiti** conservative parliamentary bloc has started putting pressure on the social affairs and labor minister to take stringent action against those who allowed a women's football team to take part in a regional tournament. Meanwhile a **Bahraini** lawmaker has urged the country's civil society, political societies, media, and upper chamber to support a drive by the lower chamber to ban alcohol in Bahrain.

FERTILE CRESCENT

Political Front: Several **Egyptian** opposition groups have asked for political reforms and more freedom. The groups further demanded an end to the concentration of power in the president's hands. They also called for peaceful protests ahead of parliamentary polls due in October. Meanwhile the National Democratic Party (NDP) has denied accusations of a secret deal struck with certain opposition parties to divide the Muslim *Brotherhood's* current parliamentary seats amongst them.

With nearly 80 percent of the votes counted from **Iraq's** March 7 parliamentary elections, the main winners appear to be *Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki* and *challenger Iyad Allawi*. But the two front-runners are neck and neck. The vote count so far shows Allawi's Al-Iraqiyah coalition narrowly ahead of Maliki's State of Law alliance by less than 9,000 votes. *The Iraqi National Alliance*, a coalition of Shi'ite religious groups, looks set to come in third, followed by the *Kurdistan Alliance*, composed of the two main factions in the autonomous **Kurdish** region. Parties have got engaged in coalition talks even before completion of vote count. Meanwhile **Iran** congratulated **Iraq** for successfully holding elections.

Geo-strategic Front: Arab countries have reportedly started losing faith in American role as arbitrator to resolve the **Israel-Palestine** issue on account of its 'biased' attitude in favor of **Israel**.

Economic Front: As an anti-crisis measure, the government of **Egypt** has aimed stimulus money at large infrastructure development projects, including water treatment plants, railways, highways and housing. Around LE 23 billion (€3.1 billion) has been issued since October 2008 to stimulate the economy and more money is expected to be added to it.

Social Front: The one-day conference has been organized by the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), which groups 57 members to form the world's largest Islamic assembly, is to be co-chaired by host **Egypt** and **Turkey**.



Employees of the *Islam Online* (IOL) website continued their sit-in for the third day

running at their Sixth of October offices, demanding settlement packages after the majority of them submitted their resignation. These were spurred by warnings of mass lay-offs and employee investigations by the website's **Qatari** owner.

Meanwhile **Egypt** has been listed as an "enemy of the internet" by Reporters without Borders as a US State Department 2009 report on human rights highlighted Egypt's ill-treatment of bloggers and internet activists in 2009.

CENTRAL ASIA

Political Front: A jailed **Azerbaijan** opposition journalist has been pardoned.

Opposition forces in **Kyrgyzstan** outlined the requirements for the **Kyrgyz** government to be performed until March 24, 2010.

Meanwhile **Tajik** President has rejected criticism of last month's parliamentary elections, describing them as democratic and transparent.

Geo-strategic Front: Last week **Azerbaijan**, **Iran**, **Kazakhstan**, **Russia** and **Turkmenistan** agreed on the main issues of the draft Agreement on joint activities at the level of border and customs services and internal affairs bodies to ensure security in the Caspian Sea.

High officials of **Azerbaijan** and **Kazakhstan** held a meeting to discuss perspective of cooperation. Meanwhile **Kazakhstan** and Norway have signed agreements to enhance cooperation in various fields.

Tajik President discussed Afghan issue with his **Turkmen** counterpart during his visit to **Tajikistan**. Meanwhile **Kazakh** President paid an official visit to **Uzbekistan** and discussed areas of cooperation.

Russia has emphasized greatly on close ties with **Turkmenistan**.

Economic Front: **Kazakh** oil and gas exports have increased by 16.7% in January as compared to the same period last year.

Japan has given US\$1.5 million to **WHO** for improving healthcare on **Tajik-Afghan** border.

Social Front: The U.S. Helsinki Commission has criticized a Baku court's rejection of appeals by two **Azerbaijani** bloggers against their prison sentences.

Over 2,000 people have been evacuated from several villages in eastern **Kazakhstan** due to severe flooding caused by melting snow.

The director of the *OzenMunaiGaz* energy company has been fired amid a strike by thousands of oil workers in southwestern **Kazakhstan**.

