

Friday on the facebook

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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.



Who are we?

Friday on the Facebook is 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 make the e-letter a multi-layered presentation: in other words Friday on the Face-book provides 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 is grounded in a thorough Analytical framework of Relocation of Power in the 21st Century.
- ◆ Our weekly e-letter is targeted to produce an annual synthesis of Global Trends. Each issue will serve as an input for the annual analysis.
- ◆ Our weekly e-letter is designed to become a teaching tool for class-room instruction in courses dealing with global political sociology or related fields.
- ◆ Our weekly e-letter is designed to build a theoretically inclined community of political sociologists.

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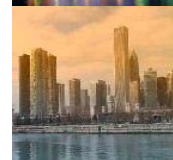
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Global Opinions

For the week

This week's report consists of 21 surveys. 2 of these are multi-country surveys, 1 is a cyber surveys, & the rest are national surveys. 5 polling organizations have been represented.



Topic of the week:

Nine Years after 9/11, Few See Terrorism as Top U.S. Problem

► This page is devoted to opinions of countries whose polling activity is generally not known very widely or where a recent topical issue requires special attention .

Commentary: *One percent see it as the top problem today, down from 46% in 2001*

by Frank Newport



Gallup USA- PRINCETON, NJ -- Nine years after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, 1% of **Americans** mention terrorism as the most important problem facing the country, down from 46% just after the attacks.

Just before the attacks, in a Gallup poll conducted Sept. 7-10, 2001, less than one-half of **1%** of Americans mentioned terrorism as the nation's most important problem. One month later, in October 2001, **46%** named terrorism, the highest in Gallup's history.

From that point on, terrorism slowly faded as a response to this question. At the one-year anniversary of the attacks, in September 2002, **19%** of Americans mentioned terrorism as the country's top problem, already eclipsed by the economy at the top of the list. By the

five-year anniversary of the attacks in September 2006, **11%** of Americans mentioned terrorism. Terrorism continued to drop from that point, albeit with an uptick to **8%** mentions in January of this year, reflecting the widespread news coverage of the "Christmas Day bomber" who allegedly attempted to detonate explosives on a Northwest Airlines plane headed for Detroit.

As terrorism has faded, other concerns have risen in importance. Over the past nine years, Americans have most commonly mentioned the **war in Iraq** (from 2003 to early 2008) and the **economy or jobs** (from 2008 to the present) as



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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 at <http://bpm-blogpage.blogspot.com/>

the top problem facing the country.

Despite the drop in top-of-mind mentions of terrorism, Americans still say it is an important issue when they are reminded of it. **Gallup** recently asked Americans to rate the importance of a number of issues to their vote in this year's midterm elections, and **75%** rated terrorism as an extremely or very important issue. Still, Americans rated economic issues such as the economy, jobs, and federal spending, as well as corruption in government and healthcare, even higher. They rated *terrorism* as more important than *immigration*, *Afghanistan*, and the *environment*.

The Sept. 11 attacks took place during the Republican Bush administration, which soon thereafter launched a "war on terrorism." Republicans have consistently been given more credit than Democrats for handling terrorism over the years since; in an August *USA Today*/Gallup poll, **55%** of Americans say the Republicans in Congress are better able to handle the issue of terrorism, while **31%** choose the Democrats.

Bottom Line

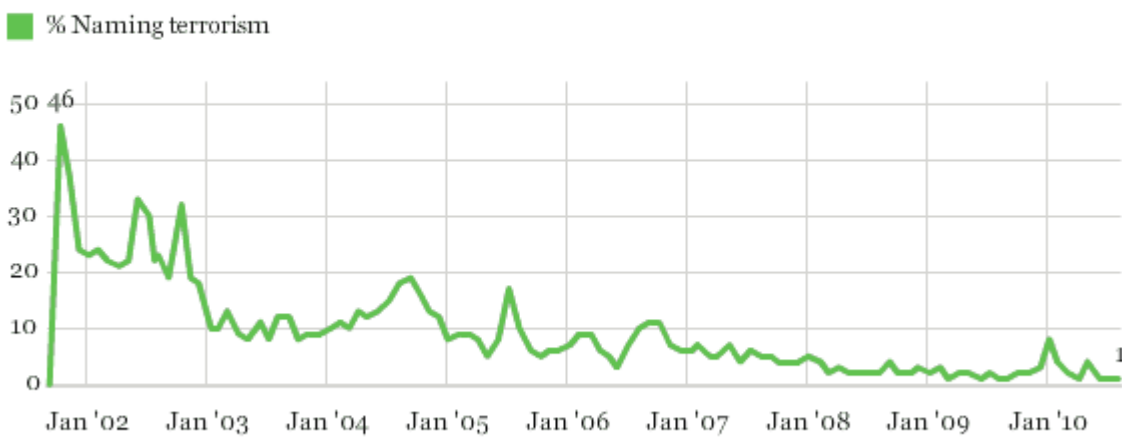
The low top-of-mind salience of terrorism as the top problem facing the nation no doubt reflects the absence of major terrorist attacks on U.S. soil in the nine years since 2001, although there have been occasional news reports of thwarted attacks. It may also reflect the degree to which **economic concerns** are crowding out most other issues at this point in the nation's history.

The dramatic jump in perceptions of terrorism as the most important problem between September and October 2001, however, serves as a reminder of the potential for terrorism to reclaim its prominence as a concern should there be new terrorist incidents in the future.



Terrorism as Most Important U.S. Problem

September 2001-August 2010



GALLUP

SOURCE: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/142961/nine-years-few-terrorism-top-problem.aspx>

SUMMARY OF POLLS



Asia zone

► MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA; WEST ASIA; SOUTH ASIA;
NORTH ASIA; EAST ASIA



► WEST ASIA

Afghans Less Confident in Elections This Time (Click for Details)

Afghans' increasing lack of confidence in the honesty of their elections, along with major security concerns, has been a pertinent issue in the country's second parliamentary elections. **Gallup** surveys show the percentage of Afghans who do not trust their electoral process spiraled from **49%** just after last year's fraud-marred presidential election to **67%** earlier this year.

September 10, 2010

[Foreign Affairs & Security](#) » [Afghanistan War](#)

Turks Downbeat about Their Institutions (Click for Details)

As **Turks** debate an upcoming referendum that would modify the country's constitution, a recent **Pew Global Attitudes survey** reveals how much confidence in Turkish institutions has slipped over the last few years. Throughout the country's history, the military has played a major role in Turkish politics, and it continues to be a popular institution: **72%** say it is having a very or somewhat good influence on the way things are going in Turkey. However, this is down from **85%** in 2007.

