



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.

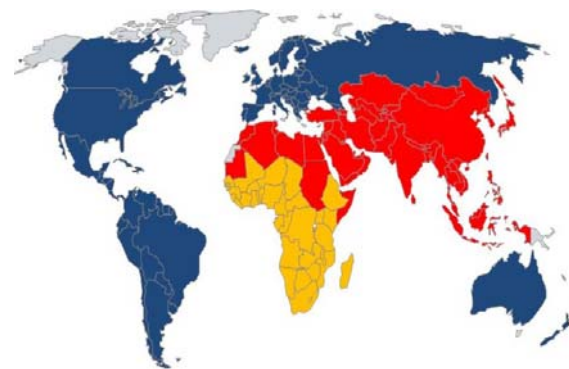
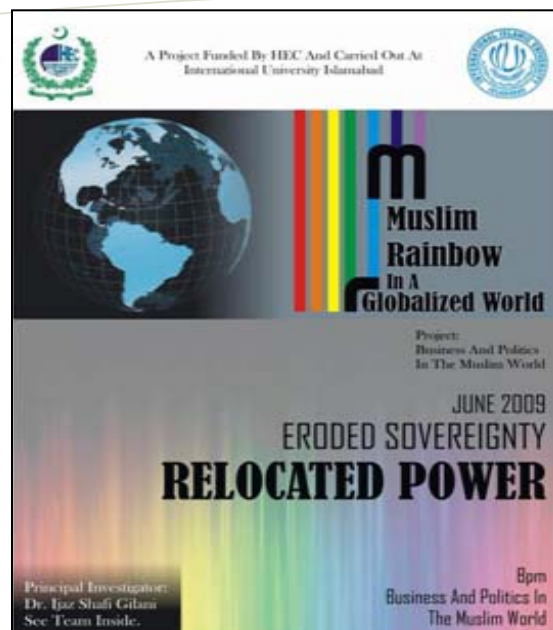
Why should one add another e-letter to many similar exercises already underway? We have pondered this question and here is what we believe to be our possible contribution or *Competitive Advantage*.

- ◆ 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 '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.



This week's report consists of **24** surveys. **2** of these are multi-country surveys while the rest are national surveys.

Week # 116- Dated April 18-24, 2010-*Gallopedia Highlights*

Philippines Democratic Credentials



After gaining independence in the wake of the Second World War, the Philippines adopted U.S.-style democracy. With elections scheduled for **May 10** this year, polling organizations have been tracking approval ratings of candidates in the country. According to a poll by *Pulse Asia* the Liberal Party (PLP) could gain control of the two highest political offices in the Philippines garnering **37%** of the votes for PLP presidential nominee **Benigno Aquino III**. **Senator Manuel Villar** of the Nacionalista Party (PNP) is second with **25%**, followed by former president **Joseph Estrada** of the Force of the Filipino Masses (PMP) with **18%**.

Given the competitive nature of political activity, the multiplicity of representation and active public campaigns, many would deem the *Philippines* political system as exuding healthy signs of democratic maturity. However many believe the country is still infested by clan-politics and election-related violence.

Aquino III is the son of former president **Corazon Aquino**, the widow of murdered opposition leader **Benigno Aquino**, who came to power through a series of massive demonstrations known as "People Power", toppling the regime of democratic ruler turned Dictator, **Ferdinand Marcos**. *Corazon* remained an extremely popular figure in the country, until her death in August 2009 following which her son *Aquino III* officially launched his bid as a Liberal Party (PLP) candidate.

Arroyo herself is the daughter of former *Philippine* President **Diosdado Macapagal**. She was elected to the vice presidency under *President Joseph Estrada* in 2001, despite having run on an opposing ticket. Following corruption allegations against the president, *Arroyo* resigned and joined the growing opposition. She was elected to a full six-year presidential term in the controversial *May 2004 Philippine elections*. At present the second longest serving president *Arroyo* is constitutionally barred from seeking a reelection.

A nation with a turbulent political history, the *Philippines* has weathered martial law, coup attempts, emergency impositions, political assassinations and election violence.

The first martial law was imposed in the post colonial state in September 1972 under the 10th President **Ferdinand E. Marcos**, widely deemed as a ploy to prolong his reign beyond the term limit imposed by law.

Meanwhile despite her popularity **Maria Corazon** had to face a series of nine coup attempts against her administration during her tenure.

There were also rumors following *President Arroyo's* controversial election regarding plans to impose martial law to put an end to military coup plots, general civilian dissatisfaction, and criticism of the legitimacy of her presidency. Instead, a "State of National Emergency" was imposed which lasted from February 24, 2006 until March 3 of the same year.

Following the election-related massacre of 57 people on November 23, 2009 in **Maguindanao**, President *Gloria Arroyo* imposed martial law in the southern province. **Andal Ampatuan Jr.**, a local mayor and the alleged mastermind of the massacre, belongs to the powerful **Ampatuan clan**, *Arroyo's* major ally in *Mindanao*. Meanwhile some Opponents accuse President *Arroyo* of fomenting a political crisis in the *Philippines* to discredit the electoral process and continue to rule, even though the constitution prohibits continuation beyond one 6 year presidential term.

Violence in the run-up to elections is not uncommon in the country. The *Maguindanao* massacre, however, was deemed the worst politically motivated violence in recent *Philippine* history. At present despite a state of *Red Alert* in the country, the highest security level, with all military and police personnel on constant stand-by, reportedly election related violence continues. Police figures released on April 26 showed that 27 people, including city councilors, village councilors, village leaders and common people were killed and 37 people were injured between Jan. 10, when election campaigns started, and April 25.

However the *Philippine* nation continues to tout 'democratic governance' and seems steady on the path of *popular voting*. One however questions whether the political institutions have acquired the requisite degree of stability in order to override the effects of popular agency in the political arena. *At what stage of maturity should one deem the Philippine political systems? §*

Continued...

Polling Data

Of the people in this list, for whom would you vote for as president of the Philippines if the elections of 2010 were held today and they were presidential candidates?