Meanwhile RSF has strongly condemned **Kyrgyz** government over the issue of harassment of opposition media persons.

EAST ASIA

Political Front: **Thai** PM has again invoked the *internal security Act* in order to contain Red-Shirt protestors; who have announced to launch a rally asking government to hold elections. Meanwhile police commanders have assured to let protestors hold peaceful demonstrations.

Malaysian cabinet has agreed to have the ISA amended, among others on the detention period, rights and treatment of ISA detainees, the powers of the Home Minister, detention without trial and on the issue of perception that it was being abused for political interests.

UN General Assembly President Dr. *Ali Abdussalam Treki* has called for the implementation of the 1996 *Tripoli Agreement*, a two decade old peace act between the **Philippine** government and the *separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front* (MNLF).

Geo-strategic Front: **Indonesians** seem quite excited about upcoming visit of the US President Obama that has been delayed right now due to his domestic commitments.

Economic Front: Positive hopes about **US-Indonesian** economic ties prevail in **Indonesia**.



Vietnam has long been the largest producer of coffee and has now become the world's second biggest exporter.

Social Front: The largest Muslim organization in **Indonesia**, *Muhammadiyah*, has declared that smoking is *haram*, or forbidden under Islamic law. As a response the Religious Affairs Minister has condemned the organization for its anti-tobacco edict,

saying it should not cause “restlessness” among public.

Cambodia has temporarily barred its citizens from marrying **South Korean** men after two dozen women were sold into marriage by matchmakers.

Sourcing contracts between Nestlé and **Indonesian** palm oil producer Sinar Mas have been terminated following criticism from environmental pressure groups. The move by the world's largest food group came after Greenpeace released a report this week which looked into its sourcing practices. The environmentalist group identified the oil producers as guilty of mass deforestation in its production of palm oil.

Seventeen of 18 volcanoes in **Indonesia** are on alert status and emitting toxic gas.

SOUTH ASIA

Political Front: Amidst political crisis in **Nepal**, UN decision to send its special mission to ensure peace has raised people's hopes. The Government of **Nepal** however has to approve the UN proposal.

Meanwhile opposition Maoists have stepped up consultations with smaller parties, apparently in a bid to secure their support for launching a no-trust motion against the coalition government of Prime Minister Madhav Kumar **Nepal**.

Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse has warned his former military commander, *General Sarath Fonseka*, against entering into politics. Meanwhile **Sri Lankan** Election Commissioner has ruled out the possibility of having foreign observers at the counting centers of upcoming parliamentary polls.

Geo-strategic Front: **Bangladeshi** PM has paid an official visit to **China** in a bid to boost existing ties.

At least 18 villagers were injured during a two-hour firefight between **Indian** and **Bangladeshi** troops across the troubled border. The shoot-out occurred when indigenous **Indian** tribal people entered **Bangladeshi** territory to fish. Meanwhile high officials from **India** and **Bangladesh** held talks to resolve the water dispute. Also **Indian** border security force has agreed to remove their newly set up border post inside **Bangladeshi** territory.

Philippines has banned import of poultry products from **Bhutan** amidst outbreak of bird flu. Meanwhile **Nepal** and **Bhutan** held talks to boost bilateral trade ties.

Economic Front: **Bangladesh's** foreign direct investment (FDI) halved to \$297 million during the first half of the fiscal year to end June 2010 because of global recession and crippling shortages in local power supply.

Continued...

Meanwhile the **European Union** (EU) has signed grant contracts worth US\$20.21 million (BDT 1.40 billion) to help the people of **Bangladesh** deal with a drastic increase in food prices.

Social Front: Water transport workers began an indefinite strike on all river routes across **Bangladesh** demanding better pay and working conditions.

UNESCO goodwill ambassador and the founder of *South Asia foundation* (SAF), has committed to donate USD 1 million to help start a centre for **South Asia** forestry studies in **Bhutan**.

Maldives has decided to introduce complete ban on Shark-fishing. Keeping environmental concerns in mind; the government has announced to take-forward the country's pledge to become carbon neutral by 2020.

About two dozen **Tibetans** jailed in **Nepal** for protesting the Chinese occupation of their homeland have gone on a hunger strike in Kathmandu.

