

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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1. COUNTRY REVIEW

A. SOUTH ASIA

AFGHANISTAN

- **Karzai declared elected, to take oath on November 19; Obama and other world leaders greet Karzai; UNSC calls for addressing the challenges facing the war-ravaged country; Dr. Abdullah says new government cannot cope with the challenges facing the country; Karzai vows to fight corruption; UN mission to relocate hundreds of its foreign staff following last week's attack**

Incumbent president Hamid Karzai was declared the winner in the Afghan presidential election on November 2 by the Independent Election Commission (IEC) as his challenger Dr. Abdullah Abdullah dropped out of the November 7 runoff elections. Mr. Karzai will take oath for the second term on November 19.¹

Even as President Obama congratulated Mr. Karzai for his re-election, White House spokesman Robert Gibbs urged the Karzai administration to immediately address the issues of corruption, credibility and governance.² UN chief Ban Ki Moon, British PM Gordon Brown, India's Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari were among other world leaders who congratulated Mr. Karzai on his re-election. The members of the UN Security Council also called on the administration to address the challenges facing the war-ravaged country. They also commended the Afghan people for their participation in the electoral process.³

Dr. Abdullah meanwhile charged that the new government was illegal and maintained that it would not be able to cope with the problems facing the country, including those of security and corruption.⁴ President Karzai on his part stated that he would seek to unify the country and pledged to work with all Afghans.⁵

In other developments, the UN mission in Afghanistan announced plans to relocate hundreds of foreign staff members in the wake of a lethal attack on its workers in the previous week.

¹ "Karzai to take oath of office on Nov 19," *Pajhwok Afghan News*, November 7, 2009, at <http://www.pajhwok.com/viewstory.asp?lng=eng&id=84390>

² "Obama congratulates Karzai on victory", *Press TV*, November 3, 2009, at <http://www.presstv.ir/detail.aspx?id=110309§ionid=351020403>

³ "World leaders greet Karzai on his reelection", *Pajhwok Afghan News*, November 3, 2009, at <http://www.pajhwok.com/viewstory.asp?lng=eng&id=84164>

⁴ "Karzai's Top Rival Denounces Afghanistan's New Government", *The New York Times*, November 4, 2009, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/05/world/asia/05abdullah.html?scp=8&sq=afghanistan&st=cse>

⁵ "Karzai Vows Corruption Fight, but Avoids Details," *The New York Times*, November 3, 2009, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/04/world/asia/04afghan.html?scp=9&sq=afghanistan&st=cse>

PAKISTAN

OCTOBER 26-NOVEMBER 1

- **Massive suicide attack in Peshawar ahead of Clinton's Pakistan visit kills over 100; Clinton says US will not support dictators in future; Offensive against militants in South Waziristan continues; Turkish PM visits Islamabad**

A massive suicide attack in Peshawar on October 28 at a busy market place claimed over 100 lives, most of whom were women and children. Reports noted that a terrorist group belonging to Darra Adamkhel carried out the attack, which occurred just before US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton arrived in Pakistan.⁶

Clinton on her part told reporters in Lahore on October 29 that it was hard for her to believe that the Pakistan government did not know where the militants were and that they could not get them if they really wanted to. She also noted the difficult economic situation in the country, and pointed out that the share of taxes to GDP was the lowest in Pakistan.⁷ The Speaker of the Pakistan National Assembly Fehmida Mirza stated on October 30 in Islamabad that Clinton had admitted that the US had erred in the past in supporting dictators and reportedly assured her Pakistani hosts that future relations would not be based on rapport with individuals but with the state and people of Pakistan.⁸

The offensive by Pakistan security forces meanwhile continued. While more than 40 militants were killed in South Waziristan on October 26, 33 were killed on October 31 in the same area.⁹ The Army proceeded towards another Taliban stronghold, Sararogha.

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited Islamabad during the week. During his meeting with PM Gilani, both the countries decided to strengthen their strategic ties, enhance cooperation in the economic domain and take steps to effectively counter terrorism.¹⁰

⁶ Ali Hazrat Bacha, "At least 101 killed, 150 injured; fire destroys several buildings; many trapped in debris: Peshawar bomb targets women, children," *Dawn*, October 28, 2009, at <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/at-least-101-killed%2C-150-injured-fire-destroys-several-buildings-many-trapped-in-debris-peshawar-bomb-targets-women%2C-children-909>

⁷ "Al Qaeda leadership in Pakistan: Hillary Clinton," *Daily Times*, October 30, 2009, at http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009\10\30\story_30-10-2009_pg1_1

