

CrisisWatch

A monthly bulletin by the ICG on current and potential conflicts around the world



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CrisisWatch:

- **summarises** briefly developments during the previous month in some 70 situations of current or potential conflict, listed alphabetically by region, providing references and links to more detailed information sources (all references mentioned are hyperlinked in the electronic version of this bulletin);
- **assesses** whether the overall situation in each case has, during the previous month, significantly deteriorated, significantly improved, or on balance remained more or less unchanged;
- **alerts** readers to situations where, in the coming month, there is a particular risk of new or significantly escalated conflict, or a particular conflict resolution opportunity (noting that in some instances there may in fact be both); and
- **summarises** ICG reports and briefing papers that have been published in the last month.

CrisisWatch is compiled by ICG's Brussels Research Unit, drawing on multiple sources including the resources of our more than 90 staff members across five continents, who already report on some 40 of the situations listed here. Comments and suggestions can be sent to crisiswatch@crisisweb.org.

February 2004 Trends



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March 2004 Watchlist



Conflict Risk Alert

Haiti
Sudan



Conflict Resolution Opportunity

Cyprus
Sudan

The International Crisis Group

is an independent, non-profit, multinational organisation, with over 90 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict. ICG's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts are located within or close by countries at risk of outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violent conflict. Based on information and assessments from the field, ICG produces regular analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international decision-takers, and backed up with high level advocacy. ICG is chaired by former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari, and its President and Chief Executive is former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans.



Africa

CENTRAL AFRICA

↳ Burundi Hutu rebel group FNL continued sporadic attacks on capital Bujumbura and surrounding areas, despite January peace talks – 1 civilian killed in mortar attack 6 February and thousands displaced after fighting 23 February. Former rebels continued returning from DR Congo under disarmament and reintegration program. Amnesty International issued report 24 February on increasing incidence of rape throughout country.

- ["Fighting displaces thousands in Bujumbura Rural"](#), IRIN, 26 Feb. 2004.
- ["Rape – the hidden human rights abuse"](#), Amnesty International report, 24 Feb. 2004.
- ["Former rebels continue to return from Congo"](#), IRIN, 11 Feb. 2004.
- ["Burundi rebels shell capital, kill one – official"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 6 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Africa Briefing, [Refugees and Internally Displaced in Burundi: The Urgent Need for a Consensus on Their Repatriation and Reintegration](#), 2 Dec. 2003 (in French: executive summary also in English).

↳ Democratic Republic of Congo Rebel militias continued attacks on UN peacekeeping mission (MONUC) in Ituri and Kivus regions – one UN peacekeeper killed 12 February. Violence by Mai-Mai militias in southwest has killed some 100 this year, and displaced 15,000. Former ex-militia group, Rwandan backed RCD Goma, threatened to leave power sharing government after one of its regional commanders arrested 23 February. But President Joseph Kabila claimed security situation improving so fast that UN peacekeepers could leave later this year.

- ["Congo ex-rebels threaten to pull out of government"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 24 Feb. 2004.
- ["15,000 Kitenge residents flee Mayi Mayi militia"](#), IRIN, 24 Feb. 2004.
- ["Kenyan UN peacekeeper killed in northeast Congo"](#), Reuters, 13 Feb. 2004.
- ["DR Congo peacekeepers 'can leave'"](#), BBC, 9 Feb. 2004.
- For background to the conflict in Ituri, see ICG Africa Report N°64, [Congo Crisis: Military Intervention in Ituri](#), 13 June 2003.

↳ Republic of Congo Disarmament and reintegration program proceeding slowly – estimated 37,000 former fighters yet to be reintegrated, and some 42,000 small arms still in circulation.

- ["The tragedy of the other Congo"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 12 Feb. 2004.
- ["DDR programme only partially complete"](#), IRIN, 2 Feb. 2004.

↳ Rwanda Government may release tens of thousands of alleged perpetrators of genocide if they confess by 15 March 2004 – some 90,000 currently in custody awaiting trial. International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), based in Tanzania, considering holding some trials in Rwanda to speed up trial process. Government denounced ICTR acquittal of genocide of 2 former senior government officials. President

Kagame declared his and family's wealth to state ombudsman in effort to promote transparency.

- ["Kigali denounces acquittals at UN tribunal"](#), IRIN, 26 Feb. 2004.
- ["President Kagame declares his wealth"](#), IRIN, 26 Feb. 2004.
- ["Rwanda to free genocide killers"](#), BBC, 19 Feb. 2004.
- For background to 2003 elections, see ICG Africa Report N°53, [Rwanda at the End of the Transition: A Necessary Political Liberalisation](#), 13 Nov. 2002. For background to ICTR, see ICG Africa Report N°69, [The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda: Time for Pragmatism](#), 26 Sept. 2003.

↳ Uganda Fighting and slaughters continued. Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels massacred as many as 200 civilians in northern refugee camp 21 February – victims shot, burnt and hacked to death. Protests in northern town of Lira against LRA massacre led to interethnic clashes 25 February killing up to 9. Parliament declared north and east disaster zones 25 February to ease humanitarian access. Earlier LRA slaughter claimed some 50 civilians in refugee camp 5 February. Army claimed it killed 37 LRA rebels 19 February and another 30 on 26 February – but continuing massacres raised doubts about government claims it was defeating LRA. Government began training and arming civilian militias to fight rebels. President Museveni pledged to cooperate with International Criminal Court if it investigates Ugandan defence forces, ICC having announced January it would investigate LRA.

- ["Ugandans lash out in fury after rebels kill 200 refugees"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 26 Feb. 2004.
- ["A crucial case for the International Criminal Court"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 27 Feb. 2004.
- ["Survivors recall Uganda attack: 206 dead"](#), *The Guardian*, 23 Feb. 2004.
- ["New direction in Uganda's old war"](#), *The Washington Post*, 16 Feb. 2004.

HORN OF AFRICA


↳ Ethiopia/Eritrea UN Special Envoy Lloyd Axworthy met Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi in Addis Ababa 20 February to discuss boundary dispute. Eritrea criticised appointment of special envoy as vehicle to reopen April 2002 ruling of Independent Boundary Commission – a ruling rejected by Ethiopia – and declined to meet him.

- ["Axworthy departs from region without meeting Isayas"](#), IRIN, 24 Feb. 2004.
- ["UN sees no sign Ethiopia-Eritrea war will resume"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 4 Feb. 2004.
- For background see, ICG Africa Report N°68, [Ethiopia and Eritrea: War or Peace?](#), 24 Sept. 2003.

↳ Somalia UN and Kenya warned disaffected parties against obstructing 29 January peace agreement, saying anyone doing so would be held accountable. Warning followed criticism of agreement by some faction leaders. Agreement approved by Transitional National Assembly in Mogadishu 8 February. Peace talks now in third and final phase in Nairobi – involving selection of parliamentarians and formation of interim government.


- ["Those blocking peace 'will be held accountable' – UN Security Council"](#), UN News Centre, 25 Feb. 2004.
- ["Plenary endorses agreement as talks move to final phase"](#), IRIN, 24 Feb. 2004.
- ["Anarchy and fighting in Somalia 10 years after 'UN mission'"](#), VOA News, 17 Feb. 2004.

- "Somalia deal 'must be enforced'", BBC, 4 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Africa Reports N°66, *Somaliland: Democratisation and Its Discontents*, 28 Jul. 2003; and N°59, *Negotiating a Blueprint for Peace in Somalia*, 6 Mar. 2003.


