



**ASIA**  
MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA; WEST ASIA; SOUTH ASIA; NORTH ASIA; EAST ASIA  
..... 4



**AFRICA**  
WEST AFRICA; EAST AFRICA & HORN OF AFRICA; CENTRAL AFRICA; SOUTH AFRICA  
.....



**EUROAMERICA**  
WEST EUROPE; EAST EUROPE; NORTH AMERICA; LATIN AMERICA  
..... 7



**GLOBALIZED OPINION...2**



**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](#).

## Commentary WELCOME REMARKS

Dear Colleagues,

We are mailing to you the weekly e-letter of the project: Globalized Business and Politics: A View from the Muslim World". The e-letter is a snapshot of the detailed data gathering and analysis which our research team does each week.

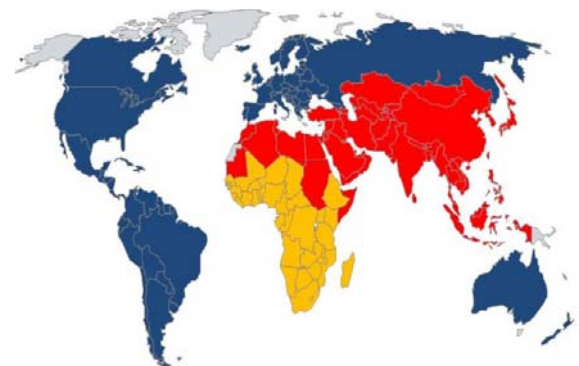
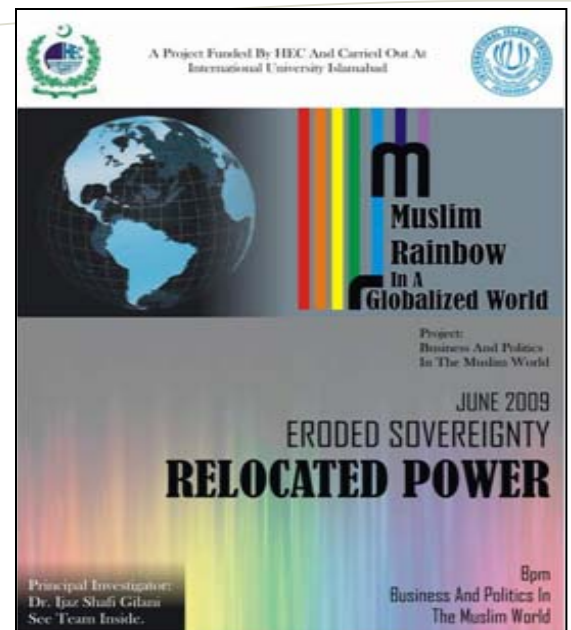
Why should one add another e-letter to many similar exercises already underway? We have pondered this question and here is what we believe to be our possible contribution or *Competitive Advantage*).

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

and analysis (complete weekly Events data, supplementary commentaries and related links).

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

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



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



Principle Investigator- DR. IJAZ SHAFI GILANI



## Globalized Opinions

A wide range of issues has been raised in this week's polls- The range of issues includes governance, resurgence of Islam, climate change/Copenhagen and Palestine.

### Commentary on Gallopedia Polls

Week # 98

Dated 13th – 19th Dec. 09'

Since 9/11 Islamic Symbols have become a focus of debate in the west. The French ban on headscarves and the recent *Swiss ban on minarets* are two examples that bear heavily on the subject of cooperation and co-existence. Thilo Sarrazin, a former Berlin finance senator and current member of the German Central Bank committee made a statement earlier this month demanding a *ban on headscarves* in Germany. The occident is clearly anxious about the growth of Islam in its midst. In a recent survey, about two third of Germans say that they are concerned about the growth of Islam in their country; one third of them are *very concerned*.

To what extent is this concern propelled by an actual mushrooming of overt religious symbolism all over Europe, or conversely is it an exaggerated effect of the media reports highlighting and hence developing a stereotypical correlation between religion, extremism and terrorism? *Is the 'Eurabia threat' real or imagined?*

On the *climate front* for several months pollsters have been monitoring the publics' concern about climate change issues before the *Copenhagen conference* began. A series of surveys by various organizations about this issue show that greater awareness has emerged about climate change across the world. In last week's surveys, even the Americans who have historically shown reluctance towards any drastic policy shifts have indicated their willingness for President Obama to become a signatory to any concrete development about this issue at Copenhagen. Despite all the publics concerns no real breakthrough could be achieved at the Conference. Several polls show that people across the world believe that political leaders should given more importance to public opinion but looking at the Copenhagen outcome it seems that it will still take a lot of time before *public aspirations are translated into leader's decisions.* §



**NETANYAHU AND OBAMA**

Zone 1  
**ASIA**

#### MIDDLE EAST

##### *Palestinians Ready to Vote for Abbas Again*

Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah remains popular among Palestinians, according to a poll by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research. 54 per cent of respondents would vote for the current president of the Palestinian Authority, who has recently announced he does not intend to seek a new term in office.

December 17, 2009

##### *Netanyahu Sought to Appease Obama, Say Israelis*

Most people in Israel believe Benjamin Netanyahu broke an election promise by ordering the freeze of settlement construction in occupied territories, according to a poll by Maagar Mochot released by IMRA. 51 per cent of respondent agree with the notion that the Israeli prime minister failed to keep his promise of allowing the growth of Jewish settlements.

