

# THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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## 1. COUNTRY REVIEW

### A. SOUTH ASIA

#### AFGHANISTAN

- **Karzai and Zardari to meet with Obama in Washington in May; Spanta: Pakistan is a threat to global security; US war veterans: Purely military approach will not help in Afghanistan; Taliban reject government's claim of ongoing negotiations**

Even as reports indicated that Mr. Karzai and Mr. Zardari will meet with President Obama in Washington in early May, Afghan Foreign Minister Rangin Dadfar Spanta reaffirmed US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's view that Pakistan continued to be a threat to global security. Spanta was speaking at Warsaw on April 23 after meeting Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski.<sup>1</sup>

US war veterans meanwhile, speaking before the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, warned that troop surge was unlikely to have much benefits in dealing with the rapidly deteriorating situation in Afghanistan. They called for a more comprehensive approach, instead of a purely military approach to deal with the rapidly changing situation.<sup>2</sup>

In other developments, even as President Karzai's spokesman Humayoun Hamidzada told reporters that the Afghan government was in contact "at various levels" with opposition forces, a Taliban spokesperson rejected the claim as an attempt to "create disunity and split among the Taliban" and asserted that the Taliban "will not engage in talks as long as foreign troops are here."<sup>3</sup>

#### PAKISTAN

- **Clinton: Pakistan poses a 'mortal threat' to global security; Kayani and Mullen discuss US drone attacks; Sufi Muhammad calls for instituting Darul Qaza in Malakand; Gilani defends the Nizam-e-Adl**

The United States expressed extreme concern over the rapidly changing developments in Pakistan with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stating that Pakistan posed a "mortal threat" to global security and therefore urgent action was needed to tackle the situation. She was speaking before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on April 22.<sup>4</sup> Clinton also expressed fears about the dangers

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<sup>1</sup> "Afghanistan backs Clinton warning on Pakistan," *Dawn*, April 24, 2009, at <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/world/afghanistan-backs-clinton-warning-on-pakistan--bi>

<sup>2</sup> "Veterans warn military solution won't end Afghan war," *Khaleej Times*, April 24, 2009, at [http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/international/2009/April/international\\_April1913.xml&section=international](http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/international/2009/April/international_April1913.xml&section=international)

<sup>3</sup> Sayed Salahuddin, "Afghan Taliban say claim of talks is 'propaganda'," *Reuters*, April 22, 2009, at <http://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSTRE53L30020090422?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews>

<sup>4</sup> "Pakistan disorder 'global threat'," *BBC*, April 23, 2009, at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/8013677.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/8013677.stm)

of Pakistan's nuclear weapons falling into militant hands.<sup>5</sup> American high-level engagement with Islamabad continued with the Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. Mike Mullen meeting Gen. Kayani in Islamabad on April 22 to discuss issues relating to US drone attacks and President Obama's AfPak strategy.<sup>6</sup>

Reports meanwhile noted that the Taliban influence remained unchecked with militants warning security forces to keep out of the Swat valley.<sup>7</sup> The chief of Tehrik Nifaz Shariat-e-Muhammadi, Maulana Sufi Muhammad also demanded the dismantlement of the existing judicial system in the Malakand division and instead called for a court of Darul Qaza to be instituted.<sup>8</sup>

In other developments, even as Prime Minister Gilani justified the imposition of the Nizam-e-Adl in the Swat valley, PML-N chief Nawaz Sharif stated that the Taliban posed a grave danger to the country.<sup>9</sup>

## **BHUTAN**

- **UNHCR: 12,388 Bhutanese refugees have resettled in various developed countries; NC President Koirala: Repatriation of Bhutanese refugees requires cooperation between Nepal, Bhutan, and India; Constituency development fund approved by Bhutanese Cabinet;**

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) announced that 12,388 Bhutanese citizens have been resettled in various developed countries, as part of the third country resettlement programme. While 10,934 individuals had resettled in the US, Australia had taken in 675 refugees.<sup>10</sup>

In a related development, Nepali Congress President Girija Prasad Koirala stated that the repatriation of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal was only possible with the cooperation of Nepal, Bhutan and India. Koirala added that the Bhutanese refugee issue had remained unsolved because it was not just a bilateral issue between Nepal and Bhutan.<sup>11</sup>

The Bhutanese Cabinet meanwhile approved a constituency development fund which would provide Nu 10 million over a period of five years to every