 Sudan Peace talks between government and southern rebels resumed in Kenya 17 February, though little progress made. Truce between parties extended one month 28 February to enable talks to continue during March. Issues to be resolved are administration of 3 disputed central regions and representation in transitional government. Conflict in western Sudan may be expanding – rebels claim to have opened new front in neighbouring Northern Kordofan state. Government said it had gained control of whole Darfur region – claim denied by western rebels. UN said 110,000 refugees have fled Darfur fighting into Chad, 25,000 since government claimed control of region.

- "Sudan rebels, govt extend truce as talks progress", Reuters AlertNet, 28 Feb. 2004.
- "West Sudan rebels say moving towards Khartoum", Reuters AlertNet, 25 Feb. 2004.
- "Amid hopes, fears of an incomplete peace in Sudan", CNN, 16 Feb. 2004.
- "Darfur – too many people killed for no reason", Amnesty International report, 3 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Africa Report N°65, *Sudan: Towards an Incomplete Peace*, 11 Dec. 2003.


SOUTHERN AFRICA

 Angola Government official said national elections may not be held for 2 years. Main opposition party, UNITA, accused government of deliberately delaying electoral process. Government set up new body to regulate loosely controlled diamond industry.


- "New body to monitor diamond mining sector", IRIN, 19 Feb. 2004.
- "UNITA accuses government of 'deliberately' delaying election date", IRIN, 12 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Africa Report N°61, *Angola's Choice: Reform or Regress*, 7 Apr. 2003.

 Swaziland State of emergency declared 18 February in response to AIDS crisis and widespread food shortages. UN agencies estimate 25% of population need food assistance, and 40% of adults HIV positive.

- "State of emergency declared", IRIN, 19 Feb. 2004.

 Zambia First national strike in 16 years on 18 February, as workers protested against wage freeze and higher taxes imposed to meet IMF conditions. Trade unions threatened 3 day strike in March unless government backs down.


- "Zambia unions threaten new strikes over tax, wages", Reuters AlertNet, 19 Feb. 2004.
- "Zambia threatens police action over planned strike", Reuters AlertNet, 16 Feb. 2004.

 Zimbabwe Amid rumours of ill-health, President Mugabe, 80, said 20 February he will have retired in 5 years. EU renewed sanctions against government 23 February. Government suspended acquisition of farms and claimed it wanted to clean up process of land reform. Authorities extended by up to 1 month period for which people can be detained without trial for


range of political and economic crimes. Official inflation reached 622.8% p.a. in January – Reserve Bank predicting official inflation of over 700% by March. BBC claimed youth militias being trained to torture and kill at government camps.

- "Zimbabwe's torture training camps", BBC, 27 Feb. 2004.
- "Nkomo seeks to end 'confusion' in land reform", IRIN, 23 Feb. 2004.
- "Zimbabwe's Mugabe has chest pains", Reuters, 22 Feb. 2004.
- "Zimbabwe's Mugabe extends detention period amid protests", VOA News, 17 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Africa Briefing, *Decision Time in Zimbabwe*, 8 Jul. 2003.

WEST AFRICA

 Côte d'Ivoire UN Security Council agreed 27 February to deployment of 6,240 UN troops and up to 350 police. UN force will replace 1,000 West African troops. 4,000 French troops will remain, not part of UN force. Government announced disarmament and reintegration process to start 8 March but rebels later claimed would not disarm until after national elections scheduled late 2005. Visiting UN rapporteur claimed "dynamic of xenophobia" in country. Rebel leader Ibrahim "Adams" Coulibaly shot dead 8 February – possibly by rival leader's supporters.


- "UN approves 6,000 peacekeepers to Ivory Coast", CNN, 28 Feb. 2004.
- "Ivorian rebels delay disarmament", BBC, 27 Feb. 2004.
- "Ethnic split stirs Ivory Coast crisis", BBC, 17 Feb. 2004.
- "Ivory coast rebel killed", CNN, 9 Feb. 2004.
- For background see ICG Africa Report N°72, *Côte d'Ivoire: The War is Not Yet Over*, 28 Nov. 2003.

 Guinea UN mission heads in West Africa warned 20 February that growing instability in Guinea was threat to region. Unrest growing since ailing President Conte re-elected to 7 year term in December – some 14,000 students went on strike 11 February.

- "Guinea threatens West African stability – UN", Independent Online, 21 Feb. 2004.
- "Student arrests as university strike spreads to interior", IRIN, 13 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Africa Report N°74, *Guinea: Uncertainties at the End of an Era*, 19 Dec. 2003.

 Guinea-Bissau Parliamentary elections due 28 March, following September 2003 coup by armed forces. Five soldiers killed and 14 injured February in clashes with armed groups in region bordering Senegal.

- "Guinea-Bissau army says armed groups kill 5", Reuters AlertNet, 28 Feb. 2004.

 Liberia Donors conference in NY raised \$520 million in pledges for reconstruction, exceeding expectations. Disarmament and reintegration program unlikely to start until mid-March at earliest. Refugees returning from neighbouring countries as peacekeepers restore security to border towns. Human Rights Watch issued report on plight of child soldiers.

- "Liberians return to safe areas", BBC, 25 Feb. 2004.
- "UN discontinues immediate \$75 cash payment to disarmed fighters", IRIN, 20 Feb. 2004.
- "Powell and Villepin team up on Liberia", *International Herald Tribune*, 7 Feb. 2004.

- "How to fight, how to kill: child soldiers in Liberia", Human Rights Watch report, 2 February 2004.
- For background, see ICG Africa Report N°75, *Rebuilding Liberia: Prospects and Perils*, 30 Jan. 2004.

☐ Nigeria At least 150 killed in 2 weeks of sectarian violence. Some 40 Muslims killed 26 February by Christians in Plateau state, central Nigeria, in retaliation for slayings of about 90 Christians by Islamic fighters 24 February. Sudanese man arrested 19 February for allegedly channelling Saudi funds to extremist Muslim group which launched abortive December uprising in northern Nigeria. Commission implementing decision of International Court of Justice to award disputed Bakassi peninsula to Cameroon delayed visit to region at request of Nigeria, which disputes ruling.

- "Forty killed in fresh violence in Nigeria", Reuters AlertNet, 27 Feb. 2004.
- "Attack on central Nigerian town kills at least 48", Reuters AlertNet, 25 Feb. 2004.
- "Sudanese arrested, accused of funding December Islamic uprising", IRIN, 20 Feb. 2004.
- "Mixed Commission delays visit to Bakassi peninsula", IRIN, 13 Feb. 2004.

☐ Sierra Leone UN warned too rapid withdrawal of peacekeepers from Sierra Leone – due to leave by end of 2004 – could contribute to regional instability. Five year disarmament and reintegration program completed 3 February, having disarmed over 71,000 fighters.

- "Guinea threatens West African stability – UN", Independent Online, 21 Feb. 2004.
- "Disarmament and rehabilitation completed after 5 years", IRIN, 4 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Africa Report N°67, *Sierra Leone: The State of Security and Governance*, 2 Sept. 2003.



CENTRAL ASIA

☐ Kazakhstan Asar, political party launched by president's daughter Dariga Nazarbayeva, held founding congress amid expectations party will lead in parliamentary elections scheduled October. Heavy rains and poor cooperation between Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan in managing shared water resources causing severe flooding along Syr Darya river near Uzbek-Kazakh border.

- "Test of regional cooperation as Syr Darya overflows", RFE/RL Central Asia Report, 16 Feb. 2004.
- "President-in-waiting?", IWPR, 6 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Asia Report N°72, *Is Radical Islam Inevitable in Central Asia? Priorities for Engagement*, 22 Dec. 2003.