December 14, 2009

#### SOUTH ASIA

##### *High Risk, Low Awareness of Climate Change in Nepal*

Nepal's citizens, awareness of global warming or climate change is low. In a Gallup survey conducted in July, 39% of Nepalese say they are aware of climate change -- essentially unchanged from the 37% average awareness across 2007 and 2008.

December 15, 2009



#### NORTHEAST ASIA

##### *Chinese Public Rejects Argument that China should not be Obligated to Limit Emissions*

In a new poll conducted by WorldPublicOpinion.org in September, an overwhelming 96 % of Chinese said that at the conference in Copenhagen their government should be "willing to commit to limiting its greenhouse gas emissions" as part of an agreement. (Seventy-one percent of Indians concurred.)

December 16, 2009

##### *Impatient Japanese! Start to Turn on Government*

Just a few months after the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) won the legislative election; people in the Asian country are quickly recanting their support for the new administration, according to a poll by NHK. 56 per cent of respondents approve of the cabinet led by Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama, down nine points since November.

December 19, 2009

Zone 3

#### EURO-AMERICAS

#### WEST EUROPE

##### *Germans Anxious About Growth of Islam*

Most people in Germany express a certain degree of anxiety over the growth of the Islamic religion and culture in the country, according



Continued...

Continued...

to a poll by Infratest-Dimap released by ARD. 33 per cent of respondents are very concerned about this matter, and 29 per cent express moderate concern.

*December 19, 2009*

### ***Scotland Ponders Change in Status-Quo***

One-in-four Scottish adults believe Scotland should attain full independence from the United Kingdom, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 25 per cent of respondents agree with this rationale.



### ***SCOTLAND'S DEMAND FOR INDEPENDENCE***

*December 16, 2009*

### ***NORTH AMERICA***

#### ***Little Support for Terrorism among Muslim Americans***

The Fort Hood shootings and the arrest of five Muslim American students in Pakistan have raised questions about the threat of homegrown terrorism in the United States. However, the Pew Research Center's comprehensive portrait of the Muslim American population suggests it is less likely to be a fertile breeding ground for terrorism than Muslim minority communities in other countries.

*December 17, 2009*

#### ***At Year's End, American Opinion Remains Divided***

Public opinion about President Barack Obama and his major policies continues to be divided as the year comes to a

close. His overall approval rating is 49%, which is largely unchanged from November (51%). Opinions about Afghanistan also are mixed: 50% express confidence in Obama to do the right thing regarding the situation in Afghanistan, which is unchanged from October.

*December 16, 2009*

#### ***Americans Favor U.S. Signature on Copenhagen Treaty***

Just over half of Americans, 55%, favor the United States' signing a binding treaty in Copenhagen that would commit the U.S. to significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions, while 38% oppose it. Democratic endorsement of a treaty (79% are in favor) is somewhat higher than Republican resistance (65% are opposed), while independents' views are identical to the national average.

*December 15, 2009*

#### ***Climate Change a Threat for Most Canadians***

Two-in-five adults in Canada believe global warming will significantly impact their life and the life of future generations, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 40 per cent of respondents feel this way about the effect of climate change.

*December 17, 2009*

### ***GLOBAL POLLS***

#### ***Global Restrictions on Religion***

"Global Restrictions on Religion," a new study by the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life, finds that 64 nations -- about one-third of the countries in the world -- have high or very high restrictions on religion. But



***SWISS MINARET BAN***

because some of the most restrictive countries are very populous, nearly 70% of the world's 6.8 billion people live in countries with heavy restrictions on religion, the brunt of which often falls on religious minorities.

*December 16, 2009*

#### ***Developed and Emerging Nations Should Cut Emissions***

Gallup surveys in 2009 find respondents in six key global economies are more likely to say developed economies such as the U.S., Germany, and Japan and fast-emerging economies such as China, India, and Brazil should reduce emissions at the same time than say one group should reduce emissions first.

*December 17, 2009*

#### ***Climate change professionals expect Europe to demonstrate leadership at UN summit***

A global survey has found that professionals involved in making decisions that have implications for climate change are calling for Europe to take a leadership stance in negotiations in Copenhagen, where leaders from around the world are meeting for a major UN climate conference (COP15).

*December 16 2009. §*



## Zone 1- Asia:

### Asia, Middle East & North Africa



#### TURKEY

**Political Front:** The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) has continued its demonstrations in Turkey as well as in Europe; protesting against the condition of their leader Abdullah Ocalan at İmralı Prison. In the meanwhile despite the PKK claiming responsibility for a terrorist attack in the city of Tokat that left seven soldiers dead earlier this week, the prime minister has stated that there might be other unseen groups and masterminds behind the attack wishing to undermine the government's Kurdish initiative. PM has again reiterated his commitment to push on with its democratic initiative agenda despite strong criticism from opposition parties.

A **Turkish** court has banned the pro-Kurdish DTP on allegations of having links with PKK. The PM has condemned the court's decision that caused angry protests and plunged the country into political uncertainty.

Meanwhile reaffirming their previously announced decision, leaders of the now-defunct Democratic Society



#### KURDISH MOVEMENT

Party (DTP) announced that all deputies would withdraw from parliamentary proceedings and return to their respective constituencies to campaign at the grass root level.