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<sup>5</sup> "Pak dispersed nukes greater risk: Hillary," *Daily Times*, April 25, 2009, at [http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009\04\25\story\\_25-4-2009\\_pg1\\_2](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009\04\25\story_25-4-2009_pg1_2)

<sup>6</sup> "Mullen-Kayani talks focus on building trust," *Daily Times*, April 23, 2009, at [http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009\04\23\story\\_23-4-2009\\_pg1\\_3](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009\04\23\story_23-4-2009_pg1_3)

<sup>7</sup> "Stay away from Swat, militants tell troops," *The News*, April 26, 2009, at [http://www.thenews.com.pk/arc\\_default.asp](http://www.thenews.com.pk/arc_default.asp)

<sup>8</sup> Essa Khankhel, "End judicial system by April 23, demands Sufi," *The News*, April 20, 2009, at [http://www.thenews.com.pk/arc\\_default.asp](http://www.thenews.com.pk/arc_default.asp)

<sup>9</sup> "US need not worry about Nizam-e-Adl: PM," *Daily Times*, April 21, 2009, at [http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009\04\21\story\\_21-4-2009\\_pg1\\_1](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009\04\21\story_21-4-2009_pg1_1)

<sup>10</sup> "Resettlement exceeds 12000," *Bhutan News Service*, April 20, 2009, at <http://www.bhutannewsservice.com/main-news/resettlement-exceeds-12000/>

<sup>11</sup> "Tripartite effort can repatriate Bhutanese refugees", *Xinhua Net*, April 20, 2009, at: [2009http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-04/17/content\\_11198661.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-04/17/content_11198661.htm)

national assembly member. The fund would be utilized for developmental work in their respective constituencies.<sup>12</sup>

In other developments, reports noted that efforts were being directed towards expanding marketing strategies or facilitating the sale of timber from community forests, as a measure to fight poverty.<sup>13</sup>

## NEPAL

- **Controversy generated by the move of the government to seek the ouster of CoAS; CPN-UML urges government to appoint Lt. Gen. Gurung as CoAS; Foreign diplomats: Move to sack the army chief would hamper the peace process; NA dismisses speculation of army coup; India's Deputy Ambassador to Nepal: India contributing 44 per cent of total FDI in Nepal**

Controversy surrounded the move by the government to seek the ouster of Chief of Army Staff (CoAS) Rookmangud Katawal on issues relating to recruitment in the Army, retirement and extension of eight generals and boycotting of national games. The main opposition party, the Nepali Congress criticized the government decision strongly. President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav met with Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal and cautioned against any unnecessary intervention in the functioning of the army. Yadav asked Dahal to consult the Interim Constitution and forge a political consensus before taking any decision.<sup>14</sup>

In an effort to resolve the political crisis, the CPN-UML on its part urged the Unified CPN (Maoist) leadership to dismiss Gen. Katawal, Defence Minister Ram Bahadur Thapa, and Lt. Gen. Kul Bahadur Khadka and instead appoint Lt. Gen. Chhatra Man Gurung, currently third-in-line in the Nepal Army, as the CoAS. The proposal was however rejected by the Maoist leadership.<sup>15</sup>

Diplomatic envoys from eight countries, including the United States, United Kingdom, India, China and Japan also met with Mr. Dahal to discuss the issue. They expressed the view that the move to sack the army chief would hamper the peace process.<sup>16</sup>

Meanwhile, the Nepal Army (NA) dismissed speculations of military coup in case the government sacked the CoAS. NA spokesperson Brig. Ramindra

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<sup>12</sup> "Cheque ... and balance," *Kuensel Online*, April 18, 2009, at <http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=12304>

<sup>13</sup> "Forests help fight poverty," *Bhutan Observer*, April 17, 2009, at <http://www.bhutanobserver.bt/2009/bhutan-news/04/forests-help-fight-poverty.html>

<sup>14</sup> "Govt seeks clarification from Army chief," *nepalnews.com*, April 19, 2009, at <http://www.nepalnews.com/archive/2009/apr/apr20/news04.php>

<sup>15</sup> "UML proposes to dismiss Defence Minister Thapa, CoAS Katwal, Lt. Gen Khadka," *Kantipuronline.com*, April 27, 2009, at <http://www.kantipuronline.com/kolnews.php?&nid=191365>

<sup>16</sup> "Envoys meet PM over CoAS row," *nepalnews.com*, April 22, 2009, at <http://www.nepalnews.com/archive/2009/apr/apr23/news05.php>

Chhettri stated that the rumours of coup and curfew were “totally baseless” and that the NA remained committed to the country’s democratic system.<sup>17</sup>