Meanwhile the *United Kingdom* (UK) has expressed its concern over intimidation and violence against journalists and human rights defenders in **Nepal**.

INDIA

Political Front: Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) along with other regional parties including the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) and the Samajwadi Party (SP) has recorded their opposition to the women reservation bill in the Lok Sabha. At the same time Deobandi and Barelvi sects have also opposed the Women's Reservation Bill which has already created unrest among Islamic scholars and bodies.

Meanwhile BJP and Leftist Parties have strongly criticized government's decision to introduce a Bill in the Lok Sabha regarding the limiting compensation in case of a nuclear accident. The passage of the Bill seems to be crucial to make the **Indo-U.S.** civil nuclear agreement operational and allow the entry of private U.S. companies which have already been assigned land for a nuclear park. The Bill would also benefit *France* and *Russia* who have been informed of land being earmarked for their companies.

Geo-strategic Front: **India** and *Russia* have signed several agreements in the defense and strategic spheres, besides taking steps to extend their partnership in new areas such as energy and fertilizers during the visit of **Russian** Prime Minister Vladimir Putin.

In spite of renewed tensions in recent months, **Indian** and *Chinese* officials struck a positive note on **Sino-Indian** ties, saying the long-running border dispute had become increasingly less relevant to bilateral relations.

Pakistan seems determined to bring water issue on table along with the *Kashmir* dispute, in its talks with **India**. Meanwhile **India** has expressed serious concerns regarding the current *Pak-Afghan* situation.

Economic Front: Foreign fund inflows into **India's** stock market climbed to a record 834.2 billion rupees in 2009, beating the previous high set two years earlier in local currency terms, as the biggest rally in 18 years lured foreign investors. In the meantime the *Bombay* Stock Exchange's Sensitive Index gained 218.19, or 1.3 percent, to 17,383.18, the highest level since Jan. 20.

Social Front: **India's** cabinet approved a proposal to allow foreign universities to set up branches, potentially opening a huge market to international educational institutions.

Regional Front: At least 12 people were injured in a bomb explosion in a jeep near Lakshmipur in *Bihar*.

The Gujarat government rejected the Congress demand for the resignation of Chief Minister Narendra Modi, in the wake of the Supreme Court-appointed Special Investigation Team (SIT) summoning him for questioning in connection with the 2002 Gulberg Society massacre.

Meanwhile, in a suspected case of child sacrifice, five children of a family were killed in a village in *Hingoli* district and four persons, including three women, have been arrested in this connection.

Lastly, the School Education department of *West Bengal* has decided to appoint 35,000 primary teachers within the next two months.

CHINA

Political Front: The amendment to the Electoral Law, that grants equal representation in legislative bodies to rural and urban people, adopted by the National People's Congress (NPC), China's parliament, has marked an important step to improve the people's congress system and advance socialist democracy.

China's anti-corruption chief has urged cadres of the Communist Party of China (CPC) to refrain from abusing their



authority for illicit gain and to win public trust through clean governance.

Chinese PM has expressed serious concern regarding mounting domestic and external pressures being faced by **China**. Meanwhile **Chinese** top political advisors have emphasized greatly on the need to enhance ties with **Taiwan**.

Geo-strategic Front: A Communist Party-backed **Chinese** newspaper has quickly refuted a top **Indian** scientist's claims that **India's** ballistic missile defense technology is superior to that of **China**. It further declared **India** to be 10-15 years far from **China** in terms of technology.

China has reiterated its call for diplomatic efforts to resolve the **Iranian** nuclear issue, urging all parties to move toward a negotiated solution to the long-standing issue.

Meanwhile **China** has been putting enormous effort to boost ties with **Britain, Poland, African** countries, **North Korea, Bangladesh, Russia, and Australia**. **China** has also called upon the nations of the world to collect more aid and funds for **Afghanistan**.

China and the US have engaged in talks to sort out irritant factors between the two countries. In the meantime chances of **Google's** closure in **China** have further increased.

Economic Front: **Chinese** fiscal revenues have increased almost 33% in first two months of the year. Meanwhile **China** has promised to make institutional arrangements to give national treatment to foreign investors. The **Chinese PM** has also expressed serious concern regarding instability of the US dollar and its likely impact on **Chinese** assets.