September 7, 2010

[Domestic Politics](#) » [National Image/ Trust](#)

Multi country poll- Employed or Not, Many Young People Desire to Migrate (Click for Details)

[Society](#) » [Immigration/Refugees](#)



Africa zone

► WEST AFRICA; EAST AFRICA; CENTRAL AFRICA; SOUTHERN AFRICA

► SUB SAHARAN AFRICA

Multi country poll- Employed or Not, Many Young People Desire to Migrate (Click for Details)

[Society](#) » [Immigration/Refugees](#)



Euro Americas zone

▶ EAST EUROPE; WEST EUROPE; NORTH AMERICA;
LATIN AMERICA & AUSTRALASIA



EUROPE

▶ WEST EUROPE

British Public Favours Cutting Government Debts (Click for Details)

A new **BBC World Service** poll revealed that six in ten (**60%**) people in **Britain** favour “taking steps to reduce the government’s budget deficit and debt.” However, when it comes to cutting spending on some of the largest government programs there is overwhelming opposition - **82 %** oppose cutting spending on education and healthcare, **80 %** oppose cutting spending on support for senior citizens, and **66 %** oppose cuts to spending on the military.

September 09, 2010

[Economy](#) » [Financial systems & Institutions](#)

Papal Visit Poll (Click for Details)

The Pope, who was in **Britain** last week, is more widely recognized than the Archbishop of Canterbury. While one in four people (**25%**) British adults supported his visit, one in ten (**11%**) opposed it, according to an **Ipsos MORI** poll conducted exclusively for The Tablet.

September 07, 2010

[Society](#) » [Religion](#)

Britons Laud Trade Unions, But Ponder if Strikes Should be Limited (Click for Details)

Many people in **Britain** believe that trade unions are necessary and important, but a majority also questions whether they have become too involved in political activities, a new **Angus Reid Public Opinion** poll has found that **28 %** of respondents think trade unions have too much influence in Britain, **22 %** say they have too little influence, and **33 %** claim they have about the right amount of influence.

September 07, 2010

[Economy](#) » [Employment Issues](#)

Churchill as Best Prime Minister, Low Interest in Reading Tony Blair’s book (Click for Details)

A sizeable proportion of people in **Britain** maintain a positive opinion of Winston Churchill (**79%**) and two thirds believe that Gordon Brown has been the worst head of government since the end of the Second World War, a new **Angus Reid Public Opinion** poll has found. Meanwhile supporters of Labour party are more interested in reading Tony Blair’s book than others.

September 09, 2010

[Domestic Politics](#) » [Performance Ratings](#)



AMERICAS

▶ NORTH AMERICA

Nine Years After 9/11, Few See Terrorism as Top U.S. Problem (Click for Details)

Nine years after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, **1%** of **Americans** mention terrorism as the most important problem facing the country, down from **46%** just after the attacks. **Gallup USA**

September 10, 2010

[Foreign Affairs & Security](#) » [Terrorism](#)

Approval for President Obama Drops to New Low in United States ([Click for Details](#))

The approval rating for U.S. President Barack Obama dropped this month, and half of Americans disapprove of his performance, a new **Angus Reid Public Opinion** poll has found. In the online survey of a representative national sample of 1,007 American adults, **43 %** of respondents (-2 since July) approve of Obama's performance, while **51 %** (+5) disapprove.

Aug. 31, 2010

[Domestic Politics](#) » [Performance Ratings](#)

Americans OK Allowing Tax Cuts for Wealthy to Expire ([Click for Details](#))

A majority of **Americans** favor letting the tax cuts enacted during the Bush administration expire for the wealthy. While **37%** support keeping the tax cuts for all Americans, **44%** want them extended only for those making less than \$250,000 and **15%** think they should expire for all taxpayers. **Gallup USA**

September 10, 2010

[Economy](#) » [Financial systems & Institutions](#)

Since the Start of the Great Recession, More Children Raised by Grandparents ([Click for Details](#))

One child in 10 in the **United States** lives with a grandparent, a share that increased slowly and steadily over the past decade before rising sharply from 2007 to 2008, the first year of the Great Recession, according to a new **Pew Research Center** analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data.

September 9, 2010

[Society](#) » [Family](#)

A Third of Americans Regard Obama and Palin as Out of Touch ([Click for Details](#))

More than half of **Americans** praise the intelligence of Barack Obama, but some cracks are appearing in the second year of his mandate, as a third of respondents believe that their president is out of touch, a new **Angus Reid Public Opinion** poll has found.

September 09, 2010

[Domestic Politics](#) » [Performance Ratings](#)

Americans Support Federal Involvement in Education ([Click for Details](#))

43 % of **U.S.** adults want the federal government to be more involved in education than it is currently and **20%** want it to keep the same level of involvement, while **35%** want it less involved. Parents of school-aged children are particularly supportive of expanding the government's role in education, with **56%** favoring more involvement. **Gallup USA**

September 8, 2010

[Society](#) » [Education](#)

Americans Spending More Time Following the News ([Click for Details](#))

There are many more ways to get the news these days, and as a consequence **Americans** are spending more time with the news than over much of the past decade. Digital platforms are playing a larger role in news consumption, and they seem to be more than making up for modest declines in the audience for traditional platforms. **Pew Research Center**

September 12, 2010

[Society](#) » [Media/ New Media](#)

Americans Support Push to Shut down Adult Services Section of Craigslist ([Click for Details](#))

Many adults in the **United States** support a move to shut down the Adult Services section of the Craigslist classified advertisements website, a new **Angus Reid Public Opinion** poll has found.

September, 02, 2010

[Society](#) » [Media/ New Media](#)

Parties Tied at 46% in Generic Ballot for Congress (Click for Details)

In **America**, Republicans and Democrats are tied at **46%** among registered voters in **Gallup's** weekly tracking of congressional voting preferences, marking a shift after five consecutive weeks in which the Republicans held the advantage.

September 7, 2010

[Domestic Politics](#) » [Political Parties](#)

Almost Half of Americans Voice Dissatisfaction with Health Care Reform (Click for Details)

Americans remain skeptical in their assessment of the health care legislation signed into law by U.S. President Barack Obama earlier this year, with a large proportion of Republican Party supporters expecting a decrease in the quality of medical services, a new **Angus Reid Public Opinion** poll has found.

September 07, 2010

[Society](#) » [Health](#)

British Columbians Clearly More Upset than Ontarians Over HST (Click for Details)

The recent implementation of a harmonized sales tax (HST) is affecting residents of two **Canadian** provinces in different ways, a new **Angus Reid Public Opinion** poll has found. The online survey of representative provincial samples of 804 Ontarian and 803 British Columbian adults also finds that respondents question whether the promise of lower consumer prices down the road will actually materialize.