In other developments, India's deputy ambassador to Nepal, Alok Sinha stated that India contributed about 44 per cent of total foreign direct investment in the country. Mr. Sinha added that India was always contributing towards the upliftment of the Nepalese economy as well as cooperating in the peace process and in providing aid.<sup>18</sup>

## SRI LANKA

- **Colombo condemns the attack on its Embassy in Oslo; International pressure grows on both Colombo and LTTE to stop the fighting and allow civilians safe passage; Narayanan and Menon meet Rajapakse and convey Indian concerns about civilians; UNSC: No military solution to the conflict; Canada not to lift the ban on LTTE**

The Sri Lankan government condemned the attacks on its embassy in Oslo. It brought to notice of the Norwegian government Article 22(2) of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of April 18, 1961, which obliges the State “to take all appropriate steps to protect the premises of the mission against any intrusion or damage and to prevent any disturbance of the peace of the mission or impairment of its dignity.” Colombo criticized the failure of the Norwegian government in fulfilling its obligations under international law and urged it to arrest the perpetrators immediately.<sup>19</sup>

International pressure meanwhile grew on both Colombo and the LTTE to deal immediately with the thousands of trapped civilians in the conflict zone. Japan called on the LTTE to allow freedom of movement to the trapped civilians and urged the government to explore possibilities for a political process towards a permanent solution for the ethnic problem.<sup>20</sup> France on its part pledged to increase humanitarian aid in order to cater to the needs of the trapped civilians. Permanent Representative of France to the UN Jean-Maurice Ripert also called on the LTTE to join the political process.<sup>21</sup> The Sri Lankan government on its part stated that it would not surrender to international and domestic pressure to stop the ongoing military operations.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> “Army trashes coup rumours,” *nepalnews.com*, April 26, 2009, at <http://www.nepalnews.com/archive/2009/apr/apr26/news16.php>

<sup>18</sup> “India contributes to 44 per cent of total FDI in Nepal,” *The Hindu*, April 27, 2009, at <http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/holnus/001200904261252.htm>

<sup>19</sup> “Government of Sri Lanka deplors the failure of the Norwegian Government in fulfilling its obligations under international law,” *Daily News*, April 16, 2009, at <http://www.dailynews.lk/2009/04/16/news01.asp>

<sup>20</sup> “Allow civilians to free movement,” *Daily News*, April 17, 2009, at <http://www.dailynews.lk/2009/04/17/news28.asp>

<sup>21</sup> “France to increase humanitarian aid to Sri Lanka, calls on LTTE to surrender,” *Colombo Page*, April 23, 2009, at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_09/April22193426CH.html](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_09/April22193426CH.html)

<sup>22</sup> “Govt not giving into international pressure,” *Daily News*, April 16, 2009, at <http://www.dailynews.lk/2009/04/18/news03.asp>

President Rajapakse meanwhile briefed the visiting NSA M.K. Narayanan and Foreign Secretary Shiv Shankar Menon on the ongoing operations. Reports noted that the Indian delegation expressed their concern about civilian welfare.<sup>23</sup>

In other developments, Claude Heller, President of the UN Security Council termed the LTTE a terrorist organization which was using civilians as human shields. The Security Council however did not call for a ceasefire. The UNSC also urged the LTTE to give up arms, and stated that there was no military solution to the conflict.<sup>24</sup> Canada on its part announced that it would not bow down to any pressure regarding the decision to lift the ban on the LTTE. Canada had placed the LTTE on a list of banned terrorist organizations under the federal Anti-Terrorism Act, which prohibits the financing of such groups.<sup>25</sup>

## MALDIVES

- **Deputy Foreign Minister: Maldives working closely with UN mechanisms to deal with problem of migrant workers; Maldivian Human rights commission chief praises government's efforts to secure a seat at the UN Human Rights Council**

Maldivian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ms. Hawla Ahmed Didi, stated that in order to tackle the problem of migrant workers, Maldives was working closely with UN human rights mechanisms, including with its newly-established Labour Tribunal and the Human Rights Commission. Ms. Didi stressed that Maldives firmly believed that regional mechanisms dealing with migration needed to be strengthened.<sup>26</sup>

The president of the Maldivian Human Rights Commission expressed appreciation of the government's efforts to secure a seat at the UN Human Rights Council, noting that the decision would benefit Maldives both at the domestic and international front.<sup>27</sup>