	Mar. 2010	Feb. 2010	Jan. 2010
Benigno Aquino III	37%	36%	37%
Manuel Villar	25%	29%	35%
Joseph Estrada	18%	18%	12%
Gilberto Teodoro	7%	7%	5%
Eddie Villanueva	2%	2%	2%
Richard Gordon	2%	1%	1%
Other / None / Undecided	9%	7%	8%

If the coming 2010 elections were held today, whom would you vote for as vice-president?

	Mar. 2010	Feb. 2010	Jan. 2010
Mar Roxas	43%	43%	47%
Loren Legarda	23%	27%	28%
Jejomar Binay	19%	15%	13%
Bayani Fernando	3%	4%	2%
Eduardo Manzano	2%	2%	2%
Perfecto Yasay	1%	1%	1%
Jose Sonza	0.5%	1%	0.2%
Dominador Chipeco	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Undecided / Other	9%	7%	7%

Source: Pulse Asia

Methodology: Face-to-face interviews with 3,000 Filipino adults, conducted from Mar. 21 to Mar. 28, 2010. Margin of error is 2 per cent.



Zone 1- ASIA

MIDDLE EAST

Palestinians Reject Land Exchange as Part of Deal

Residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip are opposed to the creation of a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders with some land exchange as part of a final solution to the current impasse with Israel, according to a poll by An-Najah National University. 66.7 per cent of respondents reject this notion.

April 21, 2010

Israelis Reject Construction Freeze in Jerusalem

A large proportion of adults in Israel would reject a prospective demand by U.S. president Barack Obama, according to a poll by Maagar Mochot. 70 per cent of respondents think Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu should not freeze construction in Jerusalem for an unlimited period of time.

April 17, 2010

SOUTHEAST ASIA

Aquino Extends Lead in the Philippines

Liberal Party (PLP) presidential nominee Benigno Aquino III remains the frontrunner in the Philippines, according to a poll by Social Weather Stations. 37 per cent of respondents would vote for Aquino in next month's election.

April 22, 2010

Zone 3- EURO-AMERICAS

EAST EUROPE

Russians Flatly Reject Negotiating with Terrorists

Many adults in Russia are opposed to any kind of negotiation with terrorists, according to a poll by the Russian Public Opinion Research Center. 75 per cent of respondents believe that terrorism can only be eradicated by defeating the terrorists.

April 21, 2010

Communists Gain Momentum in Czech Republic

The Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSCM) has increased its standing in the Czech Republic as a legislative ballot nears, according to a poll by Median. 16.8 per cent of respondents would vote for the Communists, up four points since February.

Apr 19, 2010

WEST EUROPE

Liberal Democrats Slightly Ahead in Britain

The Liberal Democrats have become the most popular political party in Britain, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 33 per cent of respondents would support the Lib-Dems in next month's General Election.

April 22, 2010

Liberal Democrats Tie Conservatives in Britain

The Conservative Party and the Liberal Democrats are tied as Britons ponder their choices in next month's General Election, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 32 per cent of respondents would support the Tories, while 32 per cent would back the Lib-Dems.

April 20, 2010

Spaniards Reject Government's Abortion Law

People in Spain are not satisfied with their government's new pregnancy termination regulations, according to a poll by NC Report published in La Razón. 54.2 per cent of respondents oppose the Abortion Law.

Apr 18, 2010

NORTH AMERICA

Bush Still Gets More Blame for Economy Than Obama

More than a year into Barack Obama's presidency, Americans are more likely to say George W. Bush is responsible for today's economic problems than they are to say Obama is responsible. Gallup shows a significant uptick since last July in the percentage of Americans blaming Obama at least a moderate amount (from 32% to 50%), but little decrease (from 80% to 75%) in the percentage blaming

Bush.

April 21, 2010

On 40th Earth Day, Image of Green Movement Still Positive

Nineteen percent of Americans say they are an active participant in the environmental movement, while 42% are sympathetic, but not active. The combined active/sympathetic group has declined some since Gallup first measured this in 2000, but, at 61%, it remains high. Currently, 28% are neutral and 10% are unsympathetic.

April 22, 2010

At 40, Environmental Movement Endures, With Less Consensus

A survey at the eve of Earth Day shows that the Environmental Movement have though survived through the 40 years long period but there has been decline in public enthusiasm for this concern.

April 22, 2010

Party Affiliation Gap in U.S. Narrowest Since 2005

The advantage in public support the Democratic Party built up during the latter part of the Bush administration and the early part of the Obama administration has all but disappeared. During the first quarter of 2010, 46% of Americans identified as Democrats or leaned Democratic, while 45% identified as or leaned Republican.

April 23, 2010

One in Five Americans Fear Job Loss in Next 12 Months

Even as Gallup's underemployment measure shows that more people are getting full-time jobs, 21% of American workers think it is "very" or "fairly" likely that they will lose their jobs or be laid off during the next 12 months.



That is nearly twice the 12% pre-recession level of 2007 and about the same as the 19% recorded in late 1982, during another deep recession.

April 23, 2010

Half of Americans Support Afghanistan Mission

Half of adults in the United States are in favour of the country's current military engagement in Afghanistan, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 51 per cent of respondents support the mission involving American soldiers, down three points since February.

April 23, 2010

Americans Endorse Racial Profiling at Airports

Many adults in the United States support security personnel relying on a passenger's racial or religious characteristics to determine whether this passenger requires a more thorough review, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 51 per cent of respondents agree with this notion, while 39 per cent disagree.

Apr 19, 2010

Only Two-in-Five Canadians Back Afghan Mission

Public support for the military mission in Afghanistan has dropped in Canada, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 39 per cent of respondents support the operation involving Canadian soldiers, down eight points since February.