☐ Kyrgyzstan President Akayev announced cabinet reshuffle; move seen as designed to bolster positions of allies ahead of 2005 elections. Passage of language law making fluency in Kyrgyz compulsory for government employees causing controversy among ethnic Russian and Uzbek minorities. Heavy rains and poor cooperation between Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan in managing shared water

resources causing severe flooding along Syr Darya river near Uzbek-Kazakh border.

- "Kyrgyz language law passes, war of words continues", RFE/RL Central Asia Report, 25 Feb. 2004.
- "New government, old faces", IWPR, 18 Feb. 2004.
- "Test of regional cooperation as Syr Darya overflows", RFE/RL Central Asia Report, 16 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Asia Reports N°66, *Youth in Central Asia: Losing the New Generation*, 31 Oct. 2003; and N°37, *Kyrgyzstan's Political Crisis: An Exit Strategy*, 20 Aug. 2002.

☐ Tajikistan Former presidential guard commander, sacked in January, named head of anti-narcotics agency. President Rakhmonov has dismissed or reassigned several officials in recent weeks in bid to consolidate power. Tajik border officials continue to seek takeover of monitoring duties along Tajik-Afghan frontier from Russian troops.

- "Tajik, Russian delegations review border-guard treaty", RFE/RL Central Asia Report, 25 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Asia Reports N°66, *Youth in Central Asia: Losing the New Generation*, 31 Oct. 2003; and N°51, *Tajikistan: A Roadmap for Development*, 24 Apr. 2003.

☐ Turkmenistan Lavish government-orchestrated celebrations marked 64th birthday of President Niazov, self-styled "Turkmenbashi" ("Leader of the Turkmen"), who continues to run one of world's most repressive regimes. Recent decree prohibits young men wearing long hair or beards.

- "Young Turkmen face beard ban", BBC, 25 Feb. 2004.
- "Flag day marked as president prepares to show 'real Turkmenistan' to the world", RFE/RL, 19 Feb. 2004.
- "People cleared to smarten up capital", IWPR, 13 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Asia Reports N°66, *Youth in Central Asia: Losing the New Generation*, 31 Oct. 2003; and N°44, *Cracks in the Marble: Turkmenistan's Failing Dictatorship*, 17 Jan. 2003.

☐ Uzbekistan International NGOs finding it increasingly difficult to work in Uzbekistan following imposition of new registration requirements. Recent government resolution allows imposition of 40% tax on foreign humanitarian assistance. Authorities arrested 62-year-old woman for speaking out against death of her son, who died in police custody after allegedly being immersed in boiling water; later released following international outcry. Heavy rains and poor cooperation between Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan in managing shared water resources causing severe flooding along Syr Darya river near Kazakh border.

- "Test of regional cooperation as Syr Darya overflows", RFE/RL Central Asia Report, 16 Feb. 2004.
- "First the son, then the mother", Transitions Online, 10 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Asia Reports N°72, *Is Radical Islam Inevitable in Central Asia? Priorities for Engagement*, 22 Dec. 2003; and N°46, *Uzbekistan's Reform Program: Illusion or Reality?*, 18 Feb. 2003.

SOUTH ASIA

☐ Afghanistan Security situation outside Kabul remained highly unstable. Attacks in Khost and Ghazni claimed 2 Afghans and 1 U.S. soldier. Four Afghan de-miners killed 14 February in western province of Farah, as were 5 Afghan NGO workers 25 February in eastern Paktika province. Australian commercial pilot killed 22 February after helicopter came under

fire from suspected Taliban rebels. Fierce fighting in northeastern Badakhshan province between rival commanders over hashish taxation. ISAF commander, Lt. Gen. Rick Hillier, claimed June presidential elections will proceed despite Taliban threats. President Karzai and UN mission not so sure. UN's task of registering estimated 10.5 million eligible voters boosted by 21 February U.S.\$22 million pledge from donor countries. As yet only 1 million voters registered.

- ["Afghan disarmament promises much, delivers little"](#), EurasiaNet, 17 Feb. 2004.
- ["Going easy on the Taliban"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 16 Feb. 2004.
- ["Multiple attacks hit southeastern Afghanistan"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 13 Feb. 2004.
- ["Afghanistan: ISAF to deploy outside Kabul as new Canadian commander takes over"](#), IRIN, 9 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Asia Briefing, ["Afghanistan: The Constitutional Loya Jirga"](#), 12 Dec. 2003.



India (non-Kashmir) 'Basic roadmap for peace' announced by Pakistan and Indian governments 18 February involves series of meetings over 6 months. Landmine blast killed 8 security personnel in West Bengal; militants of Maoist Communist Centre and People's War suspected. Indefinite curfew enforced in town in central state of Madhya Pradesh 22 February after clashes between Hindus and Muslims. Government talks with National Socialist Council of Nagaland scheduled for March. National election for lower house of parliament (Lok Sabha) set for 20 April to 10 May.

- ["Ultras strike with landmine, eight security men killed"](#), Outlook India, 25 Feb. 2004.
- ["Two years on, Gujarat's wounds are still raw"](#), *The Guardian*, 24 Feb. 2004.
- ["India's shining hopes"](#), *The Economist*, 19 Feb. 2004.
- ["Naga peace talks in March at Bangkok"](#), South Asia Monitor, 18 Feb. 2004.



Kashmir Promising developments in peace talks but violence continued between Indian troops and Kashmiri separatists; 7 killed in 20 February clash southeast of Srinagar; 17 killed 6 February in separate incidents. Pakistan urged militants to call ceasefire to allow diplomacy and peace talks to continue. United Jihad Council, umbrella organisation of different Kashmiri groups, split over ceasefire. Moderate faction of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference threatened to pull out of talks with Indian government over civilian deaths and allegations of human rights abuse.

- ["Pakistan said seeking Kashmiri militant ceasefire"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 25 Feb. 2004.
- ["Indian, Pakistani army commanders meet in Kashmir"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 23 Feb. 2004.
- ["Kashmir negotiations are set for May"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 19 Feb. 2004.
- ["Your place or mine?"](#), *The Economist*, 12 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Asia Reports N°s 68, 69, and 70, ["Kashmir: The View From Islamabad"](#), ["The View From New Delhi"](#), and ["Learning from the Past"](#), 4 Dec. 2003.



Maldives Newly formed Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) claimed several arrests made before 14 February protest march for justice and freedom. President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom previously pledged political reform and commitment to right of expression. Government denied arrests were politically motivated.

- ["Opposition arrests' in Maldives"](#), BBC, 13 Feb. 2004.
- ["Maldives: Yet another crackdown on peaceful political activity"](#), Amnesty International, 13 Feb. 2004.



Nepal Bitter power struggle between Maoist rebels, parliamentary political parties and King Gyanendra worsened. Four separate strikes in Kathmandu called by Maoists and Nepal's main opposition parties: 17 February strike in response to killing of 19 rebels by Nepalese army 6 February; subsequent 5-day strike called by Maoist students cut short 27 February as support waned. Several clashes between Maoists and government troops, including attack on Maoist camp in Kalkot district, claimed over 60 lives.

- ["Maoists call off strike in Nepal"](#), BBC, 27 Feb. 2004.
- ["Nepal's monarch seen coveting total power"](#), *The Washington Times*, 14 Feb. 2004.
- Comment by John Norris (ICG) ["Don't back a dirty war in Nepal"](#), *The Observer*, 12 Feb. 2004.
- ["Maoist guerrilla insurgency wreaks havoc, and change, in Nepal"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 6 Feb. 2004.
- For background see, ICG Asia Briefing, ["Nepal Back to the Gun"](#), 22 Oct. 2003.