⁸ Asim Yasin, "US not to back dictators in future, says Clinton," *The News*, October 31, 2009, at http://www.thenews.com.pk/arc_default.asp

⁹ Sailab Mehsud, "42 militants killed in South Waziristan," *Dawn*, October 27, 2009, at <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/42-militants-killed-in-south-waziristan-809>

¹⁰ Asim Yasin, "Pakistan, Turkey agree to upgrade strategic ties," *The News*, October 26, 2009, at http://www.thenews.com.pk/arc_default.asp

NOVEMBER 2-8

- **Another suicide attack near Peshawar kills 10 at a market place; Foreign Minister Qureshi: US should involve Pakistan in the formulation of new Afghan Strategy; NRO dropped by government; Pakistani troops reach Makin, a Taliban stronghold and hometown of Mehsud**

Yet another suicide bomb blast at a busy market in Matani near Peshawar on November 7 claimed 9 lives and left several people injured. Among those dead included the member of an anti-Taliban outfit.¹¹

Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi told reporters in Kuala Lumpur on November 1 that Pakistan has urged the US to consult more closely with it in the deliberations leading to the formulation of a new Afghan strategy, in view of his country's vital role in the solution to the Afghan problem.¹²

In domestic developments, the Pakistan government decided to shelve the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) due to lack of consensus amongst the various political parties and adverse public opinion.¹³ PM Gilani, addressing the media after the inauguration of a power plant in Jamber on November 7 stated the NRO was a non-issue and has been "buried forever." He added that the issue relating to the abolition of Article 58(2b) was no longer relevant.¹⁴ Addressing the National Assembly on November 3, Gilani also promised to implement the Charter of Democracy (CoD) so as to "transfer powers from Presidency to PM."¹⁵

Military operations against the Taliban in South Waziristan continued, with Pakistani troops reaching Makin, the hometown of the Baitullah Mehsud, former chief of the TTP.¹⁶

BHUTAN

- **Sheikh Hasina visits Bhutan, bilateral trade agreement reached; India's developmental assistance to Bhutan's tenth plan discussed; CEC Chawla visits Bhutan**

¹¹ "Suicide bomb near Peshawar kills 10, wounds 30," *Dawn*, November 8, 2009, at <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/metropolitan/09-blast-hits-peshawar-market-several-casualties-feared--szh-05>

¹² "Message conveyed to Hillary: FM: Pakistan asks US to consult it on new strategy," *Dawn*, November 2, 2009, at <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/message-conveyed-to-hillary-fm-pakistan-asks-us-to-consult-it-on-new-strategy-119>

¹³ Asim Yasin, "President retreats on NRO issue," *The News*, November 3, 2009, at http://www.thenews.com.pk/arc_default.asp

¹⁴ "NRO buried forever: PM," *Daily Times*, November 8, 2009, at http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009\11\08\story_8-11-2009_pg1_1

¹⁵ Asim Yasin, "Govt to implement CoD, not to table NRO in NA: PM," *The News*, November 4, 2009, at http://www.thenews.com.pk/arc_default.asp

¹⁶ Iftikhar A. Khan, "24 terrorists killed: Troops enter Baitullah's hometown," *Dawn*, November 7, 2009, at <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/24-terrorists-killed-troops-enter-baitullahs-hometown-719>

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina reached Thimphu on November 6, along with a 44 member delegation. Both countries signed a bilateral trade agreement on November 7 which eliminates tariff on 18 major agricultural products that Bhutan exports to Bangladesh. Another key feature of the bilateral trade agreement was the inclusion of a new trade route expected to benefit Eastern Bhutan. This route to Tamabil, Northeastern Bangladesh passes through the Indian states of Assam and Meghalaya and is the fifth trade route that Thimphu and Dhaka have identified to augment bilateral trade.¹⁷

A meeting to discuss India's developmental assistance to Bhutan's tenth plan was recently held. An Empowered Joint Group (EJG) of Ministers from both countries was formed to accelerate the process of meeting the targeted production of 10,000 MW of electricity by 2020.¹⁸ Discussions also were held on improving the Gelephu-Santabari (Assam) road, a vital road link for mega-hydro projects like Punatshangchu I and II, Chamkarchhu I and Mangdechu.