April 24, 2010

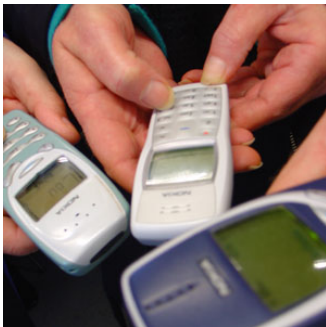
Canadian Majority Would Legalize Marijuana

Many adults in Canada believe marijuana should be legalized, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 53 per cent of respondents agree with this idea.

Apr 18, 2010

Teens, Cell Phones and Texting

Cell-phone texting has become the preferred channel of basic communication between teens and their friends, with cell calling a close second. Some 75% of 12-17 year-olds now own cell phones, up from 45% in 2004. Those phones have become



indispensable tools in teen communication patterns. Fully 72% of all teens² -- or 88% of teen cell phone users -- are text-messagers. That is a sharp rise from the 51% of teens who were texters in 2006. More than half of teens (54%) are daily texters.

April 20, 2010

Americans Remain Down About Their Financial Situations

Americans' evaluations of their current financial situations remain low, and the 41% who describe their personal financial situations as excellent or good is the lowest Gallup has measured in the past decade.

April 22, 2010

Canadian Majority Would Legalize Marijuana

Many adults in Canada believe marijuana should be legalized, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 53 per cent of respondents agree with this idea.

April 18, 2010

LATIN AMERICA

Haitians Want Foreigners in Charge of Reconstruction

People in Haiti hold little confidence in their government to oversee rebuilding efforts, according to a poll by Oxfam International. 39.3 per cent of respondents want foreign governments to play the leadership role in the reconstruction process.

Apr 20, 2010

Rousseff Gains, Almost Ties Serra in Brazil

Brazil's presidential election will require a run-off, according to a poll by Instituto Sensus. 32.7 per cent of respondents would vote for Jose Serra of the Brazilian Party of Social Democracy (PSDB) in the ballot, while 32.4 per cent would support Dilma Rousseff of the ruling Workers' Party (PT).

April 24, 2010

MULTI-COUNTRY POLLS/ GLOBAL POLLS

Wage Inequality Rampant in Four Western Nations

People in Australia, Britain, Canada and the United States are keenly aware of wage inequality in their respective countries, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. About two-thirds respondents in the four nations think women and men are not paid the same salary when working the same job.

April 21, 2010

Global Views of United States Improve While Other Countries Decline

Global views of the United States have improved markedly over the last year while views of many countries have become more negative, according to the latest BBC World Service poll across 28 countries. For the first time since the BBC started tracking in 2005, views of the United States' influence in the world are now more positive than negative on average.

April 18, 2010- §



Zone 1- **Asia: Summary**

Asia, Middle East & North Africa

TURKEY

Political Front: **Turkish** PM held meeting with most prominent **Turkish** writers seeking their opinion regarding the amendments package. Meanwhile NGOs have extended their support for the package.

Dervis Eroglu has won the elections in **Turkish Cyprus** by getting **50 %** votes.

Geo-strategic front: A recent survey has indicated that **79%** of Turkish population has unfavorable opinion of the US.

Armenia has stopped the ratification Process of the Protocols which were held between **Armenia** and **Turkey** to normalize their relations. Meanwhile the **Turkish** Foreign Minister has paid visit to **Iraq** in order to assess post election situation there.

Serbia, **Spain** and **Turkey** held a meeting in **Belgrade** last week in which they shared the common vision to integrate the **Western Balkans** States into the European Union. Israel has decided to cut off arms sale to Turkey amidst their strained ties. Turkey has signed MoU with China meanwhile has also discussed areas of economic cooperation with Russia.

Economic Front: Despite the fact that **Turkey** has successfully come out of the impact of global economic crisis, high unemployment rate and inflation continue to plague the nation. Meanwhile **Turkish** Petroleum Corporation (TPAO) has invested 4 billion USD for oil exploration in Black Sea.

GCC

Geo-strategic Front: **GCC** Secretary General held a meeting with the **Russian** Deputy Foreign Minister during his visit to Moscow and discussed various areas of cooperation. He further discussed the **Iranian** nuclear issue reiterating his opposition to the military option.

Meanwhile **Saudi** King paid a visit to **Bahrain** and emphasized greatly the need to enhance bilateral ties.

Iran has called on the **United Arab Emirates** to resolve the "misunderstanding" over the three Gulf islands through dialogue. Foreign Minister of **UAE** however claimed that "an occupation of an Arab land is an occupation and not a misunderstanding and there is no difference between Israel's occupation of the Golan (Heights), south Lebanon, West Bank or Gaza and the Iranian occupation of the UAE islands."

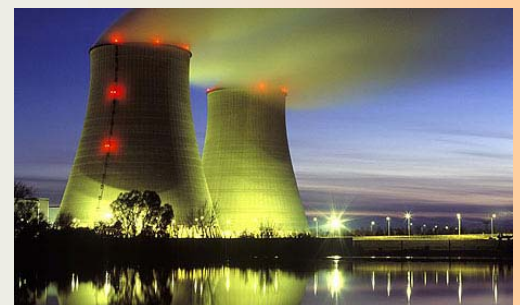
Oman and **Iran** have expressed keenness to further boost their deep-rooted historical ties. Meanwhile

Bahraini Deputy PM also held a meeting with **Iranian** Vice President.

France and **Kuwait** have opened the way for joint nuclear energy projects in the Gulf country.

Economic Front: The combined economy of the oil-rich **GCC** states grew **5.5%** last year. According to the annual report of the Gulf Organization for Industrial Consultancy (GOIC) the collective gross domestic product (GDP) of the region crossed the barrier of a trillion dollars in 2008, and reached \$ 1,086bn at the close of last year.

Qatar stood second in 2009 in the entire GCC region in terms of the



size of investment in industrial projects, accounting for **11.5 %** in total.

IRAN

Geo-strategic Front: **Iranian** authorities have deported some 15 illegal *Pakistani* immigrants and handed them over to the *Taftan* administration.

