

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

January 21-27, 1(4), 2008

CONTENTS

- COUNTRY REVIEW..... 3
- NUCLEAR REVIEW.....8
- INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW10

EDITOR: S. SAMUEL C. RAJIV

REVIEW ADVISOR: S. KALYANARAMAN

CONTRIBUTORS

MEDHA BISHT – Nepal, Sri Lanka
JAGANNATH PANDA – China, Japan
S. SAMUEL C. RAJIV – Iraq, Afghanistan
M. AMARJEET SINGH – Internal Security
Review, Bangladesh, Myanmar

PRIYADARSHINI SINGH – Energy Security Review
PRIYANKA SINGH – Pakistan
ARUN VISHWANATHAN – Nuclear Review
(INDIAN PUGWASH SOCIETY)



**INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES,
1, DEVELOPMENT ENCLAVE, RAO TULA RAM MARG, NEW DELHI – 110010**

IN THE CURRENT ISSUE

SECTIONS	HIGHLIGHTS	Page
1. COUNTRY REVIEW		3-7
Iraq	Gates: US not after permanent bases in Iraq; Maliki: New operation to root out Al Qaeda from Mosul;	
China	CPC installs new leaders in Tibet and Xinjiang ahead of Olympics; Baao Forum to focus on environmental issues	
Japan	Japan Police dismiss officer of leaking information to a Russian diplomat; Japan resumes Indian Ocean mission	
Myanmar	Myanmar has the fourth highest child mortality rate in the world, says UNICEF; Myanmar Airways International to extend its flight services to India	
SOUTH ASIA		5-7
Afghanistan	American forces alleged to have killed nearly 10 Afghan police officers in Ghazni in accidental fire	
Pakistan	Kidwai: Pakistan's nuclear assets safe; Musharraf meets Rice at Davos, reaffirms intentions of democracy; Success for security forces in militant operations in South Waziristan	
Bangladesh	New Age: Interim government curbing democratic rights of indigenous communities; State of emergency may be gradually lifted, says Fakhruddin Ahmed at Davos	
2. NUCLEAR REVIEW		8-10
Pakistan	Pakistani nuclear arsenal safe: Musharraf; SPD holds briefing for media	
North Korea	Pyongyang not serious about disarming: Lefkowitz; Bush administration distances itself from Lefkowitz statement; Ending current impasse might be difficult: South Korean Foreign Minister	
Iran	Draft resolution to impose new round of sanctions on Iran agreed upon; Iran expresses surprise about proposed sanctions; Russia completes delivery of nuclear fuel for Bushehr; Iran allows IAEA inspectors to visit P-2 centrifuge R&D lab	
3. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW		10-11
Jammu and Kashmir	HuJI commander Bashir Ahmed Mir shot dead; Governor Sinha: Ratio of deployment of troops to population in J&K (1:40), Waziristan (1: 37), Ladakh (1:28)	
Northeast Insurgency	Army claims successes in 'Operation Somtali II' in Manipur; As many 38 ULFA militants surrender in Assam	
Maoist Insurgency	Government to allocate additional funds to worst-affected Maoist districts	

1. COUNTRY REVIEW

IRAQ

- *Gates: US not after permanent bases in Iraq; Maliki: New operation to root out Al Qaeda from Mosul;*

Even as reports indicated that the Pentagon was considering the current top general in Iraq, Gen. David Petraeus to be appointed as the next chief of NATO by the end of September, debates continued over the future nature of the American troop engagement in the country. Secretary of Defence Robert Gates insisted on January 24 that America had no interest in permanent bases and that the agreement being negotiated with the Iraqi government over the American military presence would not deal with the likely numbers or kinds of force levels. Reports noted that Senators and Congressmen were also expressing concern over the American commitment made in the November 26 framework agreement to defend Iraq against 'internal and external threats' and the dangers of getting embroiled in an Iraqi civil war.¹

Meanwhile, insurgent attacks continued with over 15 people getting killed in an attack in Salahuddin province near Baghdad on January 21 and over 35 people getting killed after explosives were detonated by suspected Al Qaeda militants in the northern city of Mosul on January 23. The provincial police chief of the city was also killed by a suicide bomber when he toured the site the next day. Prime Minister Maliki on his part pledged to launch a new operation to root out the Sunni militants who had regrouped in Nineveh province and its capital Mosul, after the military offensives in Baghdad and Anbar provinces.²