## B. EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

### CHINA

- **Chinese Commerce Minister expresses his govt.'s interest to further strengthen economic ties; Chinese Defence Minister and Adm. Mehta meet in Qingdao, express satisfaction at the status of the relationship**

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<sup>23</sup> "President holds cordial talks with Indian visitors," *Daily News*, April 16, 2009, at <http://www.dailynews.lk/2009/04/25/news02.asp>

<sup>24</sup> "Lay down arms," *Daily News*, April 16, 2009, at <http://www.dailynews.lk/2009/04/24/news01.asp>

<sup>25</sup> "Canada says won't lift ban on Tigers," *Daily News*, April 16, 2009, at <http://www.dailynews.lk/2009/04/16/news03.asp>

<sup>26</sup> "Trafficking in persons undermines human rights - Deputy Minister," *Miadhu News*, April 17, 2009, at <http://miadhu.com.mv/news.php?id=9908>

<sup>27</sup> "Human Rights Commission expresses support for Maldives UN candidature," *Miadhu News*, April 17, 2009, at <http://miadhu.com.mv/news.php?id=9907>

The Chinese Commerce Minister Chen Deming, in a column in *The Wall Street Journal* expressed his government's interest to further strengthen economic ties with the United States. Pointing out that economic links have always been an important basis for the China-US relationship, he however noted that they were affected by the current global economic downturn. Bilateral trade for instance dropped by 6.8 percent and US investments in China slumped 19.4 percent. Currently, the volume of the two-way trade in goods between the two countries exceeds \$300 billion.<sup>28</sup>

The Chinese State Councillor and Defence Minister Liang Guanglie met with Admiral Sureesh Mehta, Chief of the Naval Staff of the Indian Navy in Qingdao on April 22. Both the military leaders discussed issues relating to naval cooperation between the two countries. Adm. Mehta was in Qingdao to participate in the PLAN's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. Mr. Liang noted that cooperation between the navies of the two countries, as was witnessed in recent times, was good for the stability of Asia.<sup>29</sup>

In other developments, reports noted that two Chinese naval escort taskforce warships 'Wuhan' and 'Haikou' had finished their escort missions in the South China Sea. These two ships were conducting search and rescue operations since December 2008 and had given cover to over 200 ships of 41 countries.<sup>30</sup>

## TAIWAN

- **Pacts signed to boost trade and tourism links; Taiwan seeks observer status in WHA**

Taiwanese and Chinese authorities signed three pacts during the week to strengthen trade cooperation and boost tourism links. Agreements towards increasing direct passenger charter flights, flights to more destinations and increased cargo flights were agreed upon. Agreements were also signed to enhance cooperation for ensuring financial stability as well as to increase cooperation to fight criminal activities.<sup>31</sup>

In other developments, reports noted that Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs had finalised a 'multi-language' position paper to seek global support for the country's bid to gain observer status in the World Health Assembly (WHA).<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> "Chinese commerce minister calls for stronger Sino-U.S. trade ties," *People's Daily*, April 28, 2009, at <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6646240.html>

<sup>29</sup> Luo Zheng, "Liang Guanglie meets Indian and U.S. guests," *PLA Daily*, April 23, 2009, at <http://english.pladaily.com.cn/>

<sup>30</sup> Tian Yuan and Qian Xiaohu, "First Chinese Naval Escort taskforce sails into South China Sea," *PLA Daily*, April 27, 2009, at <http://english.pladaily.com.cn/>

<sup>31</sup> "Taiwan inks three pacts with China to strengthen cooperation," *Central News Agency*, April 26, 2009, at <http://english.cna.com.tw/ReadNews/Detail.aspx?pSearchDate=&pNewsID=200904260013&pType1=PD&pType0=xPDCS&pTypeSel=0>

<sup>32</sup> Flor Wang, "Foreign Ministry releases position paper on Taiwan's WHA bid", April 26, 2009, at <http://english.cna.com.tw/ReadNews/Detail.aspx?pSearchDate=&pNewsID=200904260012&pType1=HH&pType0=xPDCS&pTypeSel=0>

## SOUTHEAST ASIA

- **PM Razak visits Indonesia, discusses cooperation agreements on areas like tourism, energy, and high technology; Sixth Special Joint Commission between Malaysia and Kyrgyz Republic takes place in Bishkek; State of emergency lifted in Bangkok; UAE's offers its help to Thai government in extraditing Shinawatra; Indonesia urges stronger stance on anti-discrimination measures for migrant labourers; India to import 37,000 tonnes of pulses from Myanmar; NHPC to build hydroelectric power plants in Myanmar and Bhutan**

Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak was in Indonesia from April 22-24 and met with President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. Both the leaders discussed issues of mutual concern, including measures to take forward cooperation in sectors such as tourism, oil and gas, high technology industries and defence cooperation.<sup>33</sup> Both the states also explored the possibilities of exploring the opening of new air routes with a view to promoting tourism. They agreed to jointly cooperate in stemming the illegal immigration of their citizens to Australia by boats.<sup>34</sup>

The Sixth Special Joint Commission meeting between officials from Malaysia and the Kyrgyz Republic was held in Bishkek. Both parties agreed to explore possibilities of cooperation in areas like finance, science and technology, tourism, health and education.<sup>35</sup>

In Thailand, Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva lifted the state of emergency on April 24, and hoped that the decision would foster reconciliation. The state of emergency was imposed in Bangkok and five neighboring provinces on April 12 after anti-government demonstrations led to the postponement of the ASEAN summit at Pattaya.<sup>36</sup> Reports however noted that the opposition had not given up on its stance on seeking the removal of PM Abhisit.<sup>37</sup> Defense Minister Prawit Wongsuwon on his part asserted that criminal charges against former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra will stay despite PM Abhisit's plan to grant amnesty to opposition activists.<sup>38</sup> Meanwhile, the government of UAE, where Mr. Shinawatra was residing at present, has agreed to cooperate with the Thai government in seeking to extradite him.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> "Najib Returns from First Visit as PM to Indonesia," *Bernama. Com*, April 24, 2009, at [http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/news\\_lite.php?id=406403](http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/news_lite.php?id=406403)

<sup>34</sup> "Malaysia/Indonesia to help stem Aussie Boat People Problem," *Bernama.com*, April 20, 2009, at [http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/news\\_lite.php?id=405570](http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/news_lite.php?id=405570)

<sup>35</sup> "Malaysia and Kyrgyz Republic Enhance Ties," *Bernama.com*, April 23, 2009, at [http://www.bernama.com.my/bernama/v5/news\\_lite.php?id=406193](http://www.bernama.com.my/bernama/v5/news_lite.php?id=406193)

<sup>36</sup> "PM Lifts State of Emergency," *The Bangkok Post*, April 24, 2009, at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/politics/141480/pm-lifts-state-of-emergency>

<sup>37</sup> "Jakrapob: UDD plans new revolt," *The Bangkok Post*, April 21, 2009, at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/141177/jakrapob-udd-won-t-surrender>

<sup>38</sup> "Thaksin cases 'not negotiable'," *The Bangkok Post*, April 21, 2009, at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/141176/charges-against-thaksin-must-not-be-cleared>

<sup>39</sup> "UAE says Thaksin no longer welcome there," *The Bangkok Post*, April 23, 2009, at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/141384/uae-supports-thaksin-extradition>

In related developments, the internal security situation in Thailand took a turn for the worse after militants struck at 11 places on April 26 in five districts of Narathiwat province.<sup>40</sup>

At the UN Summit on Racism in Geneva on April 21, Indonesia urged other countries to take a strong stance on anti-discrimination measures for migrant workers.<sup>41</sup>

India and Myanmar finalised a deal under which New Delhi will import 37,000 tonnes of pulses.<sup>42</sup> Reports also noted that NHPC, India's largest hydropower firm, is planning to build hydroelectric power projects in Myanmar and Bhutan.<sup>43</sup>

Meanwhile, joint military offensive on Karen National Union (KNU) army camp at Waw Lay Khee by the Burmese Army and the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) was temporarily suspended.<sup>44</sup>

## C. WEST ASIA

### IRAN

- **Ahmadinejad: Israel is a "cruel racist regime"; Ban Ki-moon condemns Ahmadinejad's speech; Iran's presidential election process begins; Deputy Head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization: Iran will be a nuclear fuel producing country by 2010**

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, at the UN Conference on Racism in Geneva termed Israel a "cruel and repressive racist regime," prompting delegates from European nations to stage a walkout and earning a rebuke from UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, who stated that he had not "experienced this kind of destructive proceedings in an assembly, in a conference, by any one member state." The US and more than a half-dozen other nations had already boycotted the meeting out of concern that the meeting would turn into a platform for attacking Israel and its policies. Ahmadinejad was the only head of state to attend the event.