**Geo-strategic Front:** Turkey has clearly said that it would by no means let Israel misuse Turkish airspace to carry out intelligence and surveillance missions of a neighboring country. Meanwhile Turkish growing relations *with Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia, Albania, Egypt, Australia, Denmark, China and Russia* remained significant as exchange of official visits by diplomats took place.

**Economic Front:** Dutch insurance company Eureka has made plans to shift its major investments to Turkey from several countries. Meanwhile two Turkish construction contractors have been named among Europe's top 100 construction companies.



#### IRAQI ELECTIONS

#### MIDDLE EAST

**Political Front:** Egyptian MPs have submitted 146 investigation requests against the ruling regime in a special session of People's Assembly (PA). 128 requests got accepted however tension mounted between opposition, independent MPs and the ruling NDP.

**Iraqi** elections would be held in March where the Foreign Ministry projected a possible coalition government.

**Geo-strategic Front:** Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and his Turkish counterpart held talks in Ankara on the impasse in the Middle East peace process and the rift

between Palestinians factions. Meanwhile the **Syrian** President Bashar al-Assad underlined his commitment to stability in Iraq during his meeting with IRAQI Shiite leader Amar al-Hakim. The comments by Saudi Foreign Minister, recently published in the International Herald Tribune, have provoked a range of reactions in **Lebanon**. The Saudi Foreign Minister expressed his opinion that **Lebanon** would never enjoy full sovereignty as long as Hezbollah owns more arms than the state military.

British Foreign Minister, David Miliband phoned **Israeli** opposition leader Livni to apologize and promised to act on changing laws regarding allowing the arrest and prosecution of **Israeli** officials accused of committing war crimes against the Palestinian people. Further more he opposed the British Court order to apprehend her should she travel to the UK. PM Gordon Brown also asked Livini to visit their country as she would be warmly welcomed there.

**Social Front:** Egyptian government has recently submitted a report to the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) as part of the Universal Periodic Review mechanism.

**Economic Front:** Egypt's government has started channeling most of its additional spending into infrastructure projects in a bid to combat fall-out from the global financial crisis.

In its first comment since the formation of **Lebanon's** unity Cabinet, the Institute of International Finance indicated that the creation of the government would probably improve confidence in the Lebanese economy and maintain strong growth of about 7 percent. It also talked about the likelihood of implementing key reform

Continued...

measures included in the Paris III agenda, such as fiscal adjustment and privatization of the telecom sector.

United States President, Barack Obama, signed the Foreign Aid Budget Law of 2010 which includes granting \$2.775 Billion in security aid to the state of **Israel**.

### **THE GULF**

**Geo-strategic Front:** A Gulf monetary council would be tasked to decide the peg of a proposed single currency among **Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar and Kuwait**. UAE and Oman are the two countries who have abandoned the plan to join the monetary union.

Gulf leaders have agreed to set up a rapid intervention force that will help states deal with any aggression against their territories, such as the Yemeni rebel incursion into **Saudi Arabia**. The Saudi navy has set up a blockade off Yemen's northern Red Sea coastline, in an effort to keep fresh supplies from reaching the rebels, who have engaged in a five-year insurgency in the north of the country to win autonomy. The leaders of Gulf Cooperation Council (**GCC**) have further reaffirmed the right of the **UAE** over the three islands, occupied by Iran.

While talking about Tehran's failed talks with the West about its nuclear program, **Bahrain** considered the absence of Gulf countries a major factor. Also **Kuwait** regards the Afghan war and the Iran nuclear crisis as potent threats to security in the Gulf region. Lastly the landmark 123



Agreement between the **UAE** and the **US** for the peaceful development of nuclear energy came into force last week.

**Social Front:** The **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)** and **Yemen** have promising projections for reaching UNESCO's international criteria for educational development.

**Economic Front:** Consumer prices in GCC countries have fallen this year as the global financial crisis prompted an economic downturn. Meanwhile Islamic finance, an increasingly important element of the GCC financial sector, seems to be in a better position to lead the way in the region's economic recovery.

### **CENTRAL Asia**

**Political Front:** Political parties represented at the **Azerbaijani** Parliament addressed the U.S. embassy in Baku voicing protest against the U.S. Congress financial aid to Nagorno-Karabakh separatists from the budget bill 2010. Meanwhile a **Kazakh** court has rejected the appeal made by detained Journalist Esergepov, the owner and chief editor of the Almaty-based weekly "Alma-Ata Inform," who was sentenced to three years of jail for revealing state secrets in an article printed in his newspaper in November 2008.

A criminal case has been opened against 49 associates of the late **Tajik** Emergency Situations Minister Mirzo Ziyoev. An investigation by the National Security Committee has

shown that Ziyoev and 49 others were plotting an armed operation to release some of their supporters from jail. Meanwhile Bakhodir Choriev, the emigrant leader of Birdamlik (Solidarity) **Uzbek** opposition movement, who had recently returned home, was sent back to USA.

600 observers are expected to monitor the upcoming parliamentary elections in **Tajikistan**.

**Geo-strategic Front:** Rights groups have criticized the West for allowing **Kazakhstan** to assume the rotating chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 2010, saying the nation is unfit to lead a group devoted to promoting democracy. Meanwhile Germany has allocated **Kyrgyzstan** €8million for housing development.