China has emerged as **Iran's** top economic partner, investing heavily in the energy sector and filling the gaps left by Western firms forced out by international sanctions. Many economists think that **China's** efforts of switching economic growth pattern would help to make an overall more stable world economy.

A record 51 percent of **Chinese** depositors have regarded prices of consumer goods as "unacceptably high. All the while **China** has voiced its support for the liberalization of global trade and opposition to trade protectionism as a means to economic recovery in the world at large. The threat of inflation to **China's** economy has been regarded as less worrisome compared with asset bubble by **Chinese** economists.

Social Front: Almost all of the 25,100 tonnes of defective milk powder seized in the 2008 toxic baby food probe had been incinerated.

China's current severe drought could aggravate inflation, driving commodity prices even higher. Meanwhile a **Chinese** scholar has warned that radical urbanization might harm farmers' welfare and create "urban slums."

All the while representatives of 46 cities that boast the best sceneries in **China** gathered to launch an alliance to boost exchanges and cooperate more on promotion and marketing.

At the regional front, Maritime police authorities in **Shanghai** and the eastern China provinces of **Jiangsu and Zhejiang** have launched a joint anti-terror exercise in the run-up to the **Shanghai World Expo**.

Hong Kong & Macau: **Hong Kong** seems to be heading towards democracy and economic growth. At economic front decline in **Hong Kong's** stock exchange, drop in jobless rate and improvement in its exports has been observed.

Meanwhile Macao has enhanced ties with **Taiwan**. §

Zone 2- Africa:

POLITICS OF SECURITY AND CONFLICT ISSUES

West Africa: The African Union has put sanctions on **Madagascar's** leader Andry Rajoelina, after he failed to meet a deadline to set up a unity government.



MADAGASCAR LEADER ANDRY RAJOELINA

In **Ghana** last week a high-powered government delegation met with the Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II as efforts to calm the mounting tension, following a recent chieftaincy row, between the Asante Kingdom and the Techimanhene gathered momentum.

Last week following a bomb threat issued through an email by *The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND)*, an explosion was reported at a government building hosting amnesty talks in the southern **Nigeria** oil town of Warri. Attacks by militant groups have slashed **Nigeria's** oil production by around a quarter from 2006 levels, allowing **Angola** to overtake it as Africa's biggest oil producer.

Nigerian Acting President Goodluck Jonathan dissolves the Federal Executive Council (FEC) last week as part of efforts to rejuvenate his government. Meanwhile Jonathan restated the administration's determination to ensure electoral integrity in the country in 2011.

Last week **Libyan** President Muammar Ghaddafi in a speech to African student in Tripoli, opined that the conflict between Christians and Muslims in **Nigeria** may be solved by division of the country into two nations. As an example he described the partition of India as a “historic, radical solution” which saved the lives of “millions of Hindus and Muslims”. **Nigeria** has recalled its ambassador to **Libya** while terming its leader’s statement as ‘irresponsible’.

Meanwhile the **Nigerian** parliament passed a motion last week urging the government to order an investigation by the African Union into whether **Libya** was supplying "infiltrators" to destabilize the country.

According to a **Gambian** Justice Ministry statement a group of senior military officials and businessmen have been charged with trying to overthrow **Gambian** President Yahya Jammeh.

In **Guinea**, interim military leader General Sekouba Konate has said he will not run in upcoming June presidential elections adding that leading members of the transitional government cannot stand in the June 27 elections. International pressure is believed to have precipitated the decision.

Last week two **Senegalese** soldiers were killed and two others injured during a clash with suspected separatist rebels in the southern province of Casamance, one of the country's top tourist zones.

Togo's Constitutional Court last week confirmed the re-election of *President Faure Gnassingbe* in the March 4 polls, whose provisional results were contested by the opposition. As a reaction Thousands of opposition supporters took to the streets of **Togo's** capital to protest against the re-election.

South Africa: **South African** President Jacob Zuma has survived a vote of no-confidence called by opposition parties on fathering of love child by him. The vote - the first such move since the ANC came to power in 1994 - was defeated by 241 votes to 84 with eight abstentions.