Pakistani representative Zamir Akram however told reporters that "If we actually believe in freedom of expression, then he [Ahmadinejad] has the right to

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<sup>40</sup> "11 militants strikes in Narathiwat," *The Bangkok Post*, April 27, 2009, at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/141646/unrest-in-five-districts-of-narathiwat>

<sup>41</sup> "Indonesia advocates migrant rights," *The Jakarta Post*, April 23, 2009, at <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2009/04/23/indonesia-advocates-migrant-rights.html>

<sup>42</sup> "Government imports 37,000 tonnes of pulses from Myanmar," *Indo-Burma News*, April 23, 2009, at <http://www.indoburmanews.net/archives-1/2009/april-2009/govt-imports-37-000-tonne-of-pulses-from-myanmar>

<sup>43</sup> "NHPC Plans Hydroelectric Power Projects in Myanmar-Bhutan-Chairman," *Indo-Burma News*, April 23, 2009, at <http://www.indoburmanews.net/archives-1/2009/april-2009/nhpc-plans-hydroelectric-power-projs-in-myanmar-bhutan-chairman>

<sup>44</sup> "Temporary ceasefire between KNU and DKBA," *Burma News International*, April 21, 2009, at <http://www.bnionline.net/news/nmg/6150-temporary-ceasefire-between-knu-and-dkba.html>

say what he wants to say.”<sup>45</sup> Iran termed the UN chief’s statement about its president as “one-sided and unreasonable” and as being “not impartial.”<sup>46</sup>

In other developments, the process of registration of candidates for the upcoming presidential elections slated for June 12 started. Reports indicated that according to Article 55 of the Presidential Elections Law, the nominees, personally or through their representatives, must attend the Interior Ministry to make final registration for the elections by May 5, 2009.<sup>47</sup>

The Deputy Head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization for Planning and International Affairs, Mohammad Saedi told an international conference on nuclear energy held in Beijing that Iran will be transformed into a nuclear fuel-producing country by the end of its Fourth Five-Year Development Plan (2005-2010).<sup>48</sup>

## IRAQ

- **Syrian PM visits Baghdad, the first time such a senior official visited in nearly 3 decades; Clinton makes an unannounced visit to Baghdad, promises continued engagement**

Syrian Prime Minister Naji al-Otari's during his visit to Baghdad met with his Iraqi counterpart Nouri al-Maliki and discussed issues of mutual importance. Mr. al-Otari was the highest Syrian official to visit Iraq in almost three decades. Mr. Ali al-Dabbagh, the Iraqi government spokesman, stated that the Syrian PM’s discussions with Mr. al-Maliki, which focused on preventing militants from operating from either country, showed “great optimism.” Both the countries restored diplomatic relations in November 2006, ending a 24-year break that began when Damascus accused Iraq of inciting riots in Syria in 1982.

Meanwhile, the Iraqi military announced that security forces had arrested four suspects implicated in a recent attack on Baghdad's protected Green Zone from eastern Baghdad, a predominantly Shiite neighborhood. Militants also shelled the Green Zone late on April 25, but there were no reports of casualties or damage. It was the first such bombardment inside the Green Zone in more than three months.<sup>49</sup>

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton meanwhile made an unannounced visit to Iraq, where she stated that she saw no sign that the country was sliding back into sectarian warfare despite recent suicide bombings. Clinton promised continued American engagement in the country, even as Washington prepares to

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<sup>45</sup> NEIL MacFARQUHAR, “Iranian Calls Israel Racist at Meeting in Geneva,” *New York Times*, April 21, 2009, at [http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/21/world/21geneva.html?\\_r=1&hpw](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/21/world/21geneva.html?_r=1&hpw)

<sup>46</sup> “Iran calls UN chief statement ‘one-sided and unreasonable,’” *Tehran Times*, April 22, 2009, at [http://www.tehrantimes.com/index\\_View.asp?code=192822](http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=192822)

<sup>47</sup> “Initial Registration of Presidential Election Candidates starts,” *IRNA*, April 25, 2009, at <http://www.irna.ir/En/View/FullStory/?NewsId=452055&idLanguage=3>

<sup>48</sup> “Iran will become nuclear fuel-producer by 2010,” *IRNA*, April 25, 2009, at <http://www.irna.ir/En/View/FullStory/?NewsId=449622&idLanguage=3>

<sup>49</sup> “Syrian PM on historic Iraq visit,” *Tehran Times*, April 22, 2009, at [http://www.tehrantimes.com/index\\_View.asp?code=192813](http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=192813)

withdraw its troops from the country by the end of 2011. The visit coincided with a spike in violence, with two female suicide bombers attacking a Shi'ite shrine in Baghdad, killing 60 people in the deadliest single incident in Iraq in more than 10 months. Clinton reiterated that the troop drawdown would be handled in a "responsible and careful way" and that it would not affect efforts to improve Iraq's security forces, or complete the ongoing reconstruction and development projects.<sup>50</sup>