September 02, 2010

[Economy](#) » [Consumer Confidence/Protection](#)

More Canadians Are Questioning the Benefits of Immigration (Click for Details)

More **Canadians** are questioning whether immigration is benefiting the country, with Albertans and Ontarians voicing concern over the role of illegal immigrants in Canadian society, a new **Angus Reid Public Opinion** poll has found. **46 %** of respondents (+5 since August 2009) say immigration is having a negative effect in Canada, while **34 %** (-3) believe it is having a positive effect.

September 09, 2010

[Society](#) » [Immigration/Refugees](#)

GLOBAL/MULTI-COUNTRY POLLS

**Employed or Not, Many Young People Desire to Migrate** (Click for Details)

Millions of young people worldwide would move away from their countries permanently if they had the opportunity, regardless of whether they have jobs at home. In most places, except the **Middle East** and **North Africa**, **Gallup** finds adults younger than 30 who are employed, underemployed, or not in the workforce are equally likely to desire to migrate.

September 8, 2010

[Society](#) » [Immigration/Refugees](#)

Australia's Environment Admired by Americans, Britons and Canadians (Click for Details)

Australia is regarded by many people in **Canada**, the **United States** and **Britain** as an attractive destination due to its natural environment, but several misconceptions about life in the country persist, a new **Angus Reid Public Opinion** poll has found.

September 08, 2010

[Society](#) » [Environment/ Disasters](#)

CYBER WORLD

**Bloggers Debate Growth of Government** (Click for Details)

Several controversies -- including the growth of anti-poverty programs, what liberals think of conservatives and the nature of President Obama's opposition -- stirred up divisive online conversation. Heated

commentary and even inflammatory accusations ensued from both sides of the political spectrum and often seemed to result in the ideological foes talking past each other. [Pew Research Center](#)

September 9, 2010

Society » Media/ New Media §

Events of the week in

Asia zone

► MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA; WEST ASIA; SOUTH ASIA;
NORTH ASIA; EAST ASIA

TURKEY

Political Front:

Preparations for the most awaited referendum that was held on 12 September dominated the **Turkish** political front last week. Total number of 151, 546 ballot boxes were reserved for the referendum as 49,446,269 registered Turkish residents and 2,556,335 voters registered overseas were expected to vote.

Geo-strategic Front:

The *US* embassy in Ankara has stated that the *US* Air forces will not participate in Joint military drills with **Turkey** in October as *Israel* has not been invited.

Meanwhile *Greece's* new foreign minister has called on **Turkey** to provide stronger support for peace talks in war-divided **Cyprus** after the landmark Sept. 12 **Turkish** referendum on constitutional reforms.

Turkish President has extended full support to *Bosnia-Herzegovina's* integration into EU and NATO, and has pledged support to *Bosnia's* NATO bid. Meanwhile **Turkish** Foreign Minister had two phone conversations with his *Bulgarian* counterpart over the issue of appointment of former spy and retired lieutenant colonel Gendzhev as Chief Mufti instead of Mustafa Ali Hajji, who was elected for the post last month that led to protests by Muslims in the country.

The third **Turkish** Red Crescent's train carrying 750 tons of aid materials including 500 tons of foodstuffs left for *Pakistan* to provide assistance to the food victims. Meanwhile wife of **Turkish** Prime Minister Erdogan also paid a visit to the flood-hit areas of *Pakistan*. The **Turkish** PM has also criticized oil-rich Muslim countries for their slowness and reluctance to send humanitarian aid to the flood-stricken country.

Economic Front:

Trade between **Turkey** and the autonomous *Kurdish* region in northern *Iraq* has doubled over the last three years. Three leading international finance institutions have decided to grant loans for construction of *Nabucco* natural gas pipeline project. Despite a recent rise in property sales to foreign nationals, major construction firms, real estate companies and retail associations have been complaining about tiresome legal procedures while selling real estate to foreigners in **Turkey**.

The axis of inflation in **Turkey** has shifted from west to east according to the latest data released by the **Turkish** Statistical Institute. Livestock imports have failed to pull red meat prices down to normal levels in **Turkey** and have moreover begun to threaten the balance of regional supply and demand.

Meanwhile **Turkey** and *Iraq* have agreed to revise the agreement on Kirkuk-Yumurtalık crude oil pipeline which connects the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk to the *Turkish* Mediterranean port of Ceyhan.

FERTILE CRESCENT

Political Front:

An **Egyptian** rights group criticized a government pledge to limit use of its emergency law as an "illusion," after the interior ministry ignored a court's request to release seven Shiite Muslims.

Egyptian political parties have marginalized the role of women within party structures and higher committees. President Hosni Mubarak has been seeking the continuation of US support for his presidency--or for the succession of his son Gamal to the top post. Thousands have registered in an attempt to secure an NDP official nomination in upcoming elections to the People's Assembly. Meanwhile newspapers in **Egypt** have been banned from reporting on an unprecedented poster campaign promoting the chief of intelligence, Gen Omar Suleiman, as a possible future president.

Opposition leader Mohamed ElBaradei has repeated a warning that civil disobedience could be resorted to if the regime continues to ignore demands for reform. Thousands of young **Egyptians** and dozens of prominent opposition figures have also extended their full support behind his seven reform demands that include ending the state of emergency, amending the Constitution to allow for real multi-party presidential elections, ensuring judicial supervision of the vote, and putting an end to election fraud. Meanwhile **Egypt's** leading democracy advocate made a forceful call for the nation to boycott November's parliamentary election, saying they were certain to be rigged and urging his young supporters to be patient and plan for a lengthy struggle.

The latest bombing in **Iraq** has indicated security lapses on part of the government.

Geo-strategic Front:



Iraqi President has expressed keenness to boost economic ties with **Iran**. Meanwhile the **Lebanese** PM has taken back his words accusing **Syria** for its involvement in the death of his father Rafik Hariri.

Economic Front:

The **Egyptian** pound (EGP) has marked a series of lows against the dollar in the past two weeks, partly because of a firmer dollar globally as weakness in the US economy prompts safe-haven flows into US Treasuries.

Social Front:

At a symposium organized by the **Egyptian** Council for Foreign Affairs, **Egyptian** Grand Mufti Ali cited verses from the Holy Koran to show that Islam permitted freedom of religion and did not compel anyone to change faith.

CENTRAL ASIA

Political Front:

A meeting with experts of regional headquarters to observe the conduct and organization of upcoming parliamentary elections in **Azerbaijan** has been held at the Baku branch of the International Institute of Monitoring Democracy Development.