The US has expressed satisfaction over significant progress in negotiations on new sanctions against **Iran** over its nuclear program. All the while **Iranian** envoy to IAEA has claimed that his country would allow the International Agency to inspect its new enrichment site in *Natanz* in central Iran.

The massive war games conducted by the *Islamic Revolution Guards Corps* (IRGC) in the *Persian* Gulf showed that any enemy threats against the country will be reciprocated by **Iran's** powerful response.

An *Israeli* Deputy Minister has claimed that an **Iranian** nuclear scientist has asked for asylum in *Israel*.

Meanwhile the White House has expressed deep concern about the well-being of three *American* hikers who have been detained in **Iran** for nearly nine months.

Economic Front: **Iran's** self sufficiency in oil exploration has enabled the nation to bear sanctions.

Iran has granted a \$ 105 million loan to *Sri Lanka* for a rural electrification project. Meanwhile **Iran** and *Uganda* have signed three cooperation deals during President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad's visit to the country.

Social Front: **Iran** has granted immunity from prosecution to more than one hundred members of the *Jundallah* terrorist group.



AFGHANISTAN

Political Front: At least 29 militants, including two commanders, were killed in four days of intense fighting aimed at protecting supply routes through northern **Afghanistan**.

NATO forces shot dead four Afghan school students, claiming they

were *Taliban* militants. Later an apology was issued for killing unarmed *Afghanis*. Three Italian aid workers who were detained on suspicion of plotting to kill a provincial governor have been freed.

Taliban have started regular targeting of *U.S.* government contractors in southern **Afghanistan**. New data from the *US* government indicates that the number of American contractors killed in **Afghanistan** has increased by more than **100%**.

Meanwhile **Afghanistan** has started registering thousands of candidates for the country's parliamentary elections set to be held on September 18.

Geo-strategic Front: The *Pentagon* is making efforts to halt fertilizer shipments from *Pakistan* that are used to make bombs.

In a recent poll a majority of *UK* citizens support withdrawal of military troops from **Afghanistan**.

Economic Front: A newly-constructed textile factory, funded by the *US*, was inaugurated in *Jalalabad*. Meanwhile the **Afghan** business community has expressed high hopes regarding government's anti-corruption measures, foreign investments and marble industry.

Social front: Heavy rains and flood destroyed hundreds of houses in Northern **Afghanistan**. Meanwhile a moderate earthquake in Central and northern **Afghanistan** caused death of at least **7** people.

19 development schemes, benefiting thousands of residents, have been executed in northern *Jawzjan* province. While *US* funded schools and wards continue to work in **Afghanistan**.



CENTRAL ASIA

Political Front: An *Azerbaijani* opposition party having been denied permission to stage a protest in the city on April 25 is now set to hold a mass rally on May 15. Another party has demanded amendments to the election code, official observance of the right to free assembly, and transparency in ongoing talks on resolving the **Nagorno-Karabakh** conflict.

Interim authorities in **Kyrgyzstan** have declared legitimacy and hoped

Continued...



Tolekan Ismailova chairwoman of Kyrgyzstan's Central Election Commission has stepped down

for the end of conflict following the resignation and departure from the country of former President Bakiev. **Kyrgyzstan's** interim government has so far uncovered more than \$20 million in cash and gold belonging of ousted President *Bakiev* and members of his family in **Kyrgyz** banks. Meanwhile the interim government has announced to hold elections in October, after a referendum aimed at reducing the powers of the *president*.

The ousted President has claimed that he would not like to be the country's President any more but would offer his services for the stability of

Kyrgyzstan. On the other hand the newly appointed chairwoman of **Kyrgyzstan's** Central Election Commission has stepped down after just one day on the job amidst strong protests by common people.

Geo-strategic Front: The **Azerbaijani** Defense Ministry has canceled military computer exercises with U.S. forces that were scheduled for May.

Meanwhile the **Azerbaijan-Russia** group working on delimitation of the state borders has reached an agreement during recently held talks.

Pakistan has supported **Azerbaijan's** sovereignty and territorial integrity and denied Armenian position. The **Kazakh** Interior Ministry has tightened regulations for visitors from countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

Turkmen President has received Special Representative of the *UK* on international trade and investment.

Authorities in the eastern **Uzbek** city of Andijon have imposed stringent security measures on residents in the aftermath of last week's uprising that ousted **Kyrgyz** President Bakiev.

Economic Front: *Israel* has doubled its trade with **Azerbaijan** unlike other Central Asian Republics.

The largest outdoor market in the **Kyrgyz** capital, Bishkek, was closed last week due to disorder in the city's outskirts.

Meanwhile **Uzbekistan's** GDP has grown 7.6% in First Quarter of 2010.

Social Front: The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has asked Azeri authorities to release detained Journalist. Kazakhstan's population has exceeded 16 million people. Human Rights Watch has urged the interim authorities in Kyrgyzstan to open a probe into this month's violence that led to the ouster of President Bakiev. The Food Security Monitoring System of the World Food Program (WFP) has reported that overall food insecurity has slightly worsened in the first quarter of 2010, leaving over one-third of the rural population in Tajikistan food-insecure. The Ministry of Economy and Development and the Ministry of Communications of Turkmenistan have been instructed to create a unified system to introduce information and communication technologies into public administration.

EAST ASIA

Political Front: Regular elections in Indonesia have led many scholars to call it a model democracy in East Asia. Malaysian government has built high expectations with bi-elections in Hulu Selangor as the election result would be a referendum about Prime Minister's economic policies. MILF has promised to avoid violence in Southern part of Philippines during upcoming elections. Anti-regime protests continued for fifth week putting enormous pressure on the PM of Thailand.

Geo-strategic Front: Indonesia has offered to assist Thailand in resolving ongoing political turmoil there. Military ties between the US and Vietnam have grown remarkably during post Cold War period. Cambodian troops have withdrawn from disputed border of Thailand after exchange of fire between troops of both sides.