ICG Asia Briefing ["Nepal: Dangerous Plans for Village Militias"](#), 17 February 2004. New civilian militias threaten to exacerbate the war in Nepal, which has already claimed nearly 9,000 lives. The

government's program to arm villagers is deeply flawed. First, it is not backed by effective training and oversight, raising the spectre of further abuses by undisciplined combatants. Second, disarming and demobilising militias after conflicts is notoriously difficult, as shown by other post-conflict situations around the world, where militias remain active as criminal groups. Third, their creation will force many villagers to take sides in the conflict – something most wish to avoid since it makes them targets for violence from both sides.



Pakistan 'Basic roadmap for peace' announced by Pakistan and Indian governments 18 February involves series of meetings over 6 months. Nuclear scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan publicly confessed involvement in nuclear proliferation 4 February; pardoned by President Musharraf 5 February. Recipients of nuclear technology claimed to be Iran, Libya and North Korea, but not terrorist groups. After calling for support from Islamic scholars Musharraf commenced military operations 24 February in tribal regions along Afghan border. Eleven suspected militants killed by troops in possible accident 28 February. Leader of banned party Laskhar e Tayyaba addressed audience of 3,000 jihadis in Islamabad. More than 300 mostly Sunni, hardline clerics banned from travelling during month of Muharram in government bid to prevent sectarian violence. Suicide bomber died 28 February in Rawalpindi mosque in attempt to target Shiites gathered for Muharram.

- ["Pakistan strikes Al Qaeda haven"](#), *Christian Science Monitor*, 25 Feb. 2004.
- ["Pakistan: Despite reform plan, few changes seen at most radical madrassahs"](#), RFE/RL, 24 Feb. 2004.
- ["India, Pakistan pursue peace talks in the slow lane"](#), *Christian Science Monitor*, 17 Feb. 2004.
- ["Pakistan's proliferator-in-chief"](#), *The Economist*, 5 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Asia Report N°73, ["Unfulfilled Promises: Pakistan's Failure to Tackle Extremism"](#), 16 Jan. 2004.



- ◁ Sri Lanka Political stalemate ended 7 February with President Kumaratunga calling elections for 2 April, almost 4 years ahead of schedule. Government condemned move as undemocratic. President also sacked 39 junior ministers to prevent them using positions to campaign. Tamil Tigers (LTTE) expressed concern over president's alliance partner, Marxist People's Liberation Front (JVP), who called current ceasefire national security threat. LTTE not to contest election but pledged support for moderate Tamil National Alliance (TNA). Tamil candidate campaigning to represent Prime Minister Wickremesinghe's party shot dead 1 March. Development aid pledged at Tokyo conference last year conditional on progress of peace talks.
- "Monks, Marxists at centre of S.Lanka election race", Reuters AlertNet, 23 Feb. 2004.
 - "Donors unhappy with Sri Lanka", BBC, 19 Feb. 2004.
 - "Sri Lanka opens election process", BBC, 17 Feb. 2004.
 - "Here we go again", *The Economist* (subscription), 12 Feb. 2004.

NORTH EAST ASIA

- ◁ China (Internal) China resorted to intimidation in bid to tame increasingly vocal Hong Kong pro-democracy opposition: threat to disqualify candidates for legislature if deemed insufficiently "patriotic" most direct intervention in former British colony's affairs since 1997 handover. Activists hope to introduce full democracy in Hong Kong by 2007. Chinese government announced release of dissident Tibetan nun Phuntsog Nyidron, day after U.S. State Dept human rights report criticised Chinese abuses in Tibet.
- "China frees a dissident Tibetan nun", *International Herald Tribune*, 27 Feb. 2004.
 - "Beijing again attacks Hong Kong democrats", *International Herald Tribune*, 26 Feb. 2004.
 - "Hong Kong reminded that China is in charge", *The Washington Post*, 19 Feb. 2004.
- ◁ North Korea Six-way talks ended in Beijing 28 February with 'modest gains'. Talks followed revelations that network of Pakistan's nuclear weapons scientist, Abdul Qadeer Khan, supplied uranium enrichment technology, contradicting Pyongyang's long-standing denial of uranium-based project. U.S. restated demand for total dismantlement of North Korea's plutonium and uranium programs. North Korea offered to freeze programs in return for energy and economic assistance, but will not dismantle programs until U.S. guarantees its security. No agreement reached other than to meet before the end of June. Impasse may be broken by S. Korea, Russia and China's willingness to supply aid and energy assistance. U.S. positive about talks; Chinese mediators stressed progress hampered by 'extreme lack of trust' between Washington and Pyongyang.
- "Korea talks: no deal, but new will", *Christian Science Monitor*, 1 Mar. 2004.
 - "Slow progress towards a deal", BBC, 28 Feb. 2004.
 - "Proliferating worries", *The Economist*, 24 Feb. 2004.
 - "China brings shift on nukes to Korea talks", *Christian Science Monitor*, 24 Feb. 2004.
 - For background, see ICG Asia Report N°61, *North Korea: A Phased Negotiation Strategy*, 1 Aug. 2003.

- ◁ Taiwan Strait Polls indicated President Chen Shui-ban running neck and neck with Lien Chan, leader of Kuomintang party (KMT), ahead of 20 March presidential elections. President Chen continued to draw fire – from China and further abroad – for plan to hold election-day referendum asking voters to approve boost in defences should China fail to redeploy missiles aimed at Taiwan. U.S. officials said referendum unnecessary, repeating opposition to any unilateral attempt to change status quo across Strait. Over 1 million people joined together in human chain along Taiwanese coast 28 February to protest Chinese missile deployments.
- Michael D. Swaine, "Trouble in Taiwan", *Foreign Affairs*, Mar./Apr. 2004.
 - "Human chain protest spans Taiwan", CNN, 28 Feb. 2004.
 - "Taiwan's Chen in poll pledge", BBC, 19 Feb. 2004.
 - For background, see ICG Asia Reports N°53-55, *Taiwan Strait I: What's Left of 'One China'?*; *Taiwan Strait II: The Risk of War*; and *Taiwan Strait III: The Chance of Peace*, 6 June 2003.



ICG Asia Report N°75, *Taiwan Strait IV: How an Ultimate Political Settlement Might Look*, 26 February 2004. The events of the last few months have shown that the risk of conflict across the Strait is still real: if it is to be reduced, there has to be some hard new thinking about how the apparently intractable current positions of both sides can eventually be reconciled. This report analyses how an ultimate political settlement between China and Taiwan might be reached in the longer term, perhaps over ten to fifteen years. Four different models are considered, the most likely being a "Greater Chinese Union", somewhere between a confederation and the "thinnest" possible federation, for which no existing terminology is quite suitable. Its loose and flexible form, drawing on the uniqueness of Chinese history and culture and an elastic interpretation of "what it means to be Chinese", would allow Taiwan to keep its distinct political, economic and social identity and satisfy much of its desire to be treated with more respect internationally, while allowing China to plausibly claim that reunification was a reality.