Upcoming parliamentary elections in troubled **Kyrgyzstan** could be cancelled if politicians use the process to escalate tensions in the *ex-Soviet* state. Meanwhile the chief spokesman for **Kyrgyzstan's**

presidential administration has resigned ahead of Parliamentary elections. **Kyrgyzstan** has also requested *Russia* to assist in conducting the elections on October 10 in 15 cities and regions of RF.

In **Tajikistan** two suicide bombers in an explosives-packed car slammed into a police station in the northern city of Khujand, killing two police officers and wounding some 25 others.

Geo-strategic Front:

Two **Azerbaijani** soldiers were killed and another wounded in fighting on the front line of the *Armenian*-backed region of *Nagorno-Karabakh*. Meanwhile the Foreign Minister of **Azerbaijan** held meeting with the US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states held a joint anti-terrorist exercise code-named Peace Mission 2010 in **Kazakhstan** on September 9. Meanwhile **Uzbek** authorities have released a **Kyrgyz** border guard one day after an exchange of border officials between **Kyrgyzstan** and **Uzbekistan**.

Economic Front:

Kazakhstan's oil industry chiefs, public officials and NGO representatives have held a ground breaking ceremony of an aromatic hydrocarbons production unit at the Atyrau refinery. Meanwhile China has expressed readiness to invest \$200 million for the construction of three hydroelectric stations in **Kyrgyzstan**.



Social Front:

Several non-governmental organizations representing physically disabled people in Almaty have launched a campaign to bring attention to their problems in **Kazakhstan's** largest city. The wife of a jailed **Kazakh** opposition activist has called on international organizations to intervene after she received threatening phone calls.

383 thousands of **Kyrgyz** migrants have been working in *Russia*.

The **Turkmen** government has launched a mass campaign in support of its recent plan to spend \$1.9 billion on building a new "Olympic City" sports complex in Ashgabat. Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) has published a world ranking of the most generous countries drawn up in accordance with the scale of charity provided to citizens. The report is based on the survey of 500-2000 people in 153 countries of the world by Gallup agency.

IRAN

Political Front:

Iranian Foreign Minister reiterated that Iran would not bow to pressure meant to discourage the country from pursuing its nuclear rights.

Latest International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report on **Iran's** nuclear activities has reaffirmed Tehran's commitment to the agency's rules. **Iran's** envoy to IAEA said that the interference of the UNSC in Iran's nuclear dossier prompted the Majilis to halt implementation of additional protocol. **Iran's** atomic energy chief denied allegations by a dissident group that it has been building a secret uranium-enrichment site west of Tehran. Meanwhile an **Iranian** diplomat after having resigned from his post in Brussels last week to protest his government's policies has sought asylum in **Norway**.

A *Jewish* member of **Iran's** Parliament (Majilis) Siamak Moreh Sedq described the desecration of the holy Quran in the US as an "insane act without rational justification."

Geo-strategic Front:

President Barack Obama's top military adviser, Navy Admiral Mike Mullen, urged *Turkey* to help ensure **Iran** doesn't gain the capacity to make atomic weapons and to extend the period of its commands in *Afghanistan*.

Under extensive US pressure *South Korea* agreed to take unilateral measures against **Iranian** banks and individuals carrying out foreign exchange transactions. Meanwhile *Russia* has urged **Iran** to maintain cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), a day after Tehran rejected the agency's claim that it had restricted UN inspectors. Meanwhile the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has expressed readiness to discuss supplying nuclear fuel for Tehran's research reactor. *China* has opposed unilateral sanctions against **Iran** over its nuclear program, calling for a diplomatic solution on the issue. In the meantime the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) has passed a statement in support of **Iran's** nuclear program. The U.S. Secretary of State claimed that the *US* remains open to negotiations with **Iran** even as sanctions intended to constrain the country's nuclear program begin.

Former *Cuban* President Fidel Castro criticized Mahmoud Ahmedinejad for denying the Holocaust and said the **Iranian** leader's anti-Semitism doesn't help the cause for peace.

Meanwhile the **Iranian** President has stressed greatly on the importance of taking practical steps to promote relations with African countries in view of common interests with **Iran**.

Economic Front:

Japan has announced to suspend new oil and gas investments in **Iran** and to freeze the assets of 88 organizations and 24 individuals in its latest round of sanctions for the Middle Eastern country's nuclear program. *South Korea* has decided to ban any new investments for **Iranian** oil, gas and construction projects, joining nations including the U.S. in imposing sanctions for the Middle Eastern country's nuclear program. In the meantime the *Netherlands* **Iranian** Business Association (NIBA) criticized the new EU sanctions against **Iran** targeting its foreign trade, financial services, and energy and gas sectors. Tehran's imports have passed \$24.2 billion in the first five months of the current **Iranian** calendar year. **Iran's** car production has increased by 6.21 % in the first 5 months of the current **Iranian** calendar year to reach 602,052 vehicles. Also **Iran's** natural gas exports to *Turkey* resumed after having been halted due to an explosion in *Turkey* on August 25 that damaged a pipeline.

Iran has ranked the 19th largest producer and 20th largest consumer of electricity in the world. **Iran** has also exported more than 5.5 billion kWh of electricity to its neighboring countries during the past **Iranian** calendar year. **Iran's** carpet exports have increased by nearly 50 % to reach \$204 million in the first five months of the current **Iranian** year. Meanwhile **Iran's** oil production has decreased by around 15,000 barrels per day (bpd) in August.



Social Front:

The U.S. citizen Sarah Shourd left **Iran** for Oman after her release following a year in detention on spying charges.

Two **Iranian** grand ayatollahs issued *fatwas* calling for the killing of those who insult the Koran, including anyone who burns the Islamic holy book.

Police in **Iran** have arrested two smugglers who were trying to illegally sell antiques, including two ancient bodies of a king and a goddess belonging to 4000 BCE.

SOUTH ASIA

Political Front:

Opposition party has decided to launch anti-government protests over the issues of corruption and **Bangladeshi** five deals with **India** that compromise national interest according to the opposition groups. Meanwhile the government has expressed intention to file cases under Anti Money Laundering Act against anyone who manipulates the stock market or who trades on insider information.

Sixth and seventh rounds of elections were held in Nepal last week to elect new PM but ended without any fruitful result; as none of the leaders could get required majority i.e. 300 votes. Now eighth round of elections would take place on 26 September. In the meantime a controversial recoding of telephonic conversation between a *Chinese* and K.B.Mahara, a politburo member and a person very close to Prachanda was released in which Mahara asked *Chinese* for Rs 500 million to buy votes of parliamentarians to strengthen Maoists' position. Both the Maoist leadership and the Chinese ambassador however have denied the contents of the tape. **India** too has taken note of the reports of alleged *Chinese* monetary interference in the on-going Prime Ministerial elections in **Nepal**.