**Uzbek** border guards have shot and wounded two Tajik citizens along **Tajikistan's** border in the northern Panjakent district. The **Uzbek** President Islam Karimov and Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov have signed an agreement to ease cross-border transit for people living along their common frontier.

President of **Turkmenistan** and Vice Prime Minister of Russia discussed cooperation in the energy sphere and promotion of the most important joint projects aimed at the intensification of partnership. Also Japanese-**Turkmen** economic cooperation committees held a joint meeting in Tokyo on Dec. 16.

**Social Front:** The European Parliament has adopted a resolution critical of what it calls the deterioration of media freedom in **Azerbaijan**. The State Committee for Work with Religious Associations has



### Kazakh Independence Day

registered 30 more religious communities. Meanwhile Almaty police detained 29 people for a disturbance during demonstrations on **Kazakhstan's** Independence Day.

A reporter for the Russian *BaltInfo* news agency was beaten in **Kyrgyzstan's** capital. Also Dozens of Uzbek refugees held a protest in Stockholm to support jailed Muslim women in **Uzbekistan**.

Furthermore a prominent Uzbek photographer/video-grapher has been charged with defamation and damaging the country's image because of the content of her photos and videos. Meanwhile a World Health Organization (WHO) official has reported 14 swine-flu cases in **Tajikistan**.

**Economic Front:** SOCAR (State Oil Company of **Azerbaijan**) and the National Iranian Gas Export Company have signed an agreement on supply of **Azerbaijani** gas to the northern provinces of Iran during the winter. The leaders of **Kazakhstan** and China have jointly unveiled the Kazakh section of a natural gas pipeline that would tap into Central Asia's vast energy riches and loosen Russia's influence over the region. Also the international

**Turkmenistan** - China gas pipeline was officially launched on 14 December. China has signed the intergovernmental framework agreements on granting two soft loans to **Turkmenistan**.

Employees of **Tajik** Embassy in Beijing have given up their three-day's wages to help the implementation of the Roghun hydroelectricity project. Meanwhile in **Tajikistan**, gross domestic product (GDP) rose 3.1 percent in the year to November 30, 2009.

### INDIA

**Political Front:** The BJP has expressed dissatisfaction over the *Liberhan* Commission report. Meanwhile parties

perceived as moderate have strongly condemned BJP's involvement in the demolition of the *Babri Mosque*. Indian Muslim communities have asked the government to implement the Liberhan Commission report and duly pay compensation to the affected families.

The CBI report of Shopian murder case has again disturbed security situation in Kashmir where the death of two women being documented as accidental drowning has raised local reaction.

**Regional front:** Phase three and fourth assembly elections successfully ended in Jharkand with 55% and 58% turnout respectively. Meanwhile Andhra Pradesh's unity seems to be in danger as the demand for a separate Telangana state by TRS caused serious concerns for the state and centre. TRS' chief's hunger strike ended after the confirmation of government to initiate the bill for a separate Telangana state.

**Geo-strategic Front:** at the UN climate conference **India** along with other developing countries opposed any move from developed world regarding introduction of a bill to restrict green house gas emissions.

**Social Front:** 8 lakh Indians are falling



prey to cancer every year. Also 37.2% Indians are below poverty line in accordance with consumption criteria.

**Economic Front:** **India** has announced plans to increase its bilateral trade with Russia up to \$20 billion.

### EAST ASIA

**Political Front:** Former **Thai** PM Thaksin landed in **Cambodia** amidst tight security. The issue is expected to mount tensions between the neighboring countries. Thai government has claimed that it would submit an extradition request to

**Cambodia** for Thaksin.

**Geo-strategic Front:** **Thai** government has recently detained five foreigners and their foreign registered aircraft loaded with war weaponry that flew from **North Korea** and was probably heading towards Iran. Investigations are underway.

**Social front:** Religious authorities in the North Sumatran Province of Aceh attempted to pass a law according to which Muslim adulterers would be stoned to death, a move that the **Indonesian** government blocked. Meanwhile at the environmental front Indonesia has announced to cut carbon emissions up to 26% by 2020.

**Malaysian** government has recently unveiled its plan to combat corruption. Also the Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) has assured its support to the Catholic Church's fight to overturn a government ban on the use of the term 'Allah' to describe God in Christian texts. Meanwhile **Malaysia** has expressed willingness to provide assistance to the Muslim community in southern **Thailand** in the interest of restoring peace and harmony in the restive region.

**Economic Front:** **Malaysia** has expressed willingness to send financial and banking experts to help Thailand set up an Islamic bank in the three provinces in the south for the benefit of Muslim residents. Meanwhile **Thailand** has cancelled an eight-year-old Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Cambodia** on the oil and gas-rich overlapping area in the Gulf of **Thailand**.

The **Philippine** central bank kept its benchmark interest rate at a record low to boost economic growth from near a decade low. Meanwhile the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has forecasted a 2.3 per cent growth for **Brunei** next year after it contracted by 1.2 percent in 2009. §

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



### UN CLIMATE CONFERENCE AT COPENHAGEN WESTERN EUROPE

The U.N. climate conference at Copenhagen, **Denmark** escaped absolute collapse as participants agreed last week to recognize a political accord brokered by President Barack Obama with China and other emerging powers.

Meanwhile **France's** immigration minister has said that he wants the wearing of Muslim veils that cover the face and body to be grounds for denying citizenship and long-term residence. While in **Portugal** the Socialist government has drawn up a proposal that would make the nation the sixth European country to allow gay marriage.