India's Chief Election Commissioner Navin Chawla paid a four day visit to Bhutan recently. Mr. Chawla's visit was expected to further strengthen ongoing collaboration between the election commissions of the two countries. Bhutan and India had signed a MoU on cooperation in the field of electoral management and administration in May 2006.¹⁹

B. EAST ASIA

SOUTHEAST ASIA (OCTOBER 26-NOVEMBER 8, 2009)

- **Thailand Cambodia relationship deteriorates as Cambodia makes Thaksin Shinawatra senior adviser to Hun Sen government; US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs meets Suu Kyi; US Special Advisor for Non-Proliferation and Arms Control Robert Einhorn seeks Malaysia's help in dealing with Iran; South Korea wants to sell infantry fighting vehicles to Malaysia**

The bilateral relationship between Thailand and Cambodia deteriorated further with the Cambodian government's appointment of fugitive former Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra as economic adviser to Cambodian premier Hun Sen. Tensions between both the countries had also risen in June 2008 over a land dispute at a 11th century temple near the border. Cambodia had also offered a safe haven to Thaksin who was ousted in a coup in 2006.²⁰ Reports meanwhile

¹⁷ "Duty free export on 18 farm products," *The Kuensel*, November 9, 2009, at <http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=13927>

¹⁸ "India reassures 10th plan funds," *Bhutan Observer*, October 30, 2009, at <http://www.bhutanobserver.bt/2009/bhutan-news/10/asindia-reassures-10th-plan-funds.html>

¹⁹ "Chawla starts Bhutan visit on Monday," *Hindustan Times*, October 25, 2009, at <http://www.hindustantimes.com/Chawla-starts-Bhutan-visit-on-Monday/H1-Article1-469035.aspx>

²⁰ "Thaksin made Cambodian adviser," *Bangkok Post*, November 4, 2009, at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/159113/cambodia-makes-thailand-thaksin-adviser-government>

noted that Thaksin had agreed to accept the position offered by the Hun Sen administration.²¹

Thai Foreign Minister Kasit Piromya meanwhile expressed his intention to propose the revocation of the MoU signed between Thailand and Cambodia in 2001 on resolving maritime boundary issues in the Gulf of Thailand.²² Cambodian PM Hun Sen on his part hoped that peace between the two countries could be maintained.²³

In domestic developments in Thailand, efforts towards amending the constitution faced yet another stumbling block as the Senate Committee for the study of the 2007 Constitution decided to withdraw from the charter amendment process.²⁴

US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell held talks with Burmese pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi on November 4 and hoped that a new era of engagement with the military authorities in Burma will begin. Campbell's visit was the first by a senior US official during the last 15 years.²⁵ He was accompanied by US Ambassador for ASEAN Affairs, Scot Marcel. Marcel noted that the visit was part of the Obama administration's policy of 'pragmatic engagement.' US officials however made it clear that Washington was yet not ready to lift sanctions until the authorities made concrete progress toward democratization.²⁶

US Department of State Special Advisor for Non-Proliferation and Arms Control Robert J. Einhorn, on a visit to Kuala Lumpur, sought Malaysia's help in dealing with Iran, with which it has a friendly relationship. Pointing out the country's influence within the Organization of the Islamic Conference, ASEAN and the NAM, Einhorn stated that the US saw Malaysia as a significant partner in dealing with nonproliferation and disarmament issues.²⁷

South Korea put forward a proposal to sell to the Malaysian Armed Forces its Next Infantry Fight Vehicle K21 and Black Fox armored vehicle. These vehicles have several state-of-the-art features.²⁸

²¹ "Thaksin accepts advisory job," *Bangkok Post*, November 5, 2009, at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/159200/thaksin-accepts-advisory-post>

²² "PM advised to review MoU Plan," *Bangkok Post*, November 7, 2009, at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/159382/somchai-pm-should-review-mou-revocation-plan>

²³ "Hun Sen calls for peace," *Bangkok Post*, November 7, 2009, at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/159362/hun-sen-calls-for-peace>

²⁴ "Senators quitting charter amendment," *Bangkok Post*, November 5, 2009, at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/159216/senators-quitting-charter-amendment>

²⁵ "US envoy in rare talks with Suu Kyi," *Bangkok Post*, November 4, 2009, at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/159043/us-envoy-in-rare-talks-with-suu-kyi-burma-pm>

²⁶ "US will not lift Myanmar sanctions," *The Jakarta Post*, November 5, 2009, at <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2009/11/05/us-will-not-lift-myanmar-sanctions.html>

²⁷ "US sees Malaysia as important partner in strengthening non-proliferation regime," *Bernama.com*, November 4, 2009, at http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/news_lite.php?id=452573

²⁸ "South Korea wants to sell tanks to Malaysia," *Bernama.com*, November 4, 2009, at http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/news_lite.php?id=452397

C. WEST ASIA

IRAN

- **Supreme Leader says that “Iranian nation will not be deceived by the fake conciliatory face of the US administration”; Fresh clashes between government forces and anti-government protestors on 30th anniversary of takeover of US Embassy; Reports: Iran rejects latest nuclear deal; Moscow warns Tehran against taking a “less constructive position” on the issue of uranium enrichment**