Paving the way for the current President Mahinda Rajapakse to seek reelection for a third term, **Sri Lanka's** apex court has ruled that the proposed constitutional amendments are consistent with the country's Constitution and can be approved with a two-third majority in the parliament. Meanwhile several legislators from the main opposition United National Party (UNP) have threatened to sit as independent members in parliament if the party crisis is not resolved soon.

Geo-strategic Front:

The Government of **Bangladesh** has announced US\$ 2 million relief assistance for the flood victims of **Pakistan**.

Railway officials of **India** and **Bangladesh** have finalized railway link alignment to improve connectivity between the two countries in Agartala. It will reduce the distance to Kolkata by nearly three times.

Residential ambassadors of three member states of UN Security Council, *United States*, *United Kingdom* and *France* met with caretaker Prime Minister Madhav Kumar of **Nepal** and Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal of Unified Maoists' Party separately and advised both not to be at loggerhead over the fate of United Nations' Political Mission in **Nepal** 'UNMIN'.

Indian Army Chief Gen VK Singh reached **Sri Lanka** on a five-day visit, which is expected to provide an impetus to defence cooperation between New Delhi and Colombo and lay the ground for a bilateral defence dialogue.

Economic Front:

Nepal stood in 130th position among the 139 countries that featured in Global Competitiveness Report 2010-2011, which was released by the World Economic Forum. **Sri Lanka's** benchmark share index hit a new record high as investors picked up diversified and banking shares, with low interest rates and the passage of a constitutional amendment boosting the market. **Sri Lanka's** construction industry has been in talks with a top Indian infrastructure finance company on setting up a fund to support the island's post-war construction activity. **Sri Lanka** President Mahinda Rajapakse has invited the country's business community to submit their views and proposals for the next year's budget that is being formulated by the Finance Ministry. The World Bank has announced to approve a US\$ 57.4 million credit to strengthen access to finance for the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in **Sri Lanka**.

Social Front:

Spread of Anthrax in different regions of **Bangladesh** has grabbed attention at social front. Meanwhile Eid celebration under strong security measures in **Bangladesh** also remained a potent development.



On the occasion of the International Literacy Day to celebrate the “Power of Women’s Literacy”, UNESCO issued a press release revealing that more than 4.5 million women in **Nepal** still cannot read and write. Meanwhile according to police reports on average of 12 persons daily commit suicide in **Sri Lanka**. The *Japanese* government has provided funds worth 57 million rupees for two early childhood care projects in **Sri Lanka**.

INDIA

Political Front:

Some media reports claimed that gap has erupted between PM Man Mohan Singh and his party. PM however rejected such claims and emphasized that he holds the same place within his party.

The **Indian** government has decided to hold caste census next year under an exercise to be carried out separately from the enumeration of population. Meanwhile the BJP has decided to stay quite on the upcoming ‘*Ram Janambhoomi-Babri Masjid*’ case verdict, expected on September 24. The Party has officially refused to say anything except that it will await the judgment. Meanwhile the RSS has slammed Home Minister P Chidambaram for his "saffron terror" remarks saying it has exposed the Congress' strategy of vote bank politics.

On the **Kashmir** issue, PM announced to hold a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) headed by him. Meanwhile about the Naxal problem, he said it was "more menacing than ever before" and required to be tackled in two ways -- addressing valid economic and social issues and also enforcing law and order.

The Election Commission has announced polls in Bihar in six phases spread over a month from October 21.

Geo-strategic Front:

India and *South Korea* have signed two Memoranda of Understanding. **India** has expressed serious concern on the number of projects and works China has undertaken in Gilgit-Baltistan areas and in Azad Kashmir. **India** has expressed keenness to resume negotiations for independently importing natural gas from Iran via a sea pipeline.

India has test-fired the 290-km range BrahMos cruise missile from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur off Orissa coast as part of trials by the defence forces to fine-tune its capability.

Economic Front:

Industry body Assoc ham has said that **India** may miss the USD 200 billion export target for 2010-11 due to sluggish demand in Europe, contrary to the government's assertion of meeting the target.

Social Front:

Save the Children, an NGO- has released a report according to which Children from the poorest communities are three times more likely to die before they reach the age of 5 than those from high income groups. According to the report 41 % decline in child mortality over the last two decades masks a dangerous expansion of the child mortality gap between the richest and poorest families in **India**.

EAST ASIA

Political Front:



Declining popularity of the **Indonesian** President Yudhoyono has been revealed by some recent surveys. In this regard the LSI survey showed that 77 % of the respondents thought the government had failed to properly handle a spate of explosions involving liquefied petroleum gas canisters, while 66 % objected to the government's decision to increase electricity rates. Meanwhile a survey carried by the **Indonesian** Survey Institute, indicated that if a national election had been held last month, the Democratic Party would have won with 27 % of the vote, 6 percentage points more than what the party managed in winning elections in 2009.

Geo-strategic Front:

Former vice president Jusuf Kalla called on the **Indonesian** government to take a firm stand in its border talks with **Malaysia** at an Indonesian Red Cross meeting. Meanwhile **Laos** and **Cambodia** have agreed to allow technical officials from the two nations to begin a border demarcation project in six locations along their common borderline in December this year. **Cambodia** has denied media's report that suggested the country might have a deal with **Iran** to build a nuclear power plant.

Economic Front:

Indonesia moved up 10 places to 44th in the latest Global Competitiveness Report (GCR) for 2010-2011 published in the World Economic Forum in Beijing. **Singapore's** economy is expected to expand at a record pace of 14.9 % this year as a surge in demand for the city-state exports fuels manufacturing.

Thailand ranked 38th in the world in terms of competitiveness for 2010, a decline of two spots from the year before, according to a competitiveness report by the World Economic Forum. Meanwhile **Brunei** has further improved on its Global Competitiveness ranking this year to 28th out of 139 economies. **Brunei's** standard for Halal certification is known to be one of the strictest in the world.

According to **Vietnamese** Ambassador to *Turkey*, increasingly developed bilateral relations between the two nations would reach their full potential as the latter has taken a key step toward expanding its diplomatic outreach to Southeast Asia, signing a cooperative agreement with the main forum in the region, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Social Front:

Ignoring the outrage of rights activists, the religious affairs minister reiterated his belief that an outright ban on Ahmadiyah would be good for both the country and the sect. In the last 40 years, **Thailand** has achieved significant progress on health development, especially on the reduction of maternal and child mortality, improved life expectancy, combating HIV/Aids, and introducing and enforcing legislation against tobacco and alcohol.

Over 1,000 people have died of AIDS in **Laos** over the past nine years (1990-2009) and it is estimated that the number of HIV infected people would reach 7,000 over the half decade.