A suicide bomber also attacked a gathering of Sunni leaders belonging to the American-backed Awakening Councils killing 4 of them on January 21. Reports indicated that over 100 Sunni militiamen have been killed in the past month in and around Baghdad and Baquba.³

CHINA

- *CPC installs new leaders in Tibet and Xinjiang ahead of Olympics; Baa Forum to focus on environmental issues*

The Communist Party of China (CPC) appointed new leaders in both the Xinjiang and Tibet autonomous region, in moves seen by international observers as a move by the CPC to have better control over both these sensitive regions ahead of the 2008 Olympics. While Nur Bekri was elected as the chairman of the government of Xinjiang, in Tibet, it was Qiangba Puncog who

¹ "U.S. asking Iraq for wide rights on war," *The New York Times*, January 25, 2008, at http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/25/world/middleeast/25military.html?_r=1&ref=todayspaper&oref=slogin

² "Iraq moves troops, tanks to northern city Mosul," *Reuters*, January 27, 2008, at http://in.news.yahoo.com/reuters_ids_new/20080127/r_t_rtrs_wl_us/twl-iraq-moves-troops-tanks-to-northern-d4a870c.html

³ "Attacks imperil U.S.-backed militias in Iraq," *The New York Times*, January 24, 2008, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/24/world/middleeast/24sunni.html?ref=todayspaper>

was elected as the chairman of the regional government at the first session of the 9th Tibet Regional People's Congress.⁴

Meanwhile, China and Kazakhstan have pledged to push their cooperation between their two parliaments to help foster the bilateral strategic partnership. This interest was expressed when the top Chinese legislator Wu Bangguo met with the visiting chairman of the Senate of Kazakhstan Kasymzhomart Tokaev.⁵

In Taiwan-related developments, the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) Chairman Wu Poh-hsiung and Taiwan's current President Chen Shui-bian met during the week. Denying that there was any 'secret' negotiations took place ahead of the crucial Presidential election, We Po-hsiung stated that they discussed matters like the UN bid referendums, the formation of the new cabinet and the reorganization of the Central Election Commission (CEC).⁶

Among other developments, Long Yongtu, the secretary-general of the Boao Forum for Asia - to be held from April 11-13, 2008 told *Xinhua* that this year's Forum would focus on environment-related issues that would help build a sustainable Asia.⁷

JAPAN

- ***Japan Police dismiss officer of leaking information to a Russian diplomat; Japan resumes Indian Ocean mission***

Kyodo News reported that the Metropolitan Police Department of Japan has dismissed a Cabinet Information Research Officer on charges of taking bribes from a Russian diplomat, a second secretary at the Russian Embassy in Tokyo. He was accused of breaking the National Public Service Law by leaking information to him.

Meanwhile, a Japanese maritime self-defence force destroyer left for the Indian Ocean where it will resume Japan's refueling mission in support of U.S.-led anti-terrorism operations. *The Japan Times* reported that the 4,550-ton Murasame will rendezvous with the 13,500-ton support ship Oumi, which will leave the MSDF Sasebo base in Nagasaki Prefecture.

⁴ "Northwest China's Xinjiang elects senior gov't officials," *People's Daily*, January 22, 2008, at <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/6343186.html>; "Tibet re-elects top legislator, gov't chairman," *People's Daily*, January 22, 2008, at <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/6343120.html>

⁵ "China, Kazakhstan vow to boost inter-parliamentary co-op," *PLA Daily*, January 26, 2008, at <http://english.pladaily.com.cn/>

⁶ "Democracies bear torch: Chen," *Taipei Times*, January 26, 2008, at <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2008/01/26/2003398897>

⁷ "Boao forum to highlight 'green' talks for Asia as weather warms," *People's Daily*, January 24, 2008, at <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/6344769.html>

⁸ "Cabinet official faces prosecutors in alleged spying for Russia," *The Japan Times*, January 25, 2008, at <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20080125a2.html>

⁹ "MSDF destroyer departs on Indian Ocean mission," *The Japan Times*, January 25, 2008, at <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20080125a3.html>

MYANMAR

- *Myanmar has the fourth highest child mortality rate in the world, says UNICEF; Myanmar Airways International to extend its flight services to India*

According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) annual report, *The State of the World's Children*, Myanmar had the 4th highest child mortality rate in the world and that between 100,000-150,000 children under the age of five years died every year.¹⁰

Burma Net reported that Myanmar Airways International would extend its flight services to India later this year as part of its plan to reach more international destinations.¹¹