The **Dutch** government has denied allegations that it is allowing the United States to use Caribbean islands to prepare a possible military attack against Venezuela as Hugo Chavez contends. Meanwhile **Spain's** defense minister has announced plans to send 511 more soldiers to Afghanistan in response to President Obama's request for more allied help to fight the 'War against Terror'.

### SOUTH-EAST EUROPE

In **Greece** Prime Minister George Papandreou unveiled a four-year plan Monday (December 14th) to reduce the country's crushing budget deficit and bring its soaring debts under control. Meanwhile in **Romania** the Constitutional Court has declared Traian Basescu the winner of the disputed presidential election. The court ruled that Basescu had won a second term as president after days of uncertainty following a vote the opposition

Diplomatic representatives in **Albania** including the OSCE head and the

Dutch Ambassador have warned that the country is risking its EU integration process as a result of the opposition's parliamentary boycott. Meanwhile **Kosovars** hit the polls last week (December 13th) to cast their ballot in the country's second round of local elections. The municipalities voting this time around have more than one million registered voters. Also the Republic of Malawi has become the 64th state to recognize **Kosovo**.

High Representative and EU Special Representative to **Bosnia and Herzegovina** (BiH) Valentin Inzko said on Friday (December 11th) that the political situation in BiH could aggravate during 2010 due to the upcoming general elections. Meanwhile the European Union last week opened its borders unrestricted to more than ten million *Serbs, Montenegrins* and *Macedonians* after nearly 20 years, a major boost for the troubled region's hopes for closer ties with the 27-nation bloc.

In **Serbia** War crimes prosecutor Vladimir Vukcevic has said that authorities are searching intensively for the two remaining fugitives, Ratko Mladic and Goran Hadzic, stressing that there is a clear political will to complete the country's co-operation with The Hague tribunal.

While in **Croatia** the Parliament decided last week that the nation will not increase its presence in Afghanistan next year. The country will keep its current presence of 293 soldiers in the mission. The decision has come despite a US call on its allies to send more troops

### US/CANADA



**BOLIVIA'S LEFTIST GOVERNMENT**

In the **United States**, continuing the closure of the controversial Guantanamo facility the government is to acquire an underutilized state prison in rural Illinois to be the new home for a limited number of terrorist suspects. Many in the region have welcomed the prospect as a potential economic engine.

Meanwhile the **U.S.** Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has announced that the United States is prepared to join other rich countries in raising \$100 billion in yearly climate financing for poor countries by 2020. The announcement could give a boost to deadlocked climate talks which have faltered over disputes between rich and poor countries over emissions cuts and climate financing.



### LATIN AMERICA

**Cuba's** Fidel Castro has said that President Barack Obama's "friendly smile and African-American face" are hiding Washington's sinister intentions for Latin America — a statement depictive of a new cooling in U.S.-Cuba relations.

Supporters of former **Haitian** President Jean-Bertrand Aristide marched through Port-au-Prince last week calling for his return from exile and protesting his party's exclusion from upcoming elections.

Meanwhile **Bolivia's** leftist government has seized another big ranch from a top opposition figure. It says the 2,500-hectare (10-square-mile) spread will go to landless Indians. One opposition lawmaker called the seizure "vengeance" by Morales, who easily won the December 6<sup>th</sup> re-election. §

# ASIA

## Telescopic Analysis: 'Growing Militarization of the Gulf and the Horn of Africa'

Gulf leaders have recently agreed to set up a rapid intervention force that will help states deal with any aggression against their territories, such as the recent Yemeni rebel incursion into **Saudi Arabia**. The Saudi navy has set up a blockade off **Yemen's** northern Red Sea coastline, in an effort to keep fresh supplies from reaching the rebels, who have engaged in a five-year insurgency in the north of the country to win autonomy.

Growing militarization is quite evident in the region that is a critical hub for global oil supply. In addition to recent developments historically rooted issues continue to define a volatile gulf region as well as the Horn of Africa. Analysts recognize four danger areas in the region for oil transportation, a disruption of which would have potentially paralyzing effects on world economy:

- The Straits of Hormuz
- The Bab El-Mandab passage
- The Sumed Pipeline
- The Suez Canal

**Strait of Hormuz:** The Strait of Hormuz is a narrow waterway that connects the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman - the only passage from the oil-rich gulf to the Indian Ocean for maritime traffic. The Strait is among the world's most important oil chokepoints. Approximately 88 percent of all oil leaving the Persian Gulf goes via the Strait of Hormuz.

**The Bab el-Mandab** (or Mandab Strait) connects the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden. Roughly three million barrels of oil flow through this waterway each day. Closure of the waterway would prevent tanker traffic bound from the Persian Gulf from reaching the Suez Canal, primarily impairing exports to Europe.



AFRICAN STANDBY FORCE

**The Suez Canal** and the **Sumed pipeline** connect the Red Sea with the Mediterranean Sea. Some 4.2 million barrels of oil transit the area each day with the bulk of product moving northbound from Saudi Arabia via the pipeline.



### Regional Flash Points-

#### **Global Actors-US War on Terror:**

The Iraq War is an ongoing military campaign which began on March 20, 2003, with the invasion of Iraq by a multinational force led by troops from the United States and the United Kingdom. The strategic importance of the troops present in the region also caters for regional oil politics.