Meanwhile **South African** leader Zuma met **Zimbabwean** President Robert Mugabe last week in a fresh bid to resolve a decade-long political crisis that has contributed to economic ruin in **Zimbabwe**. Following the meeting **Zimbabwe's** leaders have agreed to a "package of measures" to help rescue its fragile unity government

The African Union has put sanctions on **Madagascar's** leader Andry Rajoelina, after he failed to meet a deadline to set up a unity government. Mr Rajoelina and 108 of his backers will face travel restrictions and have any foreign assets frozen. In reaction Rajoelina has rowed back on concessions made to political rivals in power-sharing talks last year.



Central Africa: A U.S. Military Delegation including twelve students from Navy, Marine and Air force visited **Rwanda** last week in a bid to learn from the country’s ‘institutional development’.

Recent amendment to the **Rwandan** constitution include the authentic interpretation of law is now to be done by the Supreme Court unlike the previous arrangement where it was done by the Parliament. The current constitution has so far been amended three times since its official adoption in 2003.

The leader of the *Federal Republican Forces* (FRF) rebel group in the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, while accusing the national army of attacking FRF positions, has said that his group will continue its offensive against the national army. Meanwhile reportedly at least 11 civilians and eight troops have died in attacks by **Ugandan LRA** rebels in the northeast of **Democratic Republic of Congo** (DRC).

François Bozizé, President of the **Central African Republic**, has announced his candidacy at the upcoming 25 April presidential elections. Meanwhile several opposition groups have announced to boycott the polls.

President Fradique de Menezes of **São Toméand Príncipe**, having failed to follow the original election schedule, has decreed that local and legislative elections will be held in July and August.

The runner-up to **Gabon's** 2009 presidential polls last week warned that the "general discontent" with President *Ali Bongo* within the year could lead to a "**Niger-like** coup." President Ali Bongo, who "inherited" the presidency from his father in 2009, now also followed late Omar Bongo's footsteps as freshly elected leader of the ruling *Gabonese Democratic Party* (PDG).

HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL ISSUES IN DOMESTIC POLITICS

West Africa: A migration profile of **Cameroon** released last week by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) shows that current migration flows continues to be mostly internal from the countryside to the cities, with increasing numbers of skilled and unskilled **Cameroonians** emigrating to neighboring countries and beyond to Europe and to the United States.

According to reporters At least 55 children have died of malnutrition in **Niger** since the beginning of this year out of 45 525 cases recorded. According to the Niger's military leadership the country needs \$123 million in international aid to combat the risk of food shortages this year. The junta, having announced that its members are not eligible for elections, has earned approval for breaking from the policy of deposed President Mamadou Tandja by publicly addressing the risk of famine.



Meanwhile a recent journalistic piece revealed that forced child labour in

Côte d'Ivoire's cocoa industry continues to be rampant.

Last week in **Sierra Leone** at least 200 people were killed when a trench collapsed at an unofficial gold mine.

South Africa: According to a survey in 2009 reported by (IRIN) (conducted with more than 1,000 citizens and 200 policy-makers, opinion leaders, media and business people in **Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania** and **Uganda**) *God*, not global emissions, is to blame for climate change.

Reports have voiced fears of a flare-up of violent **South African** protests that could escalate ahead of the soccer World Cup as the country's angry poor press their demands for better housing and jobs.

Central Africa: According to aid workers a farming ban imposed on **Rwandan** refugees in southwestern **Uganda** is raising concerns for their food security, while proposed cash transfers, it is feared, could boost both food prices and theft.

Insecurity and poor access are hampering efforts to aid 114,000 refugees in **northern Republic of Congo**. A heavy militia and insurgent presence on the Ubangui River is complicating aid worker efforts.

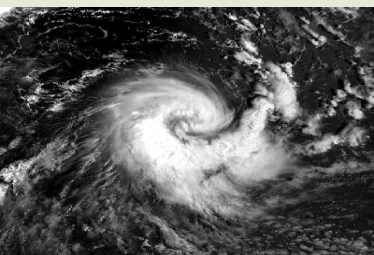
The *International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda ICTR* having requested **Kenya** to produce all relevant information pertaining to the Genocide fugitive Felicien Kabuga, has complained of unsatisfactory level of cooperation.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND DOMESTIC POLITICS

West Africa: The US\$ 2.4 million UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) project funded by Germany has helped farmers in **Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ghana, Senegal** and **Sierra Leone** to cater to a growing organic food market.