Meanwhile, according to *Burma Net*, as many as three Democratic Karen Buddhist Army personnel were killed and eight others wounded in a mine explosion near the border town of Myawaddy in Karen state on January 24.¹²

The US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and foreign ministers of France and Britain issued a joint statement urging global pressure on Myanmar's military government to end human rights abuses and return to civilian rule. The appeal was issued at the World Economic Forum in Davos (Switzerland) on January 24.¹³

Among other developments, opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi has been awarded a Spanish honor "Abogados de Atocha" for her work towards political reconciliation.¹⁴

SOUTH ASIA

AFGHANISTAN

- *American forces alleged to have killed nearly 10 Afghan police officers in Ghazni in accidental fire*

Nearly 10 people were killed, most of them Afghan police officers, when they came under accidental fire from the American forces in search of Taliban on the outskirts of Ghazni town on January 24. The American forces were criticised for having not coordinated the raid with the local authorities.¹⁵

¹⁰ "Burma has second highest child mortality rate in Asia," *Irrawaddy*, January 27, 2008, at http://irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=10027

¹¹ "Myanmar airline to fly to India," *Burma Net*, January 24, 2008, at <http://www.burmanet.org/news/2008/01/24/xinhua-myanmar-airline-to-fly-to-india/>

¹² "Landmine explosion kills three DKBA soldiers," *Burma Net*, January 25, 2008, at <http://www.burmanet.org/news/2008/01/25/democratic-voice-of-burma-landmine-explosion-kills-three-dkba-soldiers-%e2%80%93-san-kanyaw/>

¹³ "US, Britain, France make joint appeal on Burma," *Burma Net*, January 25, 2008, at <http://www.burmanet.org/news/>

¹⁴ "Suu Kyi wins another Award," *Burma Net*, January 24, 2008, at <http://www.burmanet.org/news/2008/01/24/irrawaddy-suu-kyi-wins-another-award/>

¹⁵ "10 Die in Mistaken Afghan Firefight," *The New York Times*, January 25, 2008, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/25/world/asia/25afghan.html?ref=todayspaper>

Meanwhile, an American aid worker was kidnapped in Kandahar province on January 26 by the Taliban. Also, an Afghan journalist was sentenced to death by a local court for blasphemy for allegedly insulting prophet Muhammad, in a decision that elicited concern from the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).¹⁶

Among other developments, a Canadian government panel advised the government to quit its military operations in the country by next year unless NATO countries contributed sufficient troops. The panel noted that the US, UK, and Canada were taking a disproportionately large share in the security operations in the country. Canada had over 2,400 soldiers in the country.¹⁷

PAKISTAN

- *Kidwai: Pakistan's nuclear assets safe; Musharraf meets Rice at Davos, reaffirms intentions of democracy; Success for security forces in militant operations in South Waziristan*

Amidst increased international concerns over the safety of Pakistan's nuclear Arsenal, the Director General of the Strategic Planning Division, Lt. Gen. Khalid Kidwai told reporters that at least 10,000 troops were deployed to safeguard the nuclear facilities in Pakistan.¹⁸

President Musharraf, in Davos to attend the World Economic Forum, on January 23 held a meeting with the US Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice and reaffirmed his intention to reinstate democratic rule in Pakistan.¹⁹

Meanwhile, the Interior Ministry spokesman stated on January 22 in Islamabad that the Scotland Yard team would be allowed to interrogate Aitzaz, the boy arrested in case of Benazir Bhutto's assassination.²⁰ Reports noted that the US Consulate in Karachi was also amongst other targets.²¹

Among other developments, as a result of the ongoing military operations, 50 militants were arrested in South Waziristan and some areas were cleared of militants by the Army.²² Significantly, Maulvi Abdul Raziq, a close

¹⁶ "UN body concerned about death penalty for Afghan journalist," IANS, January 24, 2008, at http://in.news.yahoo.com/indiaabroad/20080124/r_t_ians_wl_asia/tw1-un-body-concerned-about-death-penalt-d5d6288.html

¹⁷ "Panel Questions Canadian Role in Afghanistan," *The New York Times* January 23, 2008, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/23/world/americas/23canada.html?ref=todayspaper>

¹⁸ "Security at nuclear facilities boosted," *Dawn*, January 27, 2008 at <http://www.dawn.com/2008/01/27/top3.htm>

¹⁹ Khaleeq Kiani, "Musharraf assures Rice on democracy," *Dawn*, January 24, 2008 at <http://www.dawn.com/2008/01/24/top6.htm>