Recently France's first military facilities in the Gulf were opened deepening the government's alliance with the United Arab Emirates and highlighting its shifting foreign policy priorities, a move some analysts see as an encouraging shift away from the Gulf's dependence on the might of Washington for its security.

Africa too, according to the US Energy Information Administration,

supplies the US with more than 24% of its oil. Also France's main military base serving the Gulf region is in Djibouti, a former colony, serves as a hub for its operations.<sup>1</sup> In 2007, the United States established **AFRICOM**, a central command base to coordinate US military operations and monitor security interests in the continent, including oil deposits and growing African-Sino relations. Some criticize that Aid to Africa is being uniquely tied to militarization, an extremely dangerous trend.

**Israeli-Palestinian conflict:** Israel lies along a network of oil pipelines in the region and is a significant flash point for its ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Last year the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) engaged in a military operation, "Operation Cast Lead," in the Gaza Strip, with aerial and naval strikes in an offensive that lasted for three weeks. A year on the de facto ceasefire between Israel and Hamas still holds, though conflict in the volatile region continues.



UMAR FAROUK ABDULMUTALLAB, THE NIGERIAN YOUTH WITH YEMENI LINKS ACCUSED OF TRYING TO BOMB A US-BOUND FLIGHT

### ***Newly Emergent Threats:***

Owing to **Yemen's** strategic location on the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean oil exports by other countries are influenced by the political and military status of the country. **Yemen** has emerged on the radar as a significant 'threat' in the ongoing 'War against Terror'. The recent terror incident in an alleged al-Qaida plot to blow up an American airliner has been traced to terror cells in Yemen.

To the east, just across the Gulf of Aden from Yemen lies **Somalia**, yet another strategically significant and volatile region. War torn Somalia is considered a critical flash point where al Qaeda's



### **SOMALI CIVIL WAR**

surrogates are believed to act with impunity.

### **Armed Forces in the Region:**

The **GCC**, led by **Saudi** and **Kuwaiti** arms purchases, has significantly bolstered its capabilities to provide sea and air defense around the Strait of Hormuz in recent years.

In addition to the GCC forces, **Coalition forces** help protect the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz. The Combined Task Force (CTF) 150 is a multinational force whose jurisdiction includes the Strait of Hormuz. The nations of Pakistan, Canada, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States all contribute to the approximately 15 vessels



in CTF 150.

The **United States** remains the major foreign military presence in the Gulf with strategic air bases, logistics operations and the headquarters of the 5th Fleet in Bahrain which bears responsibility for areas including the Persian Gulf, Red Sea, Gulf of Oman, and parts of the Indian Ocean. US military presence, although widely regarded as a necessary evil, especially for the smaller Gulf countries, is deeply unpopular among local populations.

The Gulf is of geopolitical importance both because of its gas and oil resources and because of its proximity to Iran. Historically, Gulf States have relied on external powers to safeguard their regimes from restive sections of the population, and to protect against threats from larger regional powers such as Iran or Iraq. Although the GCC enjoys a thriving business relationship with Iran, most Gulf



rulers believe Tehran's nuclear programme will sooner or later lead to nuclear weapons.

Piracy in the region too is a menace that threatens regional stability. The Gulf of Aden is an area known for acts of piracy. The main cause of piracy in the gulf is the lack of any viable government in Somalia. One objective for the international presence in the region is also curbing this threat and safeguarding the trade routes.