SOUTH EAST ASIA

- ◁ Indonesia Supreme Court 12 February acquitted Golkar chairman Akbar Tandjung of corruption charges re misappropriation of approx. U.S.\$4.5 million in state funds allocated for poverty alleviation. Decision sparked days of protests in number of cities. Demonstrators clashed violently with police, resulting in hospitalisation of more than 60 in Jakarta alone. Two sentenced to life imprisonment for involvement in October 2002 Bali bombing. Government completed draft revision of anti-terrorism law to transfer more power to security forces to deter acts of terrorism.
- "Justice still eludes Indonesia", *International Herald Tribune*, 19 Feb. 2004.
 - "Experts seek to dispel distrust between government and Papua", *The Jakarta Post*, 18 Feb. 2004.
 - "18 suspected rebels killed in Indonesia's Aceh", *The Age* (AP), 9 Feb. 2004.
 - For background, see ICG Asia Report N°71, *Indonesia Backgrounder: A Guide to the 2004 Elections*, 18 Dec. 2003.



ICG Asia Report N°74, *Indonesia Backgrounder: Jihad in Central Sulawesi*, 3 February 2004. Recent violence in Central Sulawesi suggests the nature and gravity of the terrorist threat in Indonesia must be reassessed. While the shorter-term prospects are somewhat encouraging, there is an under-appreciated, longer-term security risk. In October 2003, attacks in Poso and Morowali killed thirteen, mostly Christian villagers. Most of those responsible were local recruits from a militia spawned by, though institutionally distinct from, Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), South East Asia's largest terrorist group. Close examination reveals important rifts within JI: a more radical element pushes for attacks on Western targets but a majority views such attacks as undermining the longer-term strategy for an Islamic state in Indonesia.

East Timor UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan urged a scaled-back peacekeeping force be kept in place for another year to guard against unexpected developments. East Timor Foreign Minister Jose Ramos-Horta agreed with Annan's recommendation. Presently 1,750 UN troops and military observers in country. A force of 310 soldiers will remain after 20 May.

- "Uneasy calm on island frontier", *The Australian*, 23 Feb. 2004.
- "Australia opposes UN extension of E Timor mission", ABC News, 21 Feb. 2004.
- "UN praises East Timor progress", BBC, 21 Feb. 2004.

Myanmar/Burma Talks between government and Karen National Union (KNU) aimed at consolidating provisional ceasefire ended 25 February, without significant advances. Six previous attempts to find agreement on relocation of armed forces, delineation of KNU territory and fate of internally displaced Karen failed. Government indicated multi-party talks on new constitution to be resumed later this year. All parties to be included in democracy "road map," but no date given for releasing Aung San Suu Kyi or lifting restrictions on her National League for Democracy (NLD).

- "KNU rebels conclude second round of peace talks with Myanmar junta", Asia Pacific News (AFP), 26 Feb. 2004.
- "Signs of movement on Myanmar", Asia Times Online, 13 Feb. 2004.
- "Myanmar military vows constitution talks this year", Reuters AlertNet, 9 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Asia Report N°52, *Myanmar Backgrounder: Ethnic Minority Politics*, 7 May 2003.

Philippines Political violence mounted in run-up to 10 May general elections. Police claimed 33 people killed and 86 wounded in at least 23 election-related attacks. Supreme Court ruling on whether popular presidential candidate Fernando Poe able to stand for office expected early March; a ruling against Poe will probably lead to violent demonstrations. Ferry explosion 29 February – approximately 180 missing - Islamist terrorist group Abu Sayyaf's claim of responsibility dismissed as propaganda by government. Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and government agreed to resume peace talks in April and to prepare for immediate deployment of Malaysian-led international ceasefire monitoring team. Eight police killed by Communist New People's Army (NPA) ambush on central Philippine island of Masbate 16 February. Attack came 2 days after government and National Democratic Front

(includes Philippines Communist Party and their armed faction NPA) concluded peace talks. Talks to resume in March.

- "Muslim extremist group claims responsibility for ferry fire", *International Herald Tribune*, 29 Feb. 2004.
- "Grenade blast kills man at Philippines election rally", Reuters AlertNet, 19 Feb. 2004.
- "Eight troops die in Philippine communist attack", Reuters AlertNet, 16 Feb. 2004.
- "Philippines peace push agreed", BBC, 14 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see "Beyond the Abu Sayyaf", *Foreign Affairs*, Jan./Feb. 2004.

Thailand Reports put death toll from southern sectarian unrest at 45 since 4 January. Nine arrested in connection with violence. Thai police recruiting additional 24,000 so officers can be sent to every village in 3 southern provinces (Pattani, Narathiwat and Yala) where martial law remains in place. Mass school closure 18 February in response to threats of violence aimed at teachers and students. PM Thaksin Shinawatra promised region U.S.\$255 million for economic and educational projects.

- "Thai arrests over southern raid", BBC, 24 Feb. 2004.
- "Thai PM says guns stolen from restive south went to Aceh rebels", Asia Pacific News, (AFP), 18 Feb. 2004.
- "Thailand to maintain martial law in south", Reuters AlertNet, 10 Feb. 2004.

PACIFIC

Papua New Guinea PM Sir Michael Somare awaits ombudsman's decision on validity of January parliament adjournment (to escape vote of no confidence). Only 8 out of 300 Australian police and civil servants deployed as part of program to address growing lawlessness - further deployment delayed by parliamentary hiatus.

- "PNG: No immunity for Aust police", *The Australian*, 27 Feb. 2004.

Europe

BALKANS

Albania Opposition parties held protest rallies 7 and 21 February against PM Fato Nano. Democratic Party leader, former president Sali Berisha called for Nano's resignation and accused him of corruption and poor economic policies. Attempt by Berisha to compare situation with Georgia failed after first demonstration turned violent.

- "Thousands join Albania protests", BBC, 21 Feb. 2004.
- "Berisha Tones Down Nano Threat", IWPR Balkans Crisis Report N°480, 13 Feb. 2004.



ICG Europe Report N°153, *Pan-Albanianism: How Big a Threat to Balkan Stability?* 25 February 2004. Fears of a "Greater Albanian" agenda driving a new round of Balkan conflict are unwarranted. The idea of a single state unifying ethnic Albanians currently spread out over six countries and entities simply does not interest most Albanians. Despite some Balkans observers' fears, the desire to territorially unify all the Albanian people has long held far more power as myth than as a practical *cont*

cont political agenda. The uncertainty over Kosovo's final status will continue to make neighbouring states uncomfortable, but the idea of separate Albanian entities in the Balkans is broadly accepted.

↳ Bosnia & Herzegovina Membership in NATO's Partnership for Peace program at risk after failure to appoint national defense minister. NATO-led troops continued search for former Bosnian Serb president Karadzic. His political ally Momcilo Krajisnik on trial 3 February as highest ranking Bosnian Serb before Hague War Crimes Tribunal. International sanctions imposed by High Rep. Lord Ashdown 9 February on 10 Bosnian Serbs, including former Bosnian Serb president Mirko Sarovic, all accused of being part of criminal network protecting Karadzic. Ashdown's proposal to unite Mostar criticised by Croat and Bosnian politicians.

- "Bosnia risks PFP over stalled defense reforms", ISN, 25 Feb. 2004.
- "Ashdown calms nationalism fears", BBC, 13 Feb. 2004.
- "Discord Over Mostar Unity Plans", IWPR, Balkan Crisis Report, N°480, 12 Feb. 2004.
- "Bosnia: Tightening the Noose Around Karadzic", Transitions Online, 10 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Balkans Reports N°150, *Building Bridges in Mostar*, 20 Nov. 2004 and N°146, *Bosnia's Nationalist Governments: Paddy Ashdown and the Paradoxes of State Building*, 22 Jul. 2003.