²⁰ Syed Irfan Raza, "Scotland Yard to be allowed to quiz suspects: Cheema," *Dawn*, January 23, 2008 at <http://www.dawn.com/2008/01/23/top4.htm>

²¹ "US mission was next on list: BB murder suspect," *Dawn*, January 22, 2008 at <http://www.dawn.com/2008/01/22/top3.htm>

²² "50 militants held in Waziristan: Army," *Daily Times*, January 20, 2008 at http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008\01\20\story_20-1-2008_pg1_4; "Army says some areas cleared of militants: Clashes in S. Waziristan," *Dawn*, January 25, 2008 at <http://www.dawn.com/2008/01/25/top1.htm>

aide of Fazlullah was also detained in the Kot area of Charbagh in Swat on January 25 by the police.

BANGLADESH

- *New Age: Interim government curbing democratic rights of indigenous communities; State of emergency may be gradually lifted, says Fakhruddin Ahmed at Davos*

Reports noted that the interim government has taken steps that curb the democratic rights of indigenous communities, including preventing eminent personalities from attending functions organised by ethnic minorities. Other measures included reduced media coverage and monitoring of the movement of a few ethnic minority leaders.²³

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed, at the World Economic Forum in Davos on January 26 told reporters that the state of emergency would be “relaxed gradually ...”²⁴ Ahmed told the Forum that Bangladesh was facing the challenges of ensuring the access of Bangladeshi products to the markets of developed countries and in adapting to the impact of global warming.²⁵

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) handed the Border Security Force (BSF) a list of 1,626 Bangladeshi criminals reportedly hiding in India, at the three-day high-level meeting between the two border forces concluded in Bogra on January 22. At a post-meeting joint press conference, both sides expressed satisfaction at having reached a consensus on the issues on the agenda, regarding on problems related to the border.²⁶

²³ “Govt plans curbs on indigenous people’s rights,” *New Age*, January 26, 2008, at <http://www.newagebd.com/2008/jan/26/front.html#5>

²⁴ “Parties must become accountable first for emergency to relax, CA tells reporters at Davos,” *Daily Star*, January 27, 2008, at <http://thedailystar.net/story.php?nid=20765>

²⁵ “Help Dhaka face 2 major issues, CA tells WEF,” *Daily Star*, January 26, 2008, at <http://thedailystar.net/archive.php?date=2008-01-26>

²⁶ “BDR hands BSF list of 1,626 criminals hiding in India,” *Daily Star*, January 23, 2008, at <http://thedailystar.net/story.php?nid=20246>

2. NUCLEAR REVIEW

PAKISTAN

- *Pakistani nuclear arsenal safe: Musharraf; SPD holds briefing for media*

Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf on a eight-day visit to Europe, stressed that it was impossible for militants to gain any access to Pakistan's nuclear arsenal. The Pakistani President, addressing a French foreign policy institute said that the only way for militants to gain access to Pakistan's nuclear arsenal would be if Al-Qaeda or the Taliban "defeated the Pakistani army entirely" or if extremist religious groups won next month's elections. He said that as there is no chance of any of the above actually taking place, Pakistan's weapons cannot fall into wrong hands.²⁷

In light of recent reports which have questioned the safety of Pakistani nuclear and other strategic assets, the Strategic Plans Division (SPD) based in Rawalpindi launched a PR exercise by organising a briefing for foreign journalists. Importantly, even two Indian journalists who are based in Pakistan were invited for the briefing. This was the third such briefing that the SPD was organising this month. It had earlier organised similar meetings for diplomats and military attaches stationed in Pakistan.²⁸

NORTH KOREA

- *Pyongyang not serious about disarming: Lefkowitz; Bush administration distances itself from Lefkowitz statement; Ending current impasse might be difficult: South Korean Foreign Minister*

Jay Lefkowitz, President Bush's special envoy on North Korea, dealing with human rights issues, stated that Pyongyang was not serious about disarming and probably still would have its nuclear weapons when the next U.S. president takes over in January 2009, despite four years of nuclear disarmament talks by the United States, the Koreans, Japan, China and Russia.²⁹ With the Six-Party talks hitting an impasse and North Korea failing to release a full declaration of its nuclear activities, the statement added to the uncertainties. However, the Bush administration immediately tried to distance itself from the statement with the Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice saying that that Lefkowitz certainly had no say on what American policy would be at the Six-Party talks.³⁰

²⁷ "Pakistan weapons in safe hands," BBC, January 22, 2008, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/7203376.stm