Economic Front: Indonesian government has started thinking to limit the inflow of foreign capital as it might cause a domestic stock bubble in a market dominated by overseas buyers. Political crisis in Thailand has not created an adverse impact on its economic ties with Malaysia. Meanwhile Malaysian economists have predicted high



Rioters ride on top of a car during unrest in the village of Mayevka, near Bishkek

economic growth this year. Despite political issues Thai exports have grown remarkably. Cambodia has observed 4% growth in agriculture due to favorable rain. Vietnam has started making various products in order to avoid reliance on other countries. Extensive tourism in Laos has caused 5% growth in country's GDP.

Social Front: A security think tank has asked Indonesian government to remain vigilant against extreme militants. Thailand has expressed serious concern regarding Muslims' uprising in Southern region. Malaria has been regarded as key health issue in Cambodia however people of Laos feel insecure because of increasing number of road accidents in the country.

SOUTH ASIA

Political Front: Nine members of Bangladesh's main opposition party have died and 30 others were injured when their speeding bus collided head-on with a truck on the way to a political rally. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been cleared of another graft case filed during the past BNP regime. Political parties have failed to build consensus over a constitution to run Nepal. Veteran politician Dissanayake Mudiyanalage Jayaratne took the oath of office as Sri Lanka's 20th prime minister on 21st April after the ruling party won a large parliamentary majority.

Geo-strategic Front: The ambassador of United States has urged India and Bangladesh to build close ties. The Bangladesh High Commission (HC) in Islamabad on Sunday celebrated the Bangla New Year – 1417.

Economic Front: Indian restrictions on cotton exports would probably affect Bangladeshi textile industry. Inflation has further increased in Bangladesh mainly due to increase in prices of food items. Improvement in Maldives' economy has been observed.

Social Front: Eighty-two tourists from Europe have so far cancelled their trip to Bhutan after Iceland's volcano eruption disrupting air traffic and forcing thousands of airlines to cancel their flights. Maldivian President has won a top environmental prize from the United Nations. §

Zone 2- Africa:

POLITICS OF SECURITY AND CONFLICT ISSUES

West Africa: In **Ghana** President John Evans Atta Mills has indicated that he will not be influenced by calls by some members of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) to dismiss some District Executives (DCEs) for alleged nonperformance.

In **Liberia** last week visiting US under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, William J. Burns, disclosed that the United States Government will provide US\$19.75 million this year to support the capacity of the *Liberia National Police* (LNP).

The **Cameroonian** Minister of State, Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation (MINATD), Marafa Hamidou Yaya

announced last week that Governors of the nation's 10 Regions will have to better coordinate and ensure the harmonious functioning of external government services that contribute to effective and efficient execution of the decentralization process in Local and City Councils.

A senior UN official said last week that **Guinea** requires continued support from the United Nations and its partners now that the West African country is preparing to transition from military rule to a civilian Government once elections scheduled for 27 June are held.

A *Dutch* court has overturned the acquittal of Mr. Kouwenhoven accused of supplying arms to **Liberia** during the presidency of war crimes suspect *Charles Taylor*, referring the case for a retrial. Meanwhile another defense witness has again contradicted Mr. Taylor's testimony regarding the whereabouts of **Sierra Leonean** rebel leader *Foday Sankoh* prior to the invasion of **Sierra Leone**.

South Africa: The rise of an organized poor people's movement in **South Africa's** most populous province,



H.E. PROF. JOHN EVANS ATTA MILLS
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA

KwaZulu-Natal, is being met with increasing hostility by the ruling *African National Congress* (ANC) government, which claims to be the legitimate representative of the poorest of the poor.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's controversial visit to **Zimbabwe** last week has been condemned by Mugabe's opponents as a meeting of despots which could further isolate Harare. Meanwhile **Zimbabwe's** President Robert Mugabe has backed *Iran's* controversial



nuclear programme and accused the West of seeking to punish the two countries for asserting their independence.

Security forces in **Madagascar** arrested 19 people last week on suspicion of plotting a coup, the latest in a series of plot rumors to hit the Indian Ocean Island's capital in the past few weeks.

Central Africa: In **Rwanda** Victoire Umuhoya Ingabire, the leader of the yet-to-be registered political party, *FDU-Inkingi*, was arrested last week accused of association with a terrorist group, propagating the Genocide Ideology, Revisionism and Ethnic Division. *Ingabire* has been granted bail on condition that she will report to the prosecution, once a week and stay within the boundaries of Kigali City.

Meanwhile the leader of **Rwanda's** opposition *United Democratic Forces* (UDF) has said that President Paul Kagame's government is determined to prevent her from participating in the upcoming election scheduled for August 9. President Kagame's government has often accused the *FDLR* of playing a part in the country's 1994 genocide.

Two of **Rwanda's** most senior army officials were arrested after a major shake-up in the military was announced by President Paul Kagame last week. Allegedly suspended due to serious charges of corruption and misuse of office, *Lt-Gen Muhire* was formerly the head of **Rwanda's** air force while *Maj-Gen Karenzi* was one of the country's highest ranking soldiers and a member of the military's ruling elite.

The top United Nations envoy in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** (DRC) has pledged to strengthen military presence in the northwestern province of Equateur to help the Government provide better protection for civilians following a deadly raid by rebels earlier this month on the regional capital.



President Kagame exercises tight control of the military

Heads of state from *the Central Africa Economic and Monetary Community* inaugurated a new regional parliament CEMAC but are facing problems since lack of fiscal coordination, uneven business and visa regulations hamper cooperation.

Gabon's opposition National Union party, uniting several major parties since March, has finally been recognized by authorities and can now function officially as a main opposition political party.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL ISSUES IN DOMESTIC POLITICS

West Africa: The 2009 US State Department Human Rights Report on **Liberia**, concluding pervasive corruption at 'all levels' of the government, has again come under attack, with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf describing it as "erroneous".

The Chairman of the Upper East Regional Inter-Sectoral Gender Network (*RISEGNET*) has called upon all Political parties to support more aspiring assemblywomen to contest the forthcoming District Assembly election scheduled for the third quarter of this year.