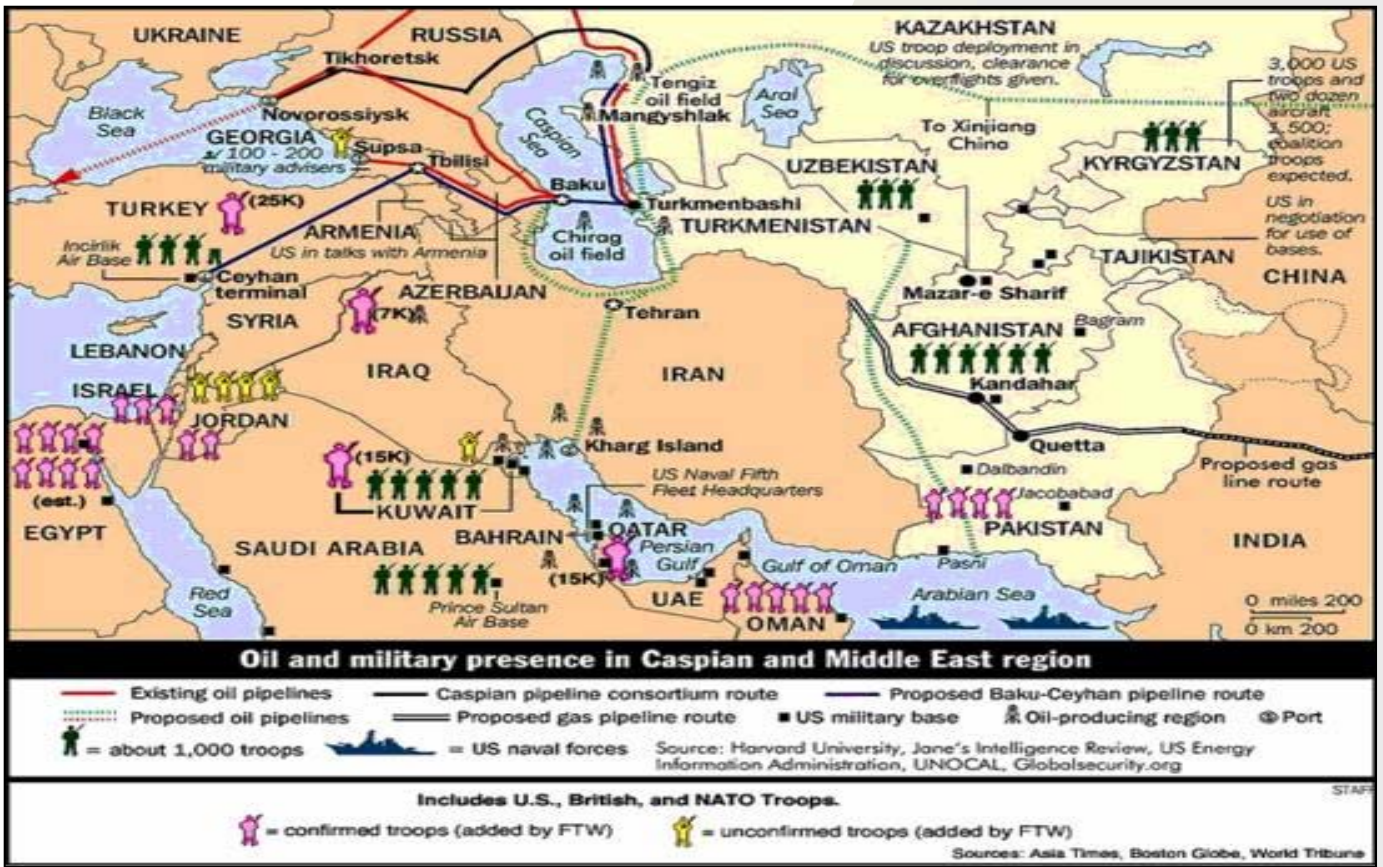
This entire region with its unique trajectory is strategically volatile. Given the multiplicity of actors, both regional as well as global, and the rapidly evolving situation on ground, a trend of increased militarization in a highly sensitive zone is quite evident. §



### **Related Links/ Bibliography:**

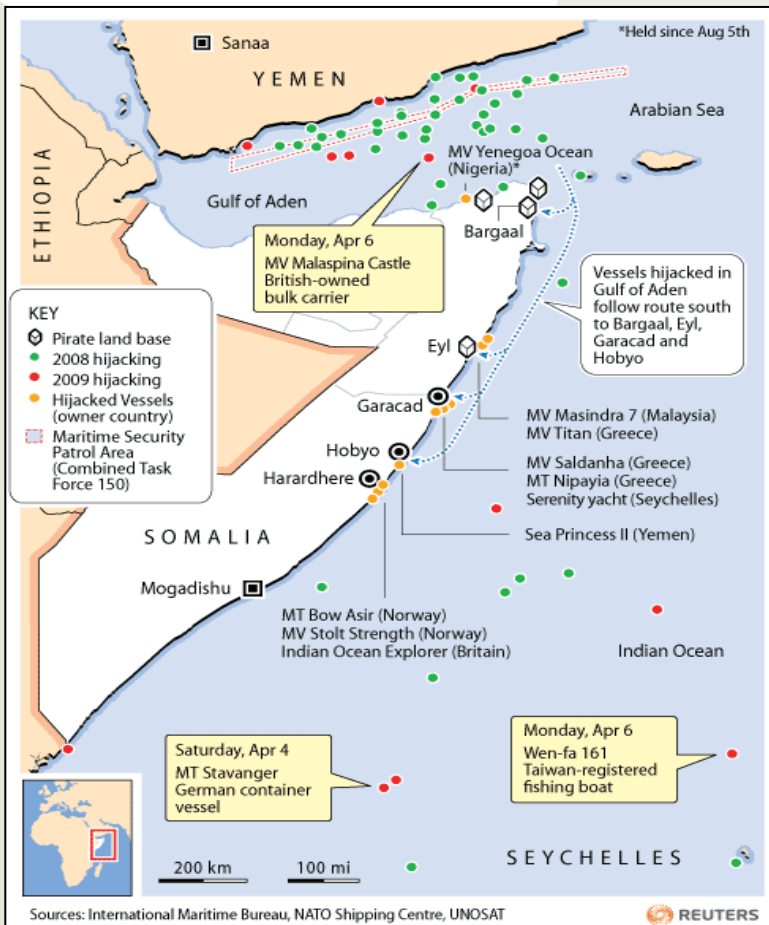
- ◆ <http://www.expletia.co.uk/worldoilreserves.html>
- ◆ [http://hormuz.robertstrausscenter.org/about\\_strait](http://hormuz.robertstrausscenter.org/about_strait)
- ◆ <http://www.iiss.org/whats-new/iiss-in-the-press/june-2009/balancing-act>
- ◆ <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/27/world/europe/27france.html>
- ◆ [http://hormuz.robertstrausscenter.org/armed\\_forces](http://hormuz.robertstrausscenter.org/armed_forces)
- ◆ <http://www.iiss.org/whats-new/iiss-in-the-press/june-2009/balancing-act>

## OIL AND ARMS IN THE REGION



## PIRACY HOT SPOTS

MOST RECENTLY MODIFIED IN 2006



## GLOBAL ENERGY HOT SPOTS



## GLOBAL INSURGENCY HOT SPOTS



*Microscopic Analysis: 'Iran's Nuclear Controversy'*

In a latest development in Iran's Nuclear Controversy it was reported last week that documents that appeared in the Times of London on Dec. 14, which perhaps contributed to the US. Intelligence reports were a forgery. The paper cited an "Asian intelligence source" that newspaper with "confidential intelligence documents" on how Iran was preparing to run tests on a neutron initiator, the component of a nuclear bomb that triggers an explosion.