²⁸ Nirupama Subramanian, "Nuclear weapons in safe hands, says Pakistan," *The Hindu*, January 27, 2008, at <http://www.hindu.com/2008/01/27/stories/2008012759870100.htm>

²⁹ "North Korean Human Rights & U.S. National Security - Remarks by Jay Lefkowitz," *American Enterprise Institute*, January 17, 2008, at www.aei.org/docLib/20080118_LefkowitzRemarks.pdf

³⁰ "Secretary of state rebukes Bush administration official critical of North Korea policy," *International Herald Tribune*, January 22, 2008, at <http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2008/01/22/america/US-NKorea.php>

The South Korean Foreign Minister was also quoted as saying that the impasse in the disarmament process was unlikely to be resolved for the time being.³¹

IRAN

- *Draft resolution to impose new round of sanctions on Iran agreed upon; Iran expresses surprise about proposed sanctions; Russia completes delivery of nuclear fuel for Bushehr; Iran allows IAEA inspectors to visit P-2 centrifuge R&D lab*

Reports indicated that the permanent members of the Security Council have agreed on an incremental increase in sanctions on Iran.³² This would include a new restriction on exporters doing business with the country. A draft resolution which was hammered out on January 23, 2008 calls for more monitoring of Iran's military and financial institutions, broader travel bans on Iranian nuclear scientists and other key officials, and freezing the assets of people and banks linked to weapons proliferation. Russia and China, which have strong business ties with Iran, resisted earlier British and French draft principles pushing for harsher sanctions if Iran kept refusing to stop enriching uranium.

Ambassador Nicholas Burns rejected Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov's statement that the resolution did not contain harsh measures.³³ Noting that the resolution was meant to be punitive, he added that the draft increased travel restrictions on Iranian nuclear scientists, banned trade in items that can be used for nuclear purposes and froze more Iranian assets.³⁴ Iran on its part, expressing surprise over the proposed new sanctions, stated that major powers should have waited for the report of the IAEA in March.³⁵

In other developments, Russia completed its delivery of nuclear fuel for the Bushehr nuclear reactor, having delivered 82 tonnes of nuclear fuel enriched to 1-3 per cent.³⁶ Iran has also allowed top IAEA inspectors to visit an advanced centrifuge development site for the first time. The Iranian R&D centrifuge lab visited by the inspectors was conducting research on developing better

³¹ "Report: Nuclear deadlock unlikely to be broken for now, says S. Korean foreign minister," *International Herald Tribune*, January 28, 2008, at <http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2008/01/28/asia/AS-GEN-Koreas-Nuclear.php>

³² "UN Powers Agree on More Iran Sanction," *New York Times*, January 24, 2008, at http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/world/AP-UN-Iran-Sanctions.html?_r=1&sq=international%20atomic%20energy%20agency&st=nyt&oref=slogin&scp=1&pagewanted=print

³³ "Iran set to address all concerns on nuclear program soon - Russia," *Ria Novosti*, January 23, 2008, at <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20080123/97573178.html>

³⁴ "UN pressed to back fresh Iran sanctions," *Financial Times*, January 28, 2008, at <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/7d9d0778-cd41-11dc-9b2b-000077b07658.html>

³⁵ Dominic Evans, "Iran says surprised at sanctions plan, urges patience," *Reuters*, January 26, 2008, at <http://in.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idINIndia-31608720080126>

³⁶ "Russia completes nuclear fuel delivery to Iran," *Khaleej Times*, January 28, 2008, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticleNew.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2008/January/middleeast_January423.xml§ion=middleeast&col=

centrifuges. IAEA Director General ElBaradei noted that he would include the results of the inquiry in a report due out around February 20.³⁷

3. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

JAMMU AND KASHMIR

- *HuJI commander Bashir Ahmed Mir shot dead; Governor Sinha: Ratio of deployment of troops to population in J&K (1:40), Waziristan (1: 37), Ladakh (1:28)*

Security Forces in Jammu and Kashmir shot dead Bashir Ahmed Mir, the Harkat-ul-Jehad Islami (HUJI) commander for operations across India, following a fierce encounter on January 25. Mir was reportedly involved in a string of terror strikes across north and south-east India in 2007, including the court complex bombings in Uttar Pradesh.³⁸

Meanwhile, Jammu and Kashmir Governor Lt. Gen. (Retd) S. K. Sinha asserted that the terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir was intact and that the prevailing situation in Pakistan was most volatile, with risks of spilling over to Indian side. In a telecast on the eve of 58th Republic Day anniversary, the Governor noted that the ratio of deployment of troops, Army and paramilitary to population in the state (excluding in the militancy-free Ladakh) was 1: 40, which was less than 1: 37 in Waziristan in Pakistan and 1: 28 in Tibet.³⁹