South Africa: Human Rights Watch has said in a recent report that **Zimbabwe's** power-sharing government has not carried out critical media reforms as promised under the country's September 2008 *Global Political Agreement*.

Central Africa: Last week *Canada's* Governor General, Michaëlle Jean, apologized on behalf of her government for the unresponsiveness and inaction of the international community in the lead up to, and during the 1994 **Rwandan** Genocide against the Tutsi.

Fighting in western provinces of the **Democratic Republic of Congo** has displaced more than 100,000 people. Some are seeking refuge across the border in **Congo-Brazzaville** where relief officials say they have only enough supplies to feed one-third of the refugees.

According to the UNHCR more than one third of recorded cases of rape, in the first three months of 2010, are in North and South Kivu provinces in eastern **DRC**, which hosts some 1.4 million internally displaced people.



Authorities are highly alarmed by the disturbing figures at an average of almost 14-assaults each day.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND DOMESTIC POLITICS

West Africa: A new strain of meningitis, strain NMX, also known simply as strain 'X', has broken out in **Burkina Faso**, where it caused just over half the new cases reported in the past week. Six of **Burkina Faso's** 13 regions are at epidemic level.

South Africa: The **Lesotho** Highlands Water Project will move into its second phase in 2010. The first phase has been praised as a shining example of trans-boundary water sharing in Africa, but community dissatisfaction may mean a rough ride for its extension.

Last week **SA** President Jacob Zuma launched a national campaign to test 15 million **South Africans** for HIV by June, 2011.

Central Africa: The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has warned that Countries in *West and Central Africa* have been hit by a measles outbreak affecting more than 22,000 children, with a shortage of resources for vaccination threatening to roll back progress on limitation child death in the region.

The third ordinary session of the conference of the *African Union* (AU) on youth has elected **Rwanda** to chair the Conference of Ministers in Charge of Youth (*COMMYIII*) for the next two years.



POLITICAL ECONOMY

West Africa: Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has asked the *Press Union of Liberia* (PUL), the umbrella organization of media entities and journalists in the country, to give comprehensive account of the US\$100,000 donated to the Union by her government.

Turkish Airlines is now to connect Accra, **Ghana** through *Lagos* during the summer season as part of its expansion policy in Africa. Meanwhile Pineapple producers in **Ghana** faced problems because of the lack of flights to Europe caused by volcanic ash. Also **Ghana** International Airlines (GIA) has pegged its revenue losses so far as a result of the *Icelandic* volcanic disruptions at a provisional figure of approximately US\$ 500,000.

Ghana's Tullow Oil PLC's shares fell as much as **3.3%** last week after the U.K.-listed company said it failed to find oil or gas at a test well off **Ghana's** coast. Meanwhile **Ghanaian** stocks rose to a seven-month high, the second-biggest gain worldwide, as investors bought stock in Standard Chartered Plc's local unit before its dividend deadline and SIC insurance declared a payout.

Also the Gross International Reserves position of the Bank of **Ghana** which increased to 3.2 billion dollars in December 2009 grew further by **4.4 %** in the first quarter of 2010 to 3.3 billion dollars.

The **Ghana** Chamber of Commerce and Industry is soon to start doing business with their *Iranian* counterparts according to a memorandum to this effect signed by a recent visiting delegation to *Iran*.

In **Cameroon** two projects piloted by the Ministries of Scientific Research and Innovation and that of Industries, Mines and Technological Development seek to modernize oil palm production in the country.

Dr. Fu Ziyang, Vice Minister of Commerce of the People's Republic of *China* led a delegation to visit

Liberia from April 22 to 25, 2010 as part of his five-nation (**Chad, Central Africa, Gabon, Liberia and Congo (Brazzaville)**) tour in Africa.

South Africa: The African Department Director at the International Monetary Fund has said that **Sub-Saharan Africa** is proving surprisingly resilient in emerging from the global financial crisis compared with previous downturns.

According to projections Foreigners will inject 13 billion rand into **South Africa's** economy during the World Cup, helping the soccer spectacular boost economic growth by **0.5 %** points.

According to stock exchange Chief Executive Emmanuel Munyuki controversial new policies to give black **Zimbabweans** majority stakes in foreign companies in the country have scared off investors from abroad. Meanwhile the controversial policy will reportedly begin in the key mining sector. Uncertainty over **South Africa's** land reform programme meant to hand over **30 %** of farm land to the country's black majority by 2014 has also slowed investment in its sugar sector.



According to **South Africa's** state-owned power utility *Eskom* the nation will face a power supply crunch between 2011-13 and 2018-24 unless more power plants than are planned are built.

Central Africa: According to the **Rwanda** Revenue Authority Government has recorded large sums of tax revenue from alcohol, and tobacco products. According to data from last year government collected Rwf952 million from wines and liquors and Rwf3 billion from cigarettes. §

Zone 3- Euro-America: *Transatlantic Community*

WESTERN EUROPE

Belgium may soon become the first European nation to outlaw the burqa and other Islamic garb even as **France** and the **Netherlands** are seen moving in the same direction.

Meanwhile earlier this month traffic police in **France** fined a Muslim woman for wearing Islamic face veil while driving. In the EU **France** is home to the largest Muslim population that comprises nearly **10%** of the **62** million **French** population.

In **Greece** Hundreds of thousands of state employees staged a 24-hour strike last week against harsh austerity measures the government has announced in a bid to end the financial crisis.

CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

A massive cloud of dangerous ash from an **Icelandic** volcano moved southward last week forcing many countries in the *Balkans* to close their airspace.

In **Albania** Lawmakers from the main opposition Socialist Party (SP) and their supporters staged a rally last week against the material that public operator TVSH is broadcasting. Meanwhile the political deadlock in the country regarding the disputed election last year continues.

On April 19th in **Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)** several thousand people attended the funeral of *Bosnian* Muslim wartime army commander *General Rasim Delic*. He was buried in Sarajevo with the highest military honors.

