

RELEASE IN PART  
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## S/ES-O Morning Press Highlights

Thursday, February 4, 2010  
 0500 EST

### MIDDLE EAST

#### PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY/ISRAEL

Chief PA negotiator Erekat called for an “alternative to the two-state solution,” asking Palestinians to consider declaring the Oslo Accords “null and void” if the peace process does not move forward. (*jpost.com*)

#### SAUDI ARABIA/AFGHANISTAN

President Karzai appealed to King Abdullah to mediate negotiations with Taliban commanders after he flew to Riyadh seeking support for peace talks. (*telegraph.co.uk*)

### EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC

#### CHINA

The government will send 5,000 elite police officers to Xijiang to prevent further unrest. Security Minister Meng vowed a more “tenacious” approach in the region after violence between Uighers and Han erupted there in July 2009. (*bangkokpost.com*)

#### ROK

The chief of South Korea’s ruling party joined growing calls for the review of a 2007 agreement that would transfer wartime operational control of South Korea’s military from Washington to Seoul in 2012. He cited a possible security vacuum due to the region’s current military landscape. (*english.yonhapnews.co.kr*)

### EUROPE

#### UKRAINE

Presidential candidate Tymoshenko appealed to the G-8 for support to block last-minute electoral law changes she said will pave the way for vote-rigging by opponent Yanukovich. (*ft.com*)

#### UNITED KINGDOM

More than 350 MPs were ordered to repay over \$1.6 million following an inquiry into their expense claims over the past five years. (*telegraph.co.uk*)

### SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA

#### KAZAKHSTAN

A court ordered the press not to criticize President Nazarbayev's son-in-law in a financial scandal, raising new doubts about press freedoms in the country. *(AFP)*

#### **PAKISTAN**

The Muttahida Qaumi Movement ended its boycott of the Sindh assembly and will attend its February 4 session. *(dawn.com)*

#### **SRI LANKA/BELARUS/SCO**

Sri Lanka and Belarus will become observer states at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's summit slated for June 2010, the group's secretary general announced. *(home.kyodo.co.jp)*

### **AFRICA**

#### **NIGERIA**

Defense Minister Abbe denied an amnesty program for former rebels was failing even though the main militant group ended a three-month ceasefire January 30 and threatened an "all-out assault" on the energy industry. Scores of gunmen surrendered their weapons in 2009 under amnesty offered by President Yar'Adua. *(news24.com)*

#### **ZIMBABWE/UNITED KINGDOM**

Senior UK MP Bruce said his country will not bow to pressure by President Mugabe to lift sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe, adding Mugabe must stop using sanctions as an excuse to block progress in the country. *(postzambia.com)*

### **WESTERN HEMISPHERE**

#### **VENEZUELA/CUBA**

President Chavez asked Cuba for help with his country's energy crisis during a visit of Cuban VP Valdes to Caracas, drawing criticism and bewildering Venezuelans as both countries cope with electricity problems. *(chron.com)*

#### **ARGENTINA**

President Fernandez named Mercedes Marco del Pont, an economist with close links to the government, as the new head of the central bank after a political battle to remove former chief Redrado. *(ft.com)*

Drafted: JADeyo

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*\*\*\*Morning Press Highlights alerts senior Department officials to breaking news items and is a synopsis of select media stories from around the world. It solely reflects the gist of the stories as presented in their original publications and does not contain analysis or commentary by Department sources.\*\*\**