↳ Kosovo UNMIK prodded Kosovo's provisional institutions (PISG) toward renewed dialogue with Belgrade and reactivated UNMIK-Belgrade high working group although Belgrade still lacked government after recent elections. UNMIK and PISG completed joint draft standards implementation plan while Kosovo Serbs maintained boycott. UNMIK chief Holkeri's warning of final status review delay beyond mid-2005 if standards not met drew threat from Prime Minister Rexhepi of unilateral action. Stalling of privatisation continued to strain UNMIK-PISG relations. Two Kosovo Serbs shot dead near Lipjan 19 February. Environment minister Ethem Ceku survived car bombing. Prizren Kosovo Protection Corps commander arrested 16 February for war crimes. Kosovo Protection Corps commander Agim Ceku detained in Budapest on Serbian Interpol warrant, then released 29 February.

- "Instability fears keep U.S. in Kosovo", *The Guardian*, 23 Feb. 2004.
- "Holkeri presents his case to the Security Council", RFE/RL, 13 Feb. 2004.
- "Kosovo says U.N. frustrates progress", *The Washington Times*, 5 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Europe Report N°148, *Two to Tango: An Agenda for the New Kosovo SRS*, 3 Sept. 2003.

↳ Macedonia President Trajkovski, architect of 2001 Ohrid peace agreement, killed in 27 February plane crash. Despite loss political situation remained stable. Speaker of parliament, Ljubco Jordanovski, to serve as acting president until elections, possibly in March or April.

- "Macedonia: Skopje unlikely to depart from the path of Trajkovski", RFE/RL, 27 Feb. 2004.
- "Macedonia's man of peace", IWPR Balkan Crisis Report N°482, 27 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Europe Report N°149, *Macedonia: No Time for Complacency*, 23 Oct. 2003.

↳ Serbia Kostunica's Democratic Party of Serbia likely to form minority government first week of March with G17+, Serbian Movement of Renewal (SPO) and New Serbia (NS), relying on support of Milosevic's Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS). Dragan Marsicanin (DSS) elected as Serbian parliament speaker with SPS support. New elections seemingly avoided for time being. Defence Minister Boris Tadic won 22 February power struggle inside Democratic Party (DS) for party president. Presiding judge in Milosevic trial resigned for health reasons, effective 31 May; prosecutors concluded their case after 2 years of hearings. Kostunica said that further cooperation with Hague Tribunal will not be priority. Milosevic to be tried in absentia in Belgrade for murder of former Serbian president Ivan Stambolic.

- "Justice on trial", *The Economist*, 26 Feb. 2004.
- "Kostunica's Faustian Pact", RFE/RL Balkan Report Vol. 8 N°7, 20 Feb. 2004.
- "Comment: Serbia Can Survive Without US Aid", IWPR Balkan Crisis Report N°481, 20 Feb. 2004.
- "Serbian President Asks Kostunica To Form Government", RFE/RL, 20 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Europe Report N°152, *Southern Serbia's Fragile Peace*, 9 Dec. 2003.

CAUCASUS

↳ Azerbaijan Opposition activists detained following post-election demonstrations in October 2003 went on hunger strike for 2 weeks to protest conditions of incarceration and demand fair trials.

- "Detained Azerbaijani oppositionists launch hunger strike", RFE/RL, 10 Feb. 2004.

↳ Georgia Parliament approved constitutional amendments strengthening powers of presidency and creating post of prime minister. Amendments criticised as undemocratic and aimed solely at installing Zurab Zhvania, Minister of State, as PM. Parliament also approved new cabinet – one of Europe's youngest. Government's aggressive anti-corruption campaign continued. Son-in-law of former president Eduard Shevardnadze arrested aboard plane bound for Paris on suspicion of tax evasion. Reports of media intimidation and police abuses raising some concern. Council of Europe Secretary General Walter Schwimmer urged lowering of 7% threshold for political party representation in parliament under proportional voting system, as legislature could have only single party following 28 March elections. In Ajara, authoritarian leader Aslan Abashidze under growing pressure from opposition groups; claimed Tbilisi preparing armed invasion of breakaway region. Separatist republic of Abkhazia sent delegation to Tbilisi for talks on resolving dispute, but refused to participate in 17-18 February negotiations in Geneva.

- "Shevardnadze son-in-law arrested", BBC, 20 Feb. 2004.
- "Critics say police violence, media intimidation on the rise", RFE/RL, 20 Feb. 2004.
- "Constitution changes cause uproar", IWPR, 13 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Europe Report N°151, *Georgia: What Now?*, 3 Dec. 2003.

↳ Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan) Armenian officer brutally murdered at NATO Partnership for Peace training course in Hungary, allegedly by Azerbaijani counterpart. Incident

dealt further blow to already dismal prospects for near-term settlement of Nagorno-Karabakh dispute.

- ["Azerbaijan says it is in 'no hurry' to settle Nagorno-Karabakh conflict"](#), Eurasianet.org, 27 Feb. 2004.
- ["Azerbaijani kills Armenian at peace program"](#), *The Washington Post* (AP), 19 Feb. 2004.

EASTERN EUROPE

➤ Chechnya (Russia) Authorities blamed Chechen rebels for 6 February Moscow subway bomb, which killed 39 according to officials, though toll likely much higher. Chechen president Aslan Maskhadov denied claims and condemned attack. Former president Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev killed in Qatar car bombing 13 February. Two Russian agents detained, prompting protests from Moscow.

- ["Assassinated leader buried"](#), CNN, 14 Feb. 2004.
- ["No evidence required: Chechens blamed for subway bombing"](#), Jamestown Foundation Chechnya Weekly, 11 Feb. 2004.

➤ Moldova Peace plan worked out by 3 mediators of Transdnistria conflict – OSCE, Russia, and Ukraine – published in Chisinau 16 February. Plan calls for breakaway region to become "federation subject", but leaves key details out - promptly rejected by Transdnistria. Negotiations to resume in late March; indications EU will play larger role. No signs Russia prepared to withdraw "peacekeeping" contingent from Transdnistria, though officials claim to be committed to resuming evacuation of ammunition.

- ["Moldova separatists warn of war if West steps in"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 24 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Europe Report N°147, [Moldova: No Quick Fix](#), 12 Aug. 2003.

WESTERN EUROPE/MEDITERRANEAN

➤ Basque region (Spain) Basque terrorist group ETA announced limited ceasefire with Catalonia. Move criticised by mainstream Spanish political parties, all of which oppose negotiations with ETA. Over 500 kgs of explosives believed to be destined for Madrid intercepted by security forces 29 February – bomb would have been largest by ETA in 30-year history.

- ["Spanish police stop van with 500 kgs of explosives"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 29 Feb. 2004.
- ["ETA sets Catalonia truce"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 19 Feb. 2004.

➤ 🇨🇵 Cyprus Long awaited talks started 19 February between Turkish and Greek Cypriot leaders Rauf Denktaş and Tassos Papadopoulos. Talks focused on previously rejected plan of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, which proposes reunification of Cyprus as "The United States of Cyprus" with 2 federal regions, 1 for 650,000 Greek Cypriots, the other for 180,000 Turkish Cypriots. Disagreement exists over return of around half 200,000 Greek Cypriot refugees to Turkish Cypriot north. Denktaş said number too high, Greek side insisted all refugees should have right to go back to their homes. U.S., UN, EU strongly back talks - U.S. promised to donate 'generously' if accord is reached. If no agreement by 22 March Turkish and Greek leaders will join negotiations. Should deadlock remain Annan will have

authority to resolve outstanding issues before deal put to all Cypriots in 21 April referendum.