Meanwhile NATO foreign ministers agreed last week at an informal meeting in Tallinn to offer **Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)** a Membership Action Plan (MAP). The ministers, however, set conditions for implementing the MAP, including resolving the defence property issue.

A court in Zagreb sentenced the former head of **Croatia's** mission to the UN, Neven Jurica, to 18 months



in prison last week for embezzling more than 90,000 euros of state funds.

The EU representative for northern **Kosovo**, Italian Ambassador Michael Giffoni, has said that the EU will not recognize structures resulting from municipal elections organized by **Serbia**.

Meanwhile in **Macedonia** Police detained more than 30 doctors and officials of the *Pension and Disability Insurance Fund* for suspected fraud for allegedly diagnosing patients without disabilities to allow them to receive pensions.

Russia spokesman for the Foreign Ministry has voiced his government's alarm at the intentions behind the U.S. missile defense plan in Eastern Europe and its deployment of Patriot missiles in **Poland**.

Meanwhile **Poland's** Democratic Left Alliance party announced that Grzegorz Napieralski would be their presidential candidate in the upcoming early elections after their former candidate died in a plane crash on April 10 in *Russia*.

Acting President Bronislaw Komorowski set elections for June 20.

The President of the **Czech Republic** Vaclav Klaus has fiercely criticized **EU** officials for not turning out for president Lech Kaczynski's funeral. The only representative of the EU offices at the funeral was a **Polish** politician Jerzy Buzek, President of the European Parliament.

Hungary faced a second round of parliamentary elections last weekend. Fidesz won a resounding victory, promising an economically shocked public badly needed jobs and growth. Meanwhile the far-right Jobbik party surfaced as a political challenger, taking nearly **17 %** of the vote. Jobbik is openly anti-Semitic and anti-gypsy.

Kyrgyzstan's interim leader Roza Otunbayeva has condemned **Belarus'** decision to take in ousted *Kyrgyz* president Kurmanbek Bakiyev, warning that Bishkek would appeal to Interpol if he is not extradited.

Ukrainian Prime Minister Nikolai Azarov has been elected the chairman of the ruling Party of Regions. President Yanukovich quitted the Party of Regions on March 3, as the **Ukrainian** constitution did not allow the president to hold any ruling positions in public organizations.

The *Kremlin* has scored a major diplomatic victory, striking a deal that will allow **Russia's** Black Sea Fleet to stay in **Ukraine** for another thirty years, more than a quarter of a century after it was supposed to leave. *Russia* has agreed to give **Ukraine** multi-billion dollar discounts to the price it pays for *Russian* natural gas in return. The controversial deal means that the *Russian* fleet will no longer have to abandon its famous base in the city of Sevastopol in *Crimea* in 2017 as originally planned. Meanwhile the *US Secretary of State* Clinton has said that the decision by **Ukrainian** President Viktor Yanukovich should be seen as an attempt to balance his country's foreign policy, not a step away from the West towards *Russia*.

Latvia's right-wing government has slashed public-sector pay by an average of **31%** over the past two years in a bid to satisfy international financiers. The average salary for a ministerial worker plummeted from 1,136 lats (£1,392) in February 2008 to 786 lats (£963) in February 2009.

On the economic front according to an IMF forecast **Poland's** economic growth will reach **2.7 %** this year and will accelerate to **3.2 %** in 2011.

President of the **Poland-Nigeria** Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Chief Julius Ogunyemi, has urged the Federal Government to consider **Poland's** initiative of revamping the nation's power and steel sectors. The late president was considering the deployment of **Polish** technology towards the revamping of *Nigeria's* railway system.

Czech production of personal and light utility vehicles jumped by nearly a third in the first three months of 2010, showing a recovery in the export-reliant economy was gaining traction.

The government of **Slovak** Prime Minister Robert Fico, running for re-election in a June general election has pledged to bring the fiscal deficit back to the European Union's official limit of 3 percent in 2012 and reach a balanced budget later in 2015.

Ukraine hopes to secure a new \$12 billion lending program from



the International Monetary Fund for the next 30 months. The IMF had released around \$11 billion of a \$16.4 billion program to **Ukraine** before freezing lending in late 2009 after large spending increases were passed into law. The country badly needs to secure further lending to revive its economy after a 15% contraction last year.

The **Russian** government has placed two bonds worth 5.5 billion dollars on the international market for the first time since Moscow defaulted on domestic debts in 1998. Meanwhile **Russia's** economic development minister has said that the country's economy grew **0.6 %** in the first quarter this year, where the recovery has lasted for three consecutive quarters.

Cisco and Nextira one has announced that they have completed a major deployment co-financed by the European Union's Outer Borders Fund to extend and support the **Polish** Border Guard's information technology and communications platform.

The **Czech Republic** is to bring "the best of its culture" to China with the Czech cultural festival entitled "New Sensitivity" starting this month. The two-month festival will feature **Czech's** two strengths: ballet and sculpture.

The *Stockholm* city authorities have asked diplomats from **Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary** and **Poland** for cooperation in solving the problem of immigrant beggars in the city. No official statistics are available, but it is



estimated that about 100 homeless immigrants from new *EU* member states are staying in *Stockholm* currently.

RUSSIA

Russia has voiced disapproval of a final document distributed at an international nuclear conference in *Iran*, which gathered top officials and experts from 56 countries. According to **Russian** Government, the document was not discussed by the event's participants and it was not

submitted for approval by delegates. **Russian** Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov attended the conference on disarmament and nonproliferation, entitled *Nuclear Energy for All, Nuclear Weapons for None*, which was held in Tehran on April 17-18.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov said here Friday that sanctions against Iran have become unavoidable because of its unwillingness to comply with the international community and to carry out the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and those made by International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors. But it is necessary for such sanctions to be selective and do not include the Iranian energy sector,

The *Peruvian* Defense Minister said Friday his country plans to buy attack and transport helicopters from **Russian** for deployment with counter-narcotics forces. There are plans to buy six Mi-17 transport helicopters and two Mi-35 attack helicopters.

