
After a nearly two-year interlude of authoritarian rule, Bangladeshis voted decisively for democracy, a secular approach to politics, and the center-left. The challenge now is to show that parliamentary democracy can deliver stability and socio-economic progress. [R]

60.2803 ARNOLD, Matthew B. — Challenges too strong for the nascent state of Timor-Leste [East Timor]: petitioners and mutineers. Asian Survey 49(3), May-June 2009: 429-449.

Timor-Leste was badly shaken by a violent national crisis from April 2006 to April 2008. Central to the turmoil were the presence and actions of two groups of ex-soldiers from the Timorese army, known as "petitioners" and "mutineers". This article examines their roles in driving the crisis, by empirically mapping their history, motivations, and relationships. [R]


How S. Milosevic's empire-building completed the process of national homogenization in the successor states of Yugoslavia and brought this part of the Balkan region in conformity with the modernity's prescription of national statehood. [R] [See Abstr. 60.2902]


English version: see Abstr. 60.2806.


The preliminary assessment of 95 of the 150 or more protests in Tibetan of 2008 suggests that they were far more widespread than during previous unrest, and also that there was greater involvement of laypeople, farmers, nomads, and students than in the past. It argues that the struggle in China and elsewhere over representation of the unrest has been dominated by the question of violence, with little attention paid to policy questions and social issues. This paper outlines the basic concepts that underlie that debate and summarizes the historical factors that might have led to protest. [R] [First of a series of articles on "The deadlock in Tibet". See also Abstr. 60.2813, 2833, 2905]


Peace research has been hesitant to systematically investigate the role of religion in sub-Saharan violent conflicts. The comparison of Benin and the Ivory Coast — two cases that show a similar profile in terms of religious demography and non-religious risk factors but differ with regard to conflict — reveals that non-religious factors matter as reinforcing influences. A main finding is a pronounced interaction between religious and non-religious factors, in which political elites and forces of coercion apparently play a key role in mobilizing religious and other identities in power politics. [R] [See Abstr. 60.1784]

60.2808 BEHR, Hartmut ; BERGER, Lars — The challenge of talking about terrorism: the EU and the Arab debate on the causes of Islamist terrorism. Terrorism and Political Violence 21(4), 2009: 539-557.

The Arab "hegemonic debate" on the causes of Islamist terrorism nurtures (par-)Arab, anti-Western sentiments and delegitimizes criticism of the political status quo. The EU's emphasis on multilateral means of conflict-resolution and trade-promotion leads to official pronouncements that barely address the Arab world's domestic problems, instead referring to international tensions such as the Arab-Israeli conflict as a particular cause of Islamist terrorism and the need for cooperation with Arab governments. By failing to challenge the official narratives of authoritarian Arab regimes the EU obstructs interests in the democratization of the region and the delegitimation of Islamist violence. [R]


As it celebrates the 60th anniversary of its Communist revolution, China is keen to quash any reminiscence of the Spring of 1989, regardless of present calls for freedom of expression. Although the regime is more determined than ever, is the system as stable as it used to be, what with migrant discontent, a slowdown in growth, hard-driven urbanization and endemic corruption? [R] [See Abstr. 60.2720]


Students of French politics often puzzle over why a country that has experienced deep economic and social change over the past quarter-century should find it so difficult to enact political reforms. Some find the explanation in the fact that globalization and Europeanization have reduced the power of national government where statist traditions once supported large-scale economic and social interventions. But the gap between a dynamic society and a stalemate politics is hardly a new one for France. Fifty years ago, at the end of the Fourth Republic, the French also despaired of their government and of their chances of reforming it. The advent to power of General de Gaulle opened a period of transformation in which changes that had long been in the works in the economy and society could break through. [R, abr.] [See Abstr. 60.1752]

60.2811 BINDER, David — Has "greater" vanished from the Balkan vocabulary? Fragmentation and cohesion in South-eastern Europe. Mediterranean Quarterly 20(3), Summer 2009: 40-50.

The Balkan region experienced the creation of ever more mini-republics — a total of eight on the territory of former Yugoslavia. This trend toward fragmentation was initiated by petty nationalists and fostered by the US and European powers that found it convenient and desirable to dominate and exploit a bunch of feftdoms. The outside powers reinforced the new system of mini-republics by inviting candidacy in the EU and NATO. But the ethnic Albanians now living in at least five Balkan states and the ethnic Serbs living in five states, as well, are developing growing kinship with their fellow nationals beyond the current frontiers and local allegiances that currently separate them. [R, abr.]


English version: see Abstr. 60.2813.


The Tibet crisis tainted the success of the 2008 Beijing Olympics. The handling of the crisis showed the CCP's rigid denial of genuine dialogue and compromise and adherence to a formula of repression and economic growth. Current leaders are enmeshed in this policy, but a new generation might well seek out policies more in tune with the quest for "harmony" at home and "peaceful rise" on the world scene. [R] [See Abstr. 60.2808]


Islam and democracy are said to be in a relationship fraught with problems as the former, allegedly, does not allow secular law to be put above divine law or accept the legitimacy of worldly authorities. This relationship is less problematic in Indonesia, a democratic Muslim-majority country, due to the syncretic forms of Islam practiced in the archipelago state that are less dogmatic, and hence more conducive to democratic