A study conducted by Action Aid **Ghana** (AAG) and FoodSPAN indicates that the absence of comprehensive policy on biofuel production in the country is adversely affecting food security, environment and human rights in the affected communities.

Meanwhile Dr.Constance Bart-Plange, Programme Manager of Malaria Control Programme, **Ghana**, has called on the private sector to assist in bridging the gap of 6.4 million bed nets.



Recent report compiled by the Joint Monitoring Project (JMP) and WaterAid International, **Nigeria** has over 75 million and 98 million **Nigerians** lack access to quality water and sanitation respectively.

South Africa: United Nations aid workers in eastern **Madagascar** are helping local officials mount relief efforts in the wake of *Tropical Storm Hubert*, which has killed

dozens of people and left an estimated 11,000 others homeless.

Meanwhile according to aid agencies Cholera has claimed the lives of over 40 people in **Mozambique** and ongoing flooding throughout the central and northern parts of the country could "aggravate" the problem. Eleven people have died of cholera in **Zambia** since the outbreak of the disease at the onset of rainy season in late 2009. Also officials reported at least 20 casualties following floods in **Angola** and neighboring **Zambia**.

Zimbabwe's food security has improved but is still "precarious" and "vulnerable to sudden shocks", according to the latest update by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

Malawi's government has announcing plans to more than double the number of people receiving antiretroviral (ARV) drugs to half a million by the end of 2010.

POLITICAL ECONOMY

West Africa: In **Ghana** some farmers in the Ahanta West District have appealed for governmental support towards the payment of compensation for lands acquired for oil-related projects.

Ghana's Western neighbor **Ivory Coast** is reportedly laying claims to portions of the huge oil wealth in the deep waters of the Western Region. **Ghana** has begun an urgent move to pass a new law that seeks to establish the *Ghana Boundary Commission* to undertake negotiations to determine and demarcate **Ghana's** land boundaries and de-limit Ghana's maritime boundaries. §

Zone 3- Euro-America: *Transatlantic Community*



WESTERN EUROPE

Britain's Labour government was boosted last week by news that unemployment fell in February at the fastest pace in over 12 years, in a fresh sign of recovery ahead of expected May elections.

Greek President Karolos Papoulias was sworn-in on March 12th for a second term during an inauguration ceremony in parliament.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has said that there needs to be a mechanism to expel countries from the eurozone if they persistently break its financial rules. She reiterated that Germany is not planning to give "rash" financial support to **Greece**. Meanwhile in a recent meeting of Euro group finance ministers decided to withhold financial assistance for **Greece** at present. However mechanisms to aid short term assistance are still being considered.

In **Greece**, taxi drivers and gas station owners staged a 24-hour strike last week against planned reforms that will oblige them to issue VAT receipts to customers. New jobless figures show the unemployment rate in the fourth quarter of 2009 climbed to 10.3%, compared to 7.9% a year earlier.

Dublin Archbishop Diarmuid Martin declared last week that his Catholic colleagues in **Ireland** must tell "the entire truth" about their decades of covering up child abuse in the priesthood. Meanwhile Angela Merkel has the sex abuse scandals in **Germany**, which Pope Benedict XVI has failed to address hence far, a major challenge.

A major reorganization of allied forces in Afghanistan is expected to centralize both American and other foreign troops under the direct command of Gen. Stanley McChrystal, the senior U.S. and NATO commander.

CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

According to the **Bulgarian** parliamentary speaker the possible deployment of elements of the US-missile defence shield has not yet been discussed by parliament or by the government in Sofia. Meanwhile **Bulgarian** Parliament unanimously adopted a bill last week to ban Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) cultivation for scientific and commercial reasons.

Serbia President Boris Tadic has said that **Serbia** would not object to the extradition of former **Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)** presidency member Ejup Ganic to Sarajevo, stressing the most important thing is for Ganic to stand trial.

According to APP, a **Polish** M-28 aircraft, which took off from Kos island of **Greece**, violated **Turkish** air space earlier this month. The incident has further strained relations between the two countries.

Polish opposition accused Prime Minister Donald Tusk's team in parliament of protracting **Poland's** dependence on **Russian** gas by sealing a long term contract with Russia's gas distributor GAZPROM.