## II. MISSILES, SPACE, AND DEFENCE REVIEW

### MISSILES AND SPACE

- **Israel seeking Vulcan-Phalanx missile interception systems**

Reports indicated that Israel was seeking to purchase the Vulcan-Phalanx missile interception systems from the United States. Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak told reporters that the system will be "part of a multi-layer defence to intercept rockets."<sup>51</sup> While the Phalanx radar can track missiles, the 20 millimeter Vulcan Gatling gun that intercepts them. The system was expected to cost about \$25 million.

Past attempts by Israel to purchase the system have been turned down by the US. Defence Minister Barak was expected to make the request to buy the system during his official visit to the US in June 2009. The system will in all probability be used to intercept Qassam rockets fired by Hamas from the Gaza Strip.

### DEFENCE ISSUES

#### NATIONAL

- **Indian Air Force to receive Phalcon AWACS**

Reports indicated that the IAF would receive the first of the Phalcon Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft from Israel, on May 18, 2009. The system, to be linked with the country's first military satellite, launched recently, would enable the IAF to acquire better intelligence inputs, maintain air superiority and improve strike capabilities as well as conduct tactical surveillance deep into neighboring countries without violating their airspace. It has all-weather capability and can log on to 60 targets at a time. The AWACS is a product of cooperation between Israel, India and Russia, with the Israeli radar mounted on modified Russian IL-76 aircraft.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> "Clinton makes unannounced visit to Iraq," *Khaleej Times*, April 25, 2009, at [http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2009/April/middleeast\\_April421.xml&section=middleeast](http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2009/April/middleeast_April421.xml&section=middleeast)

<sup>51</sup> "Israel Wants to Buy US Rocket Intercept System," *Agence France-Presse*, April 21, 2009, at [http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5h-OK4o9cYko\\_xLIyXM4D2xaMrgBg](http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5h-OK4o9cYko_xLIyXM4D2xaMrgBg)

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.india-defence.com/reports-4336>

- **FICCI: India's private defence sector will not be affected by economic downturn**

Vivek Pandit, Director of FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry) told *Janes* that India's private defence sector would be least affected by the global economic slow down. Mr. Pandit pointed out that although India's economic growth rate had declined from 8 per cent, it is strongly believed that the country would maintain 6.5 to 7 per cent growth rate in the coming year and so the private sector, which was less integrated with the world, would maintain its growth pattern. It is estimated that private sector controls about 9 per cent of the total procurement budget of \$7.6 billion.<sup>53</sup>

- **Bangladesh Air Chief visits India**

The visiting Bangladesh Air Chief, Air Marshal S.M. Zia-ur-Rehman, held talks with Defence Minister A.K. Antony, Naval Chief Adm. Sureesh Mehta and Army Chief Gen. Deepak Kapoor. Reports indicated that India has agreed to supply Bangladesh defence equipment, including the ALH (Advanced Light Helicopter) as well as assist in building warships. Sources also indicated that New Delhi was concerned about the increasing levels of defense cooperation between Dhaka and Beijing and by the active involvement of the Chinese in the region.<sup>54</sup>

## INTERNATIONAL

- **Russian Army receives first Mi-28N Night Hunter attack helicopter**

Reports noted that the Russian military has received the first of six Mi-28N Night Hunter attack helicopter, which is an advanced version of the Mi-28 attack helicopter manufactured by Rostvertol in southern Russia. The modified helicopter is designed to conduct hunter-killer missions against main battle tanks, ground forces, helicopters, and armour, in all-weather conditions. Powered by two TV3-117VMA turbo-shaft engines producing 2,200 shaft hp each, the helicopter has a combat range of up to 450 kms and over 1,000 kms without the external fuel tank.<sup>55</sup>

- **China parades its naval might on the occasion of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of PLAN**

At the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of its Navy, China paraded its naval might, along with the navies of 14 other countries. Over 25 PLAN vessels and 31 aircraft, 56 submarines, destroyers, frigates, missile boats and planes were displayed off the eastern port city of Qingdao. The Navy displayed its nuclear submarines for the first time. While President Hu Jintao asserted that China had no intension of being a threat to any country or region, the Pentagon on its part