KOREA

Political Front:

North Korea's ruling party has prepared its biggest political gathering in 30 years, fueling speculation Kim Jong II may use the forum to legitimize a transfer of power to his youngest son Kim Jong Un.

Meanwhile outgoing **Korean** Foreign Minister apologized for the nepotism scandal that has forced him to step down from the country's top diplomatic post.

Geo-strategic Front:

Turkey has shown a strong interest in joining **Korea's** KF-X fighter development plan.



South Korea and the *United States* have executed “realistic” training exercises to respond to various types of internal instability in **North Korea**. President Lee Myung-bak and *Russian* Prime Minister Vladimir Putin have agreed to work closely together to move the international talks on denuclearizing **North Korea** forward. Meanwhile under extensive US pressure; **South Korea** said that it would take unilateral measures against *Iranian* banks and individuals carrying out foreign exchange transactions.

Economic Front:

Toyota Motor Corp. has announced plan to sell about 20,000 plug-in Prius hybrids in the U.S. **South Korea's** unemployment rate declined to a three-month low as its economic recovery spurred hiring. Local economic experts believe the country needs to immediately start saving up for unification with impoverished North Korea that will cost at least 3,500 trillion won (\$3 trillion). Korea and Ecuador have agreed to boost cooperation in the fields of information technology, energy, infrastructure, trade and investment.

Social Front:

A **Korean** private tutor was caught earning more than 150 million won (\$130,000) a month, without paying tax, from illegally teaching students in an apartment in the affluent southern Seoul.

North Korean leader Kim Jong attended concerts to commemorate the 62nd anniversary of the country's founding. Meanwhile **North Korea's** Red Cross Society has proposed talks with **South Korean** officials to arrange reunions of families separated between the two countries. **South Korean** President Lee Myung-bak urged high-ranking government officials to hold themselves to stronger standards of integrity in their behavior.

Meanwhile a **South Korean-U.S.** anti-submarine exercise in the western waters of the *Korean* Peninsula has been postponed due to an approaching typhoon. §

Events of the week in

Africa zone

▶ WEST AFRICA; EAST AFRICA; CENTRAL AFRICA; SOUTHERN AFRICA

POLITICS OF SECURITY AND CONFLICT ISSUES

West Africa: Ghana: According to reports President Atta Mills has been accused of secretly sponsoring persons within the National Democratic Congress (NDC) to run down ex-President Jerry John Rawlings and his family.

Meanwhile in **Nigeria** Voter Registration is clashes with Hajj, according to a Muslim Group that has faulted the election timetable released by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), especially the voter registration, fearing that Muslims on the annual pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina could be disenfranchised.

President Goodluck Jonathan has met the governors elected on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) at Aso Rock, Abuja, and made known to them his decision to run in the 2011 presidential poll.

The **U.S.-Nigeria** Bi-national Commission convenes its third full working group met on September 13 in Washington for two days of talks that focused on the **Niger Delta** and **Nigeria's** role in regional security.

Central Africa: According to reports relatives of victims of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi may sue the **Belgian** government for having withdrawn its peacekeeping troops from **Rwanda** at the peak of the Genocide.

Meanwhile a former chief of staff to **Rwandan** President Paul Kagame says the draft U.N. report that accuses the **Rwandan** army of committing war crimes in the Democratic Republic of **Congo** should be made public.

D. R. Congo: The U.N. peacekeeping force in the Democratic Republic of **Congo** are extending special patrols another week in an area where more than 240 women and children were raped in recent weeks.

Elections: Cote d'Ivoire: The agreement reached on the final list of voters for next month's long-delayed presidential polls signals a major breakthrough in Côte d'Ivoire's electoral process, the United Nations peacekeeping mission in the West African nation said today.

For many Ivorians, it is hard to shake off the feeling that a long overdue election now scheduled for Oct. 31 is just another mirage, tantalizingly close but destined to evaporate as the date approaches.

Guinea: Two senior Guinean election officials were sentenced to a year's imprisonment each over irregularities in the first round of the presidential election in June.

Nigeria: It's Official: After extensive legal and administrative brainstorming, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) released the timetable for the conduct of the 2011 general election, fixing the presidential election for January 22 next year.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL ISSUES IN DOMESTIC POLITICS

Central Africa: Rwanda: Human Rights Watch called for **Rwanda** President Paul Kagame to allow open political space and permit opposition voices as he began his second term in office.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced that he will continue discussions with **Rwanda's** President on a soon-to-be released United Nations report on serious human rights violations committed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

D. R. Congo: The aid organization OXFAM says the number of women, children and even men who were raped recently in the Eastern DRC is now about 500. That's about double the figure currently being used by the United Nations.

Nigeria: Nigerian billionaire businessman, Alhaji Aliko Dangote, has donated \$2 million to the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) to help the survivors of the devastating floods in Pakistan.

Christian-Muslims Peace Movement (CMPM), Group Condemns Insecurity in **Nigeria** and has called on the Federal and state governments to as a matter of urgency put in place pragmatic policies and solutions aimed at ensuring security of the lives and property of the citizenry.

Gambia: The Director of African Democracy and Good Governance, Human Rights defender *Edwin Nebolisa Nwakame* was last week sentenced by Magistrate Abeke of Banjul Magistrates' Court to a mandatory jail term of six months imprisonment with hard labour.



A Scottish Missionary man serving a jail sentence for sedition in the **Gambia** has been freed from Gambian jail, the Foreign Office confirmed.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND DOMESTIC POLITICS

West Africa: Ghana: The country has been able to save close to \$300million, following the vigorous campaign throughout the country on energy conservation since 2007, the Energy Foundation (EF) has revealed.

The country, especially Accra, has been hit by a devastating shortage of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), leading to many households resorting to the use of charcoal.

Nigeria: The incessant setting and shifting of deadlines for ending the flaring of Gas by associated gas (AG) in Nigeria in spite of the 2005 ruling of Justice C. V. Nwokorie of the High Court of Benin that such practice had become illegal and it has been alleged attributed to the interest of some legislators.

The Federal Government of **Nigeria** came up with an update on the rampaging scourge of cholera epidemic in some parts of Northern States of the country, saying that 13,000 people have been infected by the disease, while 781 have lost their lives.

Central Africa: DR. Congo: The World Health Organization said polio is spreading in Democratic Republic of **Congo** from neighboring **Angola**, creating an international threat. Despite the vaccine for polio discovered more than 50 years ago, yet the disease is gaining a foothold in central Africa.



POLITICAL ECONOMY

West Africa: Ghana: India has sought a greater role in **Ghana's** energy sector, pitching for more tie-ups between ONGC Videsh (OVL), the overseas exploratory and acquisition arm of the state-run upstream major, and oil companies of the African nation.