The **European Commission** on 18 March 2010 sent reasoned opinions, the final stage before a case is referred to the European Court of Justice, to **Austria, Belgium** and **Poland** after they failed to communicate National Legislation that aims

to implement EU rules against gender discrimination in employment. Reasoned opinion have also been sent to the **Czech Republic** and **Greece** as a result of the countries failing to reschedule EU legislation setting procedures for safety checks for EU and third country aircraft using their airports.

The president of **Slovakia** has vetoed a controversial patriotism law passed recently by parliament. The law among other things would have required schools to play the **Slovak** national anthem every Monday.

Pre-election rallies in **Hungary** last week reflected a marked shift to the right after eight years of socialist government. A crowd of tens of thousands greeted the opposition leader of the centre-right party FIDESZ.

Polish-Belarusian consultations on the situation of the Union of Poles in Belarus begin last week, after accusations that Lukashenko's regime has persecuted the minority organization. The EU has already warned Belarus against harassment of the Union of Poles or risk losing financial aid packages.

In the backdrop of an IMF mission arriving in **Ukraine** the country's Communist Party has slammed government plans to accept a new loan from the US-dominated International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization and the World Bank.

Latvia's right-wing People's Party pulled out from the ruling coalition as protest on unpopular tax rises and drastic cuts in public welfare sector. It recalled its five ministers from the government and moved into the parliamentary opposition after Prime Minister Valdis Dombrovskis refused to back the party's economic-rescue plan.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton met with Prime Minister Vladimir Putin last week and pledged to enhance cooperation with Russia in trade and sort out strategies for the Russian entry to WTO. Also at the invitation of **Russian PM**, Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping arrived in **Russia** last week for a five-day official visit. Russia is the first leg of Xi's four-nation Europe tour, which will also take him to **Belarus, Finland** and **Sweden**.

According to statistics **Poland's** consumer inflation was lower than expected in February, strengthening the case for keeping interest rates unchanged. Meanwhile according to officials the **Czech Republic** may be able to adopt the euro in 2015, provided it cuts its Budget deficit by EU standards.

Ratings agency Moody's has played down the scope of political tensions in **Latvia**, saying they had no implication for credit quality. Moody's is the only ratings agency to have kept **Latvia** at an investment grade, albeit it's lowest level of Baa3.

A **Polish** court ruled last week that allegations in the 2009 biography of former President "*Lech Walesa: The Idea and History*" by Pawel Zyzak alleging that Walesa served as a communist informant were slanderous.

According to a report from human rights watchdogs Amnesty international and the Omega Research Foundation, several EU countries including **Spain, Germany, Hungary** and the **Czech Republic** buy and sell equipment used in torture despite a 2006 EU law against the trade.

Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich has proposed to hold the joint military parade of the *Ukrainian Navy* and *Russia's Black Sea Fleet* in Sevastopol on May 9 to celebrate the 65th anniversary of V-Day.

RUSSIA

Thousands of **Russians** took to the streets in rallies across the country in a protest about falling living standards, unemployment, local issues and government policies. "A Day of Anger" was organized by a coalition of opposition groups: the Communist Party, the Solidarity movement and human rights groups.

Amidst agitation parliamentary election was held last week in eight territories of the **Russian** Federation; all the four parties represented in the State Duma - *United Russia, KPRF, LDPR* and *Just Russian* parties, will have their representatives in these legislatures. In the vote **Russian** Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's party easily won control of all eight regional parliaments, but its support was down significantly in seven compared with 2007 parliamentary elections. **Russian** opposition parties expressed satisfaction with the results of Sunday's regional legislative elections as seen a popularity test for the pro-Kremlin United Russia party.

Meanwhile the Prime Minister won support on the domestic turf to build a dozen ultrasafe nuclear reactors in *India*, part of more than \$10 billion in deals in energy, arms, telecoms and other cooperation signed during his visit last week.

According to Valery Kononalyuk, who heads the *Ukrainian* parliament's commission for investigating illegal weapon supplies **Russia** has terminated a number of armament projects with **Ukraine** in the wake of supplies of **Ukrainian** weapons to **Georgia**.

Last week Medvedev, Obama agreed to discuss concrete dates for a new strategic arms reduction treaty START signing.