- ["U.N. settlement plan hotly contested by Cypriots on both sides"](#), SFGate.com (AP), 22 Feb. 2004.
- ["Turkish and Greek leaders of Cyprus are far apart on core issues on talks to reunify island"](#), SFGate.com (AP), 21 Feb. 2004.
- ["One last push for peace"](#), *The Economist*, 19 Feb. 2004.
- ["EU: Pressure's On Turkey To Move On Cyprus"](#), RFE/RL, 6 Feb. 2004.

➤ Northern Ireland (UK) Good Friday Agreement Review started 3 February. Progress in doubt after police blamed Provisional IRA for attempted kidnapping of alleged dissident republican in Belfast 20 February. David Trimble, leader of moderate UUP, threatened to pull out of review unless UK government takes action. Paisley's DUP 'Devolution Now' document largely rejected as alternative to existing Agreement but praised for invigorating discussions. DUP suggested corporate assembly involving all 108 assembly members in running government before outstanding questions of IRA arms and paramilitary activity resolved. Sinn Fein responded with own proposals to revive Stormont with 10 government departments.

- ["NI process in 'dangerous crisis'"](#), BBC, 29 Feb. 2004.
- ["Blair warns Sinn Féin as IRA kidnap denial is scorned"](#), *The Guardian*, 26 Feb. 2004.
- ["Call to Speed Up Agreement Review"](#), *The Scotsman*, 16 Feb. 2004.
- ["In N. Ireland, hard-liner reborn as power broker"](#), *The Boston Globe*, 8 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Europe Briefing, [Monitoring the Northern Ireland Ceasefires: Lessons from the Balkans](#), 23 Jan. 2004.


Latin America /Caribbean

LATIN AMERICA

➤ Bolivia Alleged coup plot to take over legislative assembly broken up by authorities late January, made public early February. Government's U.S. backed campaign to eradicate coca leaf continues to cause unrest among growers. Car bomb killed government prosecutor with reputation for fighting drug operations 27 February.

- ["Prosecutor killed in Bolivia bomb"](#), BBC, 28 Feb. 2004.
- ["Alleged plot renews fears in Bolivia"](#), *The Guardian*, 5 Feb. 2004.
- ["Dispatches from Bolivia"](#), Slate, 5 Feb. 2004.
- For background see ["Indigenous movements and democracy in the Andean countries"](#), *The Economist*, 19 Feb. 2004.

➤ Colombia Government claims paramilitary groups have killed more than 250 since ceasefire announced December 2002, but that killings down by 44% over previous year. U.S and UN complained of continuing paramilitary violence. 22 members of AUC paramilitary group and 10 soldiers killed in fighting 21 February. Government claimed some 17 members of FARC rebel group and 8 members of ELN rebel group killed in clashes with armed forces on weekend of 21 February. FARC responded 25 February with attack in



south, killing 12 soldiers and kidnapping 3 businessmen – President Uribe sacked general in command of region. U.S. added leaders of FARC and AUC to its list of international drugs traffickers.

- [“Colombia rebels counterattack”](#), BBC, 26 Feb. 2004.
- [“Death toll from weekend clashes in Colombia rises to 66”](#), CNN, 24 Feb. 2004.
- [“Colombia ceasefire fails to end killings – govt”](#), Reuters, 19 Feb. 2004.
- [“Colombia turns up heat on rebel leaders”](#), *The Guardian*, 17 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Latin America Report N°6, [Colombia: President Uribe's Democratic Security Policy](#), 13 Nov. 2003.

➤ Dominican Republic Border with Haiti closed mid-February to prevent spillover of violence and flood of refugees from Haitian uprising. Haitian rebels based in Dominican Republic taking part in fighting, leading to renewed tension between 2 countries. Following departure of Haiti's President Aristide, some officials from his government sought asylum in Dominican Republic. President Mejia determined to seek re-election in May vote despite widespread opposition, including from some in own party.

- [“Aristide supporters arrive in Dominican Republic”](#), Reuters AlertNet, 29 Feb. 2004.
- [“Unpopular Dominican president defends performance”](#), Reuters, 27 Feb. 2004.
- [“Suspicious rife along Dominican border”](#), *San Jose Mercury News*, 19 Feb. 2004.
- [“Dominican Republic closes border with Haiti”](#), VOA News, 17 Feb. 2004.

➤ Ecuador Gunmen opened fire on president of powerful National Indian Federation 2 February – he escaped injury, but 3 family members wounded. Police clashed 17 February with hundreds of Indian protesters during second day of demonstrations against government austerity measures - 17 injured. President Gutiérrez postponed his visit to Colombia, scheduled for early March.

- [“17 injured in demonstrations in Ecuador”](#), *The Guardian*, 18 Feb. 2004.
- [“Gunmen attack Ecuador Indian leader, family wounded”](#), Reuters AlertNet, 2 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see [“Indigenous movements and democracy in the Andean countries”](#), *The Economist*, 19 Feb. 2004.

➤ Guatemala Former President Alfonso Portillo fled country ahead of charges of corruption by month-old government of Oscar Berger after Congress lifted his immunity from prosecution.

- [“Former Guatemalan president leaves country amid corruption probe”](#), CNN, 19 Feb. 2004.

➤ ➤ Haiti Following rebel uprising in north and violence in capital, and calls from France and U.S. for him to step aside, President Aristide resigned and left country 29 February for Central African Republic. Rebels, including former military and police – many of whom served under notorious Duvalier and Cedras' dictatorships – control second largest city, Cap-Haïtien, and most of north, and have begun moving into capital Port-au-Prince. Violent

gangs, supporters of President Aristide, looting and terrorising civilians in capital. More than 80 killed since uprising commenced 5 February. UN Security Council voted unanimously to send multinational peacekeeping force to Haiti for up to 3 months and President Bush ordered deployment of marines to Haiti, with first contingent arriving late 29 February. Up to 200 French troops due to arrive 1 March.

- [“U.S. marines land in Haiti”](#), CNN, 1 Mar. 2003.
- [“Aristide resigns and flees Haiti; US sends marines”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 1 Mar. 2004.
- [“Haiti's spreading rebellion”](#), *The Economist*, 26 Feb. 2004.
- [“Rebels hunt supporters of Aristide”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 24 Feb. 2004.

➤ Peru Beleaguered President Toledo reshuffled his cabinet for fourth time in less than 3 years. Polls show his popularity at 7%. Ex-President Fujimori, in exile in Japan, seeking to build political support for possible return to Peru – facing criminal charges if he does return. Angry coca farmers demanded greater financial assistance from government to grow alternative crops.

- [“Fujimori plots political revival”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 24 Feb. 2004.
- [“Peru's coca growers demand help”](#), BBC, 19 Feb. 2004.
- [“Jury still out on ‘last chance’ Peru Cabinet”](#), CNN, 16 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see [“Indigenous movements and democracy in the Andean countries”](#), *The Economist*, 19 Feb. 2004.

➤ Venezuela Election board ruled 3-2 that more than 1 million of 3.4 million signatures on petitions for referendum to recall President Chavez need to be certified by petitioners – to occur on 16 March. Petitions submitted December require at least 2.4 million valid signatures to enable referendum to proceed. Board decision denounced by opposition as violation of constitution. Two killed as thousands protested election board decision 27 February – Chavez responded by warning he would crack down on “subversion”.

- [“Venezuela's Chavez warns foes after summit clashes”](#), Reuters AlertNet, 28 Feb. 2004.
- [“Anti-Chavez drive hits big obstacle”](#), *The Miami Herald*, 26 Feb. 2004.
- [“Opposition sees bias in bid to depose Chavez”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 26 Feb. 2004.
- [“Venezuela on the edge”](#), *The Washington Times*, 21 Feb. 2004.