The **Ghana** National Petroleum Corporation (GNPC) said on Monday that it had lifted about one million barrels of crude oil from **Equatorial Guinea** under an agreement signed between Ghana and Equatorial Guinea last May.

Liberia: The Governments of the Republic of **Liberia** and the Federal Republic of **Germany** on Wednesday, September 1, 2010 signed a Comprehensive Financial Cooperation Agreement.

Sierra Leone: London Mining's extended drilling programme at its flagship Marampa project in northern Sierra Leone has uncovered two structures with an estimated inferred resource of 111 million tonnes grading 33% iron.

Nigeria: The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) owes petroleum suppliers between \$3 billion and \$6 billion for previous imports, trade sources told Reuters, although the corporation said it was meeting its obligations.

Nigeria and the United Kingdom have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to facilitate the authorization of employment for dependants of Mission officers to engage in gainful employment during the period of the officers' posting.

Central Africa: ZIJIN Mining Group Co has dropped a plan to acquire a **Congolese** copper miner, the second time this year it withdrew from an overseas investment plan. §

Events of the week in

Euro Americas zone

▶ WEST EUROPE; EAST EUROPE; NORTH AMERICA; LATIN AMERICA & AUSTRALASIA

WESTERN EUROPE

Political Issues

On 7th September the president of the **European Commission**, José Manuel Barroso called for a common European foreign and defence policy during his first ever State of the Union address.

Economic Issues

The **EU** has resolved to have an oversight of national budgets where every member state will report its budget to Brussels, with the exception of **UK**. Meanwhile the **EU** Visegrad countries are challenging *rebatement* policy in the **EU** as **Britain** believes scrapping such will be detrimental to its net contribution which obviously means that London will be paying more than the rest of EU power house. **Ireland** is arguing that its bank is though facing serious debt problems but not on same track as **Greece**.

Saving the **Eurozone** from another financial woe was the underlying philosophy for the establishment of a financial regulation bodies by the EU. However the **European Commission** failed to have a consensus on resolution funds, a fund to be generated by the levy on banks in each member states. **UK, France** and the **Netherlands** stand against the funds, but it was welcomed by **Germany** and **Sweden**, while others are still undecided. The fund is expected to be a bailout measure for banks than making taxpayers pay for banks' mistakes in the period of financial crisis.

Germany along with few EU members rejected *American* policy of huge stimulus to stir up global economic recovery but rather held on to austerity measure which is now paying the **German** economy. The **German** government is asking other **EU** members to act on its model of strict and principled financial practices if Europe must survive and finally walk through its financial crisis.

EU Free Trade Agreement with *South Korea* is handicapped by MEPs reservation particularly from **Italy**. The reservation is sensitive because such agreement might affect the domestic industry of car producing EU members.

British government is stepping up effort to cut state spending and creating an autonomous enterprise as measures to balance the downing economy. Meanwhile according to reports prices in **Britain** rose by 0.2 % in August after a gain of 0.6 % in July.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

Italy is tailing behind **France** on expelling and dismantling Roma camps and has thus made the issue more momentous within the European parliament, it is clear that many MEPs are not comfortable with the manner in which the Roma expulsion is being handled as it divides the parliament and has caused an accusing finger to be pointed at the European commissioner for justice.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

The effort of the **European** Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), meant the Europe is deeply craving to see the Nabucco pipeline project operational. The pipeline is projected to bring gas from the Caspian to central Europe and is way of reducing energy dependence on *Russia*.

EAST EUROPE

Political Issues

Investigation into the plane crash that killed former **Polish** president and many Polish leaders has reawakened as a political issue the opposition, led by Jaroslaw Kaczynski, is using as challenge against the government.

Meanwhile the **Indo-Polish** relation is witnessing a good season as investments exchange between the countries is rising. The tie was further cemented by the visit of **Indian** PM to **Poland** during the last week.



Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich wants a political calmness among regional parties but the oppositions in the parliament are challenging government economic and energy policies. The opposition lawmakers launched protest against a hike in gas and utilities prices and other government policies.

Hungarian ruling FIDESZ party is putting all political cards on table to ensure a success at the forthcoming municipal elections, victory in the election is expected to enable the centre-right party muster more muscle to revive the weak economy through a formidable 2011 budget. Amid the election passion, there is insinuation that the ruling party plans to use the State Audit Office to discredit rival political grouping.

In **Belarus**, run up for presidential elections in underway but the election governing body is not set to announce date of the elections. Such atmosphere will further create misgiving for opposition seeing the present system as authoritarian.

Latvia will join the host of countries facing ageing population and emigration problem, therefore the growing advice to the government in order to save the weak economy is reversing the situation.

Economic Issues

According to the results of a survey conducted in June the opposition to **Poland's** possible adoption of the euro is growing in the country in reaction to the Greek public finance crisis, with 47% of Poles against the plan, compared to 38% in December 2009.

Meanwhile, the latest Global Competitiveness Report by World Economic Forum (WEF) puts **Poland** among the leaders in central and Eastern Europe (CEE) in terms of competitive economy. **Poland** rose to 39th from 46th most competitive economy worldwide last year.

For the countries in the region, 'Europe 2020' strategy has become a target upon which economies are expected to become stable, crisis free and having low level unemployment. **Czech** new government is taking this target seriously.

Slovakia's centre-right coalition government has united on plans to temporarily increase the rate of value-added tax (VAT) from 19% to 20% from January 1, 2011, in a bid to reduce the country's public deficit. Doing for its own economy, ECB is irked at **Slovakia's** rejection to participate in the Greek loan bailout

For an economy still struggling to maintain its stamina, borrowing from international financial houses will be the best option; **Hungarian** government is considering this as it sells bonds to international and domestic investors in order to get loans.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

President of **Belarus** Alexander Lukashenko is craving for good and cordial relation with neighbors in order to increase export of **Belarusian** products to its neighbors. Meanwhile, the dragging energy rift between **Russia** and **Belarus** has been asked by the Economic Court of the CIS to be given an out-of-court settlement.

Late Maharaja of Jamnagar of Gujarat who gave asylum to many displaced **Polish** citizens of Ashkhabad and Samarkand has been asked to be posthumously honored by the *Indian* government. If that is granted, it will further attest to the new level of *Indo-Polish* ties.

Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich hopes to borrow the Chinese model of which the organization of international events like (Beijing Olympics and Shanghai World Expo) could help showcase a country to the world.

According to the 'Progress in International Reading Literacy Study,' reports by Nozare.lv the **Latvian** schoolchildren read very little outside of school and have a bad attitude towards reading.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

In **Latvia**, *German* Chancellor Angela Merkel defended her government's decision to extend the lifetime of the country's nuclear plants against criticism that the deal guarantees huge windfall profits to utility companies.