Russia has condemned as "irresponsible and immoral" a **Georgian** TV hoax about a Russian invasion. Panic was sparked in Georgia after the Imedi TV station broadcast news that Russian tanks had invaded the capital and the country's president was dead.

A total of \$411 million flowed into **Russian** funds over the week ending March 11, the



highest level since October, far outstripping investment flows into **Russia's** BRIC peers, according to fund tracker EPFR Global. Meanwhile Alexandra Wrage, whose non-profit organization TRACE International advises firms on how to avoid bribery, told Reuters the "rampant endemic" corruption in Russia was much worse than in other big emerging economies.

The **Russian** Foreign Ministry indignantly dismissed U.S. criticism of Russia's human rights record last week, saying the United States was guilty of its own abuses from Afghanistan to "the streets of America."

At least 69 people have been arrested in a crackdown on the **Russian** mafia in several European countries.

According to a Federal Security Service spokesman 20 members of the radical Islamic organization *Tablighi Jamaat* have been arrested in Chita, *Siberia*. Many countries, including Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan have already banned the movement, which was outlawed in Russia in 2009, after the Supreme Court ruled that the organization sought to destroy the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation, discriminated against **Russian** citizens, and gave support to international terrorist organizations.

According to Reuters report, the jobless rate in **Russia** fell by nearly 400,000 last month, but the economy contracted because (1) the investment continued to fall and (2) growth in retail sales and disposable incomes was very slow.

Meanwhile President Dmitry Medvedev announced last week that **Russia** would build a high-tech hub at Skolkovo, near Moscow to encourage modernization of the economy and reduce its dependence on oil and gas. The centre will be designed to develop five priority sectors — energy, IT, telecommunications, bio-medical and atomic technologies.

US/CANADA

Last week the Senate Homeland Security subcommittee heard testimony from top federal officials about growing corruption of U.S. law enforcement along the **U.S/Mexican** border.

US Companies that hire unemployed workers are to get a temporary payroll tax holiday under a bill that won final congressional approval last week. Optimistic estimates predict the tax break could generate perhaps 250,000 jobs through the end of the year, but that would be just a tiny fraction of the 8.4 million jobs lost since the start of the recession.

According to a top White House official *Israel's* announcement of plans to build 1,600 settler homes in east Jerusalem was not only an "insult" to the **United States** but "destructive" of the Middle East peace process. Meanwhile Secretary of State Hillary Clinton while saying that Israel must prove it is committed to the peace process brushed aside suggestions that relations with Israel are in crisis.



LATIN AMERICA

Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva was in the Middle East last week, seeking to bring a fresh outlook to the peace process on a trip to Israel, the Palestinian territories and Jordan.

Meanwhile *Israel's* foreign minister confirmed last week that he boycotted meetings with the visiting **Brazilian** president; Lieberman said he was upset at Silva's decision not to visit late Zionist leader Theodor Herzl's grave, especially while agreeing to lay a wreath at the tomb of late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

According to a Human Rights Commission's report since deployment of **Mexico's** troops combating drug trafficking since December 2006, there has been a dramatic increase in complaints of military abuse. From 2007 to the end of 2009, **Mexico's** National Human Rights Commission received 3,388 complaints of human rights violations by the military. Of these, it has already concluded that in at least 38 cases the military was in fact responsible for abuses.

Meanwhile three people with ties to the American consulate were killed in a drug-plagued **Mexican** city. President Barack Obama expressed outrage over the killings, and **Mexican** President Felipe Calderon promised a swift investigation. The number of U.S. citizens killed in **Mexico** has more than doubled to 78 in 2009 from 37 in 2007, according to the U.S. State Department's annual count.

Spanish Deputy Prime Minister María Teresa Fernández de la Vega said last week that Spain has the support of **Venezuela** in the fight against the armed Basque separatist group ETA, as it occurs with other countries like France or Portugal.

José Mujica, the president of **Uruguay**, has said that he wants to help improve relations between **Venezuela** and **Colombia** and is willing to "talk to everybody."

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko offered to help **Venezuela** strengthen its military, while saying last week that President Hugo Chavez's government should not have to worry about foreign threats.

The **Venezuelan** government plans to increase its fuel consumption by a third in 2010 to fuel thermoelectric plants with which President Hugo Chávez hopes to overcome the energy crisis. §