A high-level **Russian** delegation is set to negotiate **Russian** accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) with U.S.



Russian President Dmitri Medvedev said April 21 that **Russia** will give preferential treatment to its partners. This was followed by the *Ukrainian* deal where the price charged for natural gas has been cut by nearly **30 %**. In doing so, Moscow is signaling its displeasure to *Belarus*.

In **Russia** a bill scheduled to be approved by the State DUMA aims to overhaul the financing for medical, educational, cultural and scientific institutions by giving them for the first time a free hand in how they spend state subsidies.

A group of U.S. lawmakers is calling on **Russian** President Dmitry Medvedev not to suspend adoptions between Russia and the United States. **Russian** authorities have said all adoptions to the U.S. are on hold pending a new agreement on the matter that could take months.

US/CANADA

In the **USA** Public confidence in government is at one of the lowest points in a half century, according to a survey from the *Pew Research Center*. Nearly 8 in 10 Americans say they don't trust the federal government and have little faith it can solve America's ills.

Meanwhile *President Barack Obama* last week cited encouraging signs of an auto industry rebound as he promoted stronger financial rules that he said would help prevent a repeat of the crisis that pushed carmakers to the brink. After shedding 400,000 jobs in 2008, bailed-out U.S. automakers are rebounding. General Motors Co. said this week it will repay \$8.1 billion in U.S. and Canadian government loans five years ahead of schedule.

Washington-based Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) a prominent national Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization last week said it has asked the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (*NCIS*) to investigate a report of *anti-Islam bias* in the training offered to security personnel by that military law enforcement agency that includes the viewing of a propagandistic anti-Islam film.

Gov. Jan Brewer of Arizona USA signed the nation's toughest bill on illegal immigration into law last week aimed at identifying, prosecuting and deporting illegal immigrants. The move unleashed immediate



protests and reignited the divisive battle over immigration reform nationally.

Following the recent signing of a *Strategic Nuclear Arms Agreement* with *Russia*, the **United States** is parrying a push by several NATO allies to withdraw its aging stockpile of tactical nuclear weapons from Europe. Speaking last week at a meeting of NATO foreign ministers, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said the Obama administration was not opposed to cuts in these battlefield weapons, provided *Russia* agreed to cuts in its arsenal as well, which is allegedly

'10 times' the size of the **American** one.

According to the top U.S. military commander in Iraq the planned withdrawal of nearly 45,000 **U.S.** troops from by the end of August is on track in spite of a recent increase in attacks by militant forces.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates asserted last week that the **U.S.** is prepared to take a range of actions against the *Iranian* nuclear program and will not be taken 'off guard'.

LATIN AMERICA

Argentine meat workers marched to the labor ministry last week, disrupting traffic in downtown *Buenos Aires*, to protest expected job cuts amid fears that falling beef production will lead to plant closures.

Argentina's last dictator Reynaldo Bignone, 82, has been convicted and sentenced to 25 years in prison for torture and illegal detentions committed during the nation's 1976-1983 military regime.

Argentina's Minister for Science, Technology and Productive Innovation Dr Lino Baranao has said that the country is initiating steps to boost co-operation with educational and scientific institutions in *Qatar* to develop its science, research and technology in coming years.

Vietnam's Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung led a delegation to Buenos Aires last week for his official visit to **Argentina**. Meanwhile *Russian* President Dmitry Medvedev also arrived in Argentina on the first visit by a *Russian* head of state to the nation, touting Moscow's drive to expand its presence and influence in Latin America.

China and Brazil's governments said in a joint statement that the two countries have agreed to cooperate in oil exploration and building infrastructure needed to ship **Brazilian** iron, coal and other minerals to *China*.

Brazil's government appeared to harden its position regarding Iran's government and its nuclear program following statements at a BRIC meeting, saying the country must be flexible in talks with the international community.

Chile's President Sebastian Pinera has announced his \$8.43 billion plan to finance **Chile's** reconstruction with tax increases, new government debt and withdrawals from the country's copper savings.

The Catholic Church in **Chile** has asked for forgiveness from victims of pedophile priests in the country, saying there were 20 known such cases.

Mexico has become the top provider of sex slaves to the Americas, according to the United Nations. In an effort to tackle the problem, the **Mexican** government has now signed onto the UN's Blue Heart campaign, but so far it has had little success in prosecuting and convicting human traffickers.



Meanwhile **Mexico** is offering a package of tax and mortgage extensions and loans for the border city of Mexicali, after a 7.2-magnitude quake April 4 killed two people, damaged buildings and flooded some land with saline water.

On the **Mexican** Drug War front Mexican investigative reporters have revealed that violent drug cartels are increasingly hitting US targets in the country in an attempt to escalate an all-out war with President Felipe Calderon.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez called on 35,000 armed militias yesterday to defend his socialist revolution with their lives if necessary as he faces a test of its popularity in elections in September.

Colombia has warned its citizens of the dangers of visiting **Venezuela** after eight **Colombians** were detained in the neighboring country on espionage accusations.

Venezuelan Oil Minister Rafael Ramirez last week welcomed investment by U.S. oil companies to help develop his country's vast crude reserves, as he held energy talks in Washington for the first time in six years.

President Hugo Chavez said over the weekend that *China* had agreed to extend \$20 billion in loans to **Venezuela**, pointing to deepening ties between the two countries as China seeks to secure oil supplies here.

Cuban President Raul Castro arrived in **Venezuela** last week to participate in the main celebrations for the bicentennial of the beginning of Venezuela's struggle for independence, including the Ninth Summit of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of the Americas (ALBA) regional cooperation and integration bloc.

Meanwhile the governments of **Venezuela** and **Argentina** signed 25 cooperation accords in a number of sectors including food, construction and energy, during the latest of the quarterly meetings of the two countries' heads of state, Hugo Chavez and Cristina Fernandez.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has said that **Venezuela's** economic recovery is expected to be "delayed and weak" compared to other countries in the region which managed to weather the global downturn "comparatively well". §