Middle East /North Africa

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

➤ Israel/occupied Territories International Court of Justice held 3 days of hearings 23-25 February on Israeli security fence. Israel claimed Court has no jurisdiction in matter, sent no representatives to hearings, which saw presentations from several parties opposed to barrier. U.S. and EU said Court not appropriate forum for resolving dispute. Day before hearings began, suicide bomber killed 8 others on bus in Jerusalem. On 29 February Israel's High Court ordered work on barrier delayed 1 week while Palestinian complaints considered. Israeli raid into

Gaza 11 February left 14 dead, and 28 February missile strike in Gaza City killed 3 militants and young boy. Ariel Sharon held meetings with U.S. envoys to discuss his plan for unilateral withdrawal from most of Gaza Strip. U.S. said to be supportive. Sharon to present plan to President Bush in Washington in late March.

- "Court hears new barrier criticism", BBC, 24 Feb. 2004.
- "U.S. seeks safeguards for Israel's Gaza pullout", *The Washington Post*, 18 Feb. 2004.
- "14 Palestinians killed in Israeli raids", *International Herald Tribune*, 12 Feb. 2004.
- Comment by Yossi Beilin, "Middle East: The wrong exit from Gaza", *International Herald Tribune*, 11 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Middle East Report N°21, *Dealing With Hamas*, 26 Jan. 2004.

◁ Jordan Jordanian legal team at International Court of Justice hearings said Israeli security barrier could push thousands of Palestinians to take refuge in Jordan.

- "Court hears new barrier criticism", BBC, 24 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Middle East Briefing, *The Challenge of Political Reform: Jordanian Democratisation and Regional Instability*, 8 Oct. 2003.

◁ Lebanon Despite concerns expressed by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Hizbollah said it has right to mine Israeli border. Israeli jets continued to violate Lebanese airspace. Following January prisoner exchange with Israel, new swap expected in coming months. Talks to focus on fate of missing Israeli pilot Ron Arad.

- "Hizbollah says it has right to mine Israeli border", Reuters AlertNet, 15 Feb. 2004.
- Farid El Khazen, "Hizbollah: The exception to the norm", Arab Reform Bulletin, Feb. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Middle East Briefing, *Hizbollah: Rebel Without a Cause?*, 30 July 2003.

◁ Syria Damascus passed messages to Israel via Turkey offering to restart peace talks broken off 4 years ago. U.S. pressure over Iraq remained high, with Donald Rumsfeld accusing Syria 23 February of allowing militants to cross into Iraq, and with U.S. government debating whether to apply sanctions authorised by Syria Accountability Act.

- "Syria and Iran warned over Iraq", BBC, 23 Feb. 2004.
- "Syria makes overture to Israel", *The Washington Post*, 19 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Middle East Briefing, *Hizbollah: Rebel Without a Cause?*, 30 July 2003.



ICG Middle East Reports N°s 23 and 24. *Syria Under Bashar (I): Foreign Policy Challenges*; *Syria Under Bashar (II): Domestic Policy Challenges*, 11 February 2004. Damascus and Washington need to make important compromises in order to revive the Israel-Syrian peace process and address other issues of concern between them, including Iraq. At the same time, President Bashar al-Assad needs to see internal reform as a strategic imperative to broaden his popular support and enhance the country's stature and stability. The first report, *Foreign Policy Challenges*, analyses the state of the U.S.-Syrian relationship; describes a comprehensive strategy that would address U.S., Syrian and Israeli interests; and spells out steps each party would need to take. The second report, *Domestic Policy Challenges*, assesses the urgent *cont*

cont requirement for internal reform. An ambitious international strategy that offers Syria the prospect of satisfying its own pressing interests stands the best chance of achieving fundamental changes in both its internal and external policies.

GULF

◁ Iran Conservatives won clear parliamentary majority in 20 February elections, boycotted by reformers after hardline Guardian Council barred more than 2,500 candidates from running. Turnout was reported at 50% country-wide – down from 67% in 2000 – and 33% in Tehran. Statements from EU and U.S. expressed disappointment at flawed democratic process. Two major reformist newspapers shut by conservatives day before vote. IAEA released report detailing secret Iranian purchases of nuclear equipment from international suppliers linked to Pakistan's Abdul Qadeer Khan, indicating Iran only partially disclosed nuclear activities in autumn 2003 report to IAEA. Western officials say Tehran still hiding full extent of program.

- "Iran admits secretly buying nuclear components", *International Herald Tribune*, 24 Feb. 2004.
- "A sorry election", *The Economist*, 23 Feb. 2004.
- "Iran's timid reformers", *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 19 Feb. 2004.
- "Pakistan's proliferator-in-chief", *The Economist*, 5 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Middle East Report N°18, *Dealing with Iran's Nuclear Program*, 27 Oct. 2003 and ICG Middle East Briefing, *Iran: Discontent and Disarray*, 15 Oct. 2003.

◁ Iraq Following fact-finding mission led by UN Special Envoy Lakhdar Brahimi, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said Iraqi elections not feasible before end of 2004 or early 2005. Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, country's most powerful Shiite cleric, called for guarantee – possibly in form of UN Security Council resolution – that elections would be held by year end. U.S. acknowledged plan to select transitional assembly through local caucuses requires modification, but handover of power will go on as scheduled 30 June. Governing Council agreed on interim constitution; composition of transitional assembly yet to be decided. Violence continued with series of large-scale attacks mainly targeting Iraqis: On 1 February suicide bombers struck offices of Kurdish political parties PUK and KDP, killing 101, including several senior Kurdish officials. Two apparent suicide car bombs 10 and 11 February killed around 100 Iraqi men waiting in line for police and army jobs. Twin suicide attacks on Coalition base in al-Hillah 18 February left 11 Iraqis dead and dozens of Coalition soldiers wounded. 316 Coalition soldiers, including 267 Americans, killed by hostile fire since declared end of combat operations on 1 May 2003.

- "The next plan for Iraq", *The Economist*, 26 Feb. 2004.
- "Annan says Iraq voting not feasible until winter", *International Herald Tribune*, 24 Feb. 2004.
- "Post-war, or pre-civil war?", *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 19 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Middle East Report N°20, *Iraq: Building a New Security Structure*, 23 Dec. 2003.

◁ Saudi Arabia U.S. authorised non-essential staff to return to Kingdom despite continued terror warnings.

- "Imminent Saudi attack warning", BBC, 17 Feb. 2004.

◁ Yemen Saudi Arabia agreed to stop construction of security fence along frontier with Yemen. Fence designed to tighten border following 2003 Riyadh suicide bombings.



- "Yemen says Saudis will stop fence", BBC, 18 Feb. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Middle East Report N°8, *Yemen: Coping with Terrorism and Violence in a Fragile State*, 8 Jan. 2003.

NORTH AFRICA

- ◁ Algeria Berbers announced boycott of 8 April presidential elections and said would disrupt voting activities in Kabylie region. Talks with government broke down over Berber demand that Tamazight language be given same status as Arabic. President Bouteflika, under pressure from opposition, invited international community to send election observers, but short notice likely to make monitoring mission difficult.
 - "Berbers to boycott Algeria poll", BBC, 13 Feb. 2004.
 - "Algeria president invites foreign election monitors", Reuters AlertNet, 4 Feb. 2004.
 - Kada Akacem, "Islamist Opposition in Algeria: Recent Developments", Arab Reform Bulletin, Feb. 2004.
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