Meanwhile the **Lithuanian** government is showing a transparent attitude to all international investors bidding to participate in the country's nuclear power plant construction. Ministry of Energy hopes to release name of successful investor by end of 2010.

Geostrategic Issues

Turkey position in the region should not be down played and Europe must recognize Ankara's importance to the EU. This was the message reiterated by the **Czech** Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg asking EU to keep to its promise.

Hungary-Slovak impasse does not need a third party and can better be resolved between the two countries. **Hungarian** Foreign Minister Janos Martonyi made this known in **Austria** as a way of dampening tension with **Slovakia** after the

Hungarian controversial dual citizenship legislation.

RUSSIA

Political Issues

In **Russia** the political atmosphere remains tense due to the repression of opposition, clamouring for a change in political participation. Opposition media, activities have been subjected to different form of attacks and such could better explain the reason for coalition of oppositions, forming a platform for the 2011 parliamentary elections and having a single nominee for 2012 presidential elections and.

Economic Issues

Russia financial sectors like their counterpart in other BRIC countries are showing good signs of financial stamina. The economy is showing resilience despite the looming economic troubles facing the country.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

The United **Russia** party leader Boris Gryzlov has said that **Russian** President Dmitry Medvedev has approved a plan that seeks an overhaul of the country's police system in order to curb corruption and usurpation of power.

North Caucasus remains the trouble spot for **Russia** and quenching the trauma is similar to what the *Mexican* government is passing through.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

Sino-Russia energy deal reaches a new level as China agreed to lend Russia about \$6 billion in exchange of increasing coal supplies over the next quarter century. Such deal is part of the ties knobbed by the BRIC countries.

Geostrategic Issues

An international tribunal is set to decide whether or not **Russia** was responsible for ethnically cleansing **Georgian** over the last two decades.

Russia-U.S Non proliferation pact is yet to have a certain approval by the U.S Senate due to republicans' skepticism of the pact that such pact could undermine U.S ability to build arsenal against its enemies. However, the uncertainty in nuclear pact is not obstructing **Russia-US** and **Russia-France** military cooperation.

NATO has reacted to the new **Russia-Armenia** strategic alliance, NATO sees no offense if **Russian** base sits in **Armenia** as the latter is a member of CSTO [Collective Security Treaty Organization] therefore no cause for alarm.

From the *Indian* standpoint, the just concluded quadripartite summit of **Russia, Afghanistan, Pakistan** and *Tajikistan* hosted by President Dmitry Medvedev was that Moscow decisively moved to de-hyphenate its relations with Islamabad and New Delhi.

US/CANADA

Political Issues

The **US** midterm election is around the corner and it is a big fight between the republican and democrat, the latter is on the defensive fight to retain House majority, while the former is embarking on an offensive campaigning to outmatch the democrats.

According to reports despite lingering effects of the recession, financial reports indicate that billions are being expended for capturing and retaining majority in the House.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

The plan to burn the Qur'an by Rev. Terry Jones in the **US** has been widely condemned even by the Obama administration. As an issue potent enough to brew a new surge of enmity towards the US, the Reverend was forced to cancel the controversial burning.

Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf has publicly disclosed that regardless of the indignation surrounding the Ground Zero mosque in the **US**, plan to construct the mosque will continue on site. Rauf believes the whole plan has to be made transparent to the public as a way to soften the ire of the antagonists.



Food, Environment and Energy Issue

Most **Americans** wait to read BP's investigation of oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, the report is expected to unravel what went wrong but analysts believe BP is less likely to shoulder much blame on itself in the report.

LATIN AMERICA

Political Issues

In **Brazil**, Ms. Rouseff, the hand picked candidate of President Lula maintains her lead over all opposition. Lula's one sided support for Rouseff has been a source of resentment in the political arena.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez' 21st Socialism has been under attack by opposition. Meanwhile **Venezuelan** Jew community believes the media is targeting Jews as un-loyal citizens, whose actions are

damaging to country's economy. In this regard a *Jewish* leader is lobbying Chavez for a political post in order to combat these anti-Jew sentiments.

Economic Issues

Venezuela might have lost **Colombia** as a trade partner due to their border brawl but **Argentina** is now filling that gap. This will be true for energy ties between **Argentina** and **Chile** as well, as the latter is expected to start exporting liquefied natural gas to **Argentina**.

Brazil-China-India economic relations are increasingly becoming stronger characterized by the huge investment exchange among these BRIC nations. Such atmosphere evidently adds to **Brazil's** bubbling economy with a remarkable GDP growth.

Venezuelan economy is not showing any signs of quick change, growth rate is little or nothing and oil revenue has equally dropped owing to less oil exploration in its Orinoco belt. Nonetheless, **Venezuelan** government earmarked million of dollars to be used in constructing and refurbishing social infrastructures in a state bordering **Colombia**.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

Credit goes to President Lula as the enrolment of Latin American students at the Federal University for Latin American Integration (Unila) in **Brazil**, is progressing swiftly, yet another snowballing pace of regional integration among the Latinos.

Rescue effort to bring **Chilean** miners trapped in underground mine remains a serious concern for the **Chilean** government, seeking all possible ways to rescue the miners. The recent case might have to force the government to reform mining laws.

Ending the menace of **Colombian** FARC rebel and **Mexican** drug lords would be two most worrisome issues in the region. Drug, weapon and violence are threatening lives and government and there is little doubt that it is not a protracted war to fight. Due to the escalation of the violence in **Mexico**, U.S Congress is slashing the *Merida* Initiative Plan fund.



Geostrategic Issues

Brazil-China relations is not limited to trade but transcends into the realm of strategic cooperation, the recent visit of *Chinese* officers to **Brazil** was geared at deepening relations promoting armed forces cooperation of the two countries. The Chinese defense minister also paid **Colombia** a visit.

As *Latin American* and *Chinese* leaders are increasingly developing interest in *Africa*, inducting *South Africa* into BRIC will be a less far fetched reality. *South Africa* is said to be a potential candidate for the group.

AUSTRALASIA

Political Issues

The new **Australian** coalition government is compromising the policy of increasing tax on the mining sector. It is true that the power sector was responsible for the decline of ex-PM Rudd when he attempted to implement tax policy on the powerful sector.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

According to reports in the Australian criminal system the court is ready to reduce 40% of punishment if a criminal would plead guilty within six weeks of arrest.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

The southeastern state of Victoria, **Australia** experienced its own share of the growing effect of global warming and climate change as rising flood waters threatened hundreds of **Australian** homes. Meanwhile **New Zealand** was also gripped by a recent earthquake. §