<sup>53</sup> [http://www.janes.com/news/defence/jdi/jdi090422\\_1\\_n.shtml](http://www.janes.com/news/defence/jdi/jdi090422_1_n.shtml)

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.defensenews.com/story.php?i=4056461&c=ASI&s=TOP>

<sup>55</sup> <http://www.india-defence.com/reports/4335>

stated that the display of Chinese naval might was not a cause of concern but wanted more transparency and clarity on Beijing's intentions.<sup>56</sup>

- **US House unveils acquisition reform bill**

The US House of Representatives unveiled the Weapons Acquisition System Reform through Enhancing Technical Knowledge and Oversight (WASTE TKO) Act, aimed at controlling the cost of future acquisition programs. The bill, which covers about 20 percent of Pentagon acquisition process, also expects that the defence companies would bear the cost of developing alternative weapons while the Pentagon would only pay the developmental costs.

The other features of the bill include the appointment of a principal adviser at the Pentagon to oversee the functions of cost estimation, systems engineering and performance assessment for major weapons; granting of full authority to the cost overseer for selecting confidence levels for major weapons cost estimates and access to all cost-related records; constant reviews of the performance and technological maturity of major weapons under development; and ensuring competition through a program's lifetime at the prime and subcontract level.<sup>57</sup>

### III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

#### JAMMU AND KASHMIR

- **Farooq Abdullah: Terrorists infringing on right to democracy**

The NC President Dr. Farooq Abdullah, talking with reporters on April 18, asserted that the people of Jammu and Kashmir had a right to democracy and that they were ready to kill to uphold this right. He was responding to the threat issued by the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) on April 18 warning people against taking part in the forthcoming parliamentary elections. Dr. Abdullah stated that he would mobilize world opinion against terrorists who were infringing on the right to democracy of the people of the state. Dr. Abdullah further added that the advent of militancy in 1989 had destroyed the economy of the state.<sup>58</sup>

Meanwhile, five people, including two Village Defence Committee members were killed and eight others injured after the vehicle they were traveling was hit by a landmine in Poonch District on April 21.<sup>59</sup>

The central government admitted on April 21 that around 50 terrorists had infiltrated into J and K through the Gurez sector in North Kashmir. The

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<sup>56</sup> <http://www.defensenews.com/story.php?i=4054514&c=ASI&s=SEA>

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.defensenews.com/story.php?i=4055609&c=AME&s=TOP>

<sup>58</sup> "Terrorists' infringing on right to democracy: Farooq," *Daily Excelsior*, April 19, 2009, at <http://www.dailyexcelsior.com/web1/09apr20/news.htm#3>

<sup>59</sup> "Five killed in Poonch blast, 8 injured," *Hindu*, April 22, 2009, at <http://www.hindu.com/2009/04/22/stories/2009042256490100.htm>

Home Ministry however dismissed as “grossly exaggerated” reports that 158 terrorists had sneaked into the state.<sup>60</sup>

#### MAOIST INSURGENCY

- **Maoists hijack, release train in Jharkhand**

On April 22, the Maoists unleashed a reign of terror in Jharkhand and Bihar. In Jharkhand, nearly 200 Maoists hijacked a passenger train in Latehar district for about three hours.

In Bihar, the Maoists bombed a government office in Aurangabad district and shot dead a truck driver after setting eight trucks ablaze in Gaya district.<sup>61</sup>

#### NORTH EAST DEVELOPMENTS

- **Six die in twin DHD-J attacks**

Suspected militants of the Jewel Gordosa faction of the Dima Haram Daogah (DHD-J) continued their spate of attacks in Assam’s NC Hills district. Twin attacks were mounted on a private cement company’s convoy of vehicles and an office on April 20. Five security personnel and a civilian were killed in the ambush. The militants ambushed the 20-truck convoy of Vinay Cement Company at Panimur Kalanala and attacked the company’s office at Umrangsu.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> “Centre admits 50 militants infiltrate into J&K,” *Daily Excelsior*, April 23, 2009, at <http://www.dailyexcelsior.com/web1/09apr23/news1.htm#2>

<sup>61</sup> “Maoists hijack, release train in Jharkhand,” *Hindu*, April 23, 2009, at <http://www.hindu.com/2009/04/23/stories/2009042357830100.htm>

<sup>62</sup> “6 die in twin DHD-J attacks,” *Telegraph*, April 21, 2009, at [http://telegraphindia.com/1090421/jsp/frontpage/story\\_10852044.jsp](http://telegraphindia.com/1090421/jsp/frontpage/story_10852044.jsp)