Among other developments, three Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) terrorists holed up at the residence of two activists of the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) in Kupwara district were shot dead after a 30-hour-long gun-battle with the security forces on January 21. As many as three AK-56 rifles and six hand grenades were recovered from the incident sites. A LeT spokesman identified as Abdullah Ghaznavi also claimed that nine soldiers were also killed in the gun-battle.⁴⁰

NORTH-EAST INSURGENCY

- *Army claims successes in 'Operation Somtal II' in Manipur; As many 38 ULFA militants surrender in Assam*

The Army claimed successes in 'Somtal Operation II', with as many as five militant camps reportedly busted and 19 villages liberated. The operation

³⁷ IAEA Makes 1st Visit to Advanced Iran Centrifuge Site, New York Times, January 23, 2008, at <http://www.nytimes.com/reuters/news/news-iran-nuclear-iaea.html?sq=iaea&st=nyt&scp=1&pagewanted=print>

³⁸ "HuJI chief shot dead," *The Hindu*, January 26, 2008, at <http://www.hindu.com/2008/01/26/stories/2008012659680100.htm>

³⁹ "Troops' deployment in Kashmir lowest: Sinha," *Daily Excelsior*, January 26, 2008, at <http://www.dailyexcelsior.com/web1/08jan26/news.htm#7>

⁴⁰ "3 militants killed at PDP activists' house in Handwara," *Daily Excelsior*, January 22, 2008, at <http://www.dailyexcelsior.com/web1/08jan22/body.htm>

was launched in November 2007 against the United National Liberation Front (UNLF) to liberate nearly 1,000 square km of Somtal located along the Indo-Myanmar border in Manipur's Chandel district. At least two major operations in 2006 (in January and December) had failed to clear the area of UNLF presence. Troops also managed to open the New Somtal Road that connects to the Imphal-Moreh route. The army also intended to set up a permanent base and to restore civil administration. The UNLF, on the other hand, claimed that 'Operation Somtal II' was only partially successful.

Among other developments, as many as thirty-eight United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) militants surrendered before the security forces in Assam's Baksa district on January 24. The surrendered militants deposited 27 pistols, 18 grenades, 22 detonators, 30 kg of explosives and 150 live ammunition of AK-47 assault rifle.⁴¹ Assam police also arrested one Hafiz Rafiqul Islam from the Guwahati University campus for working as a conduit for the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) on January 25.⁴²

MAOIST INSURGENCY

- *Government to allocate additional funds to worst-affected Maoist districts*

South Asia Terrorism Portal reported that the Union Government was reportedly considering to develop 33 districts worst affected by Maoist violence by allocating additional funds. Of the 33 districts, Khammam in Andhra Pradesh, Dantewada in Chhattisgarh, Malkangiri and Koraput in Orissa have been identified for taking up these programmes.⁴³

FIVE HUJI TERRORISTS SENTENCED TO LIFE IN LUCKNOW

- *Terrorists arrested by STF in Lucknow in April 2006*

On January 23, a local court in Lucknow sentenced five HuJI terrorists to life term for waging war against the state, sedition, conspiracy and other charges. The terrorists - Mehboob Ali, Sayeed Shoaib, Mohammad Rizwan, Farhan and Mohammad Saad - were arrested by the Special Task Force from Lucknow on April 5, 2006.⁴⁴

⁴¹ "38 ULFA militants surrender in Assam," *Hindustan Times*, January 24, 2008, at <http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/StoryPage.aspx?id=ad12e5f9-0975-4c8b-9655-f62d9dd03412&MatchID1=4628&TeamID1=1&TeamID2=6&MatchType1=1&SeriesID1=1165&PrimaryID=4628&Headline=38+ULFA+militants+surrender>

⁴² "ISI agent," *Telegraph*, January 26, 2008, at http://telegraphindia.com/1080126/jsp/northeast/story_8828765.jsp#2

⁴³ "Union Government plans to develop 33 Naxalite-affected districts," *SATP*, January 25, 2008, at http://satp.org/satporgtp/detailed_news.asp?date1=1/25/2008#18

⁴⁴ "Five HuJI militants get life term in UP," *Indian Express*, January 24, 2008, at <http://www.expressindia.com/latest-news/Five-HuJI-militants-get-life-term-in-UP/264766/>