Iran has pursued nuclear energy technology since the 1950s, spurred by the launch of U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower's *Atoms for Peace* program. The program however was abandoned after the 1979 revolution, which brought to power the current Islamic regime. Iran was known to be reviving its civilian nuclear programs during the 1990s, but revelations in 2002 and 2003 of secret research into fuel enrichment and conversion raised international debate that Iran's ambitions had metastasized beyond civilian use, an allegation Iran has consistently denied.

In August 2005 in Iran, Mohammad Khatami, seen as a moderate in the west, was succeeded as president by Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who is perceived as a hard-line conservative. In the following Jan. 2006 Iran announced that it would resume enrichment work. Under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, Iran has the right to enrich uranium, but the atomic energy association called for the program to be halted until questions about the earlier secret program were resolved.

Iran says it is simply doing what it is allowed to do under the treaty and intends only to enrich to the level needed for nuclear power station fuel with a goal to generate electricity without



dipping into its oil. The United Nations Security Council voted in December 2006 to impose sanctions on Iran for failing to heed calls for a suspension of the program.

The Security Council Resolution 1737 (December 2006) mandates all UN member states "to prevent the supply, sale or transfer... of all items, materials, equipment, goods and technology which could contribute to Iran's enrichment-related, reprocessing or heavy water-related activities or to the development of nuclear weapon delivery systems". In March 2007, the Council passed resolution 1747 seeks to tighten the squeeze on Iran's nuclear and missile programmes. Imports of arms from Iran are banned and member states were told to exercise restraint in selling major arms systems to Iran. Resolution 1803 of March 2008 extended the asset restrictions and travel bans on more Iranian individuals and companies said to be involved in nuclear work. It also called for inspection of cargo going into and out of the country, and monitoring the activities of two Iranian banks.

The extent of Iran's nuclear development remains unclear. In December 2007, a US intelligence assessment contradicted the earlier 2005 assessment, claiming that the weapons portion of the Iranian nuclear program remained on hold. The report stated that the Iranian government did not appear determined to obtain nuclear weapons, although it said Iran's intentions were unclear. Yet many in the international community, including the American leadership, remain skeptical. Nonproliferation experts note Iran's ability to produce enriched uranium continues to progress but disagree on how close Iran is to mastering capabilities to weaponize.

The September 2009 revelation of a second uranium enrichment facility near the holy city of *Qom* deepened international suspicions surrounding Iran's nuclear ambitions.

On Oct. 1, 2009, talks were held between Iran and the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council - the United States, Russia, China, Britain and France - as well as Germany, and led by the European Union's then foreign policy chief, Javier Solana. In this a tentative agreement was reached in principle for Iran to



export most of its enriched uranium for processing. The news however raised a tumult in Iran and eventually the deal was rejected on Oct. 29.

Stratfor an online publisher of 'geopolitical intelligence' reports that an Inter Press Service (IPS) Report emerged last week providing discrediting intelligence that the widely circulated document describing Iran's nuclear weapons plans was fabricated. According to Stratfor analysis this counter-leak plays into the interests of the Obama administration in seeking to buy time to deal with the issue. In Oct. 2009 in a radical revision of policy President Barack Obama



### RADICAL REVISION OF MISSILE DEFENSES

announced aborting missile defenses in Eastern Europe, originally being developed under the pretext of protection of the alleged missile threat from Iran. However at present the diplomatic standoff continues. §

### Discussion Questions:

§- In your opinion is the Iranian nuclear threat real or imagined?

§- Do you see possible engagement with Iran and an ultimate resolution of the nuclear controversy under the Obama Regime?

§- To what extent could international Actors like Russia, Israel and Latin American nations influence possible engagement with Iran?

## Iran's nuclear facilities

Iran has revealed to the U.N. nuclear watchdog the existence of a second uranium enrichment plant.



### Bibliography/Related Sources

- August 2009 IAEA report; <http://www.cfr.org/publication/20107>
- [http://www.stratfor.com/geopolitical\\_diary/20091229\\_deciphering\\_disinformation](http://www.stratfor.com/geopolitical_diary/20091229_deciphering_disinformation)
- <http://www.cfr.org/publication/16811>
- [http://www.iaea.org/NewsCenter/Focus/IaeaIran/iran\\_timeline6.shtml](http://www.iaea.org/NewsCenter/Focus/IaeaIran/iran_timeline6.shtml)
- <http://www.iaea.org/NewsCenter/Focus/IaeaIran/index.shtml>
- <http://www.nytimes.com/info/iran-nuclear-program/>
- <http://www.nytimes.com/info/iran-nuclear-program/#irans-nuclear-history>
- [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/4031603.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4031603.stm)
- [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/8425704.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8425704.stm)
- [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/7367475.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7367475.stm)

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.

Principle Investigator- DR. IJAZ SHAFI GILANI