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei warned the US not to use the post-election events in his country as a means for staging anti-Iranian plots. He stated that "as long as the US administration maintains its arrogant spirit and threats, the Iranian nation will not be deceived by the fake conciliatory face of the US administration and will not give up its independence, freedom, national interests and rights at all."²⁹

Police fired tear gas to disperse anti-government protestors in Tehran who took part in a rally commemorating the 30th anniversary of the takeover of the American Embassy and used the occasion for launching renewed protests against the June 30 election. The clashes occurred even as hard-liners warned the opposition not to take advantage of the occasion for anti-government protests.³⁰

Iran's Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki meanwhile stated that Iran was considering alternatives to the uranium exchange deal that was negotiated at Geneva even as a leading member of Iran's parliament stated that Tehran had decided to reject the proposal. Iran was to have shipped most of its stocks of low-enriched uranium to Russia and France for enrichment in return for fuel for a research reactor in Tehran. Moscow on its part warned Tehran that it risked further sanctions if it took a “less constructive position” on the issue of uranium enrichment.³¹

IRAQ

- **Iraq's parliament approves new election law; Obama: Parliamentary approval “advances the political progress that can bring lasting peace and unity to Iraq”**

Iraqi MPs approved a law meant to govern the process of holding general elections due in early 2010. 141 of the 195 members present voted in favour of the new law. The January 2010 general elections are viewed as crucial to

²⁹ “Supreme Leader Lauds Islamic Republic's Resistance,” *Fars News*, November 3, 2009, at <http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=8808121758>

³⁰ Robert F. Worth and Alan Cowell, “Iran Clashes on Anniversary of Embassy Takeover,” *New York Times*, November 5, 2009, at http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/05/world/middleeast/05iran.html?_r=1&hp=&pagewanted=print

³¹ “Iran set to reject UN-brokered nuclear plan,” *Khaleej Times*, November 7, 2009, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2009/November/middleeast_November236.xml§ion=middleeast

consolidating the country's fledgling democracy ahead of the withdrawal of US combat troops by August 2010 and a complete pullout by the end of 2011.³²

President Obama, appreciating the new development, stated that the approval of the long-delayed election law "advances the political progress that can bring lasting peace and unity to Iraq and allow for the orderly and responsible transition of American combat troops out of Iraq by next September."³³

II. DEFENCE AND NUCLEAR REVIEW

DEFENCE NATIONAL

- **Mahindra Satyam and Saab to collaborate in defence and homeland security market**

India's IT company Mahindra Satyam and Swedish defence and security company Saab have announced that they will collaborate jointly to cater to the global defence and security market. Reports noted that the financial value of the deal was estimated to be around \$300 million. Both sides will set up a Centre of Excellence for Network Centric Warfare (Coe - NCW) which would function as a development centre for "mission critical applications and C⁴I solutions for global opportunities accessible to either side." In the Indian context, the two companies will "jointly address the Battlefield Management System (BMS) for the Indian Army."³⁴

INTERNATIONAL

- **Australian Minister: Assistance from allies crucial in building future submarines**

Australia's Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science, Greg Combet stated that his country would require assistance from allies to build submarines in the future. Currently, Australia has six Collins-class submarines, which are to be replaced by 12 "next generation submarines with greater range, longer endurance on patrol and expanded capabilities," requirements spelt out in the Defence White Paper released in May 2009.³⁵

³² "Iraq approves 2010 election law: official," *Khaleej Times*, November 8, 2009, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/displayarticle.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2009/November/middleeast_November274.xml§ion=middleeast&col=

³³ "Iraq poll law step toward U.S. withdrawal: Obama," *Khaleej Times*, November 8, 2009, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/displayarticle.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2009/November/middleeast_November275.xml§ion=middleeast&col=

³⁴ Mahindra Satyam, "Mahindra Satyam to collaborate with Saab," November 3, 2009; "Mahindra Satyam bags Saab deal," *The Economic Times*, November 4, 2009.

³⁵ Julian Kerr, "Australia required help for future submarines," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, November 5, 2009.

NUCLEAR

- **Report: US helping Pak secure its nuclear arsenal**

New Yorker magazine reported that the Obama administration has been pursuing arrangements with Pakistan's military that would enable it to help secure Islamabad's nuclear weapons if they came under threat in a terrorist offensive or an internal coup. The report quoted a former high-level US intelligence official as stating that the Pakistanis allowed "a virtual look at the number of warheads, some of their locations, and their command-and-control system. We saw their target list and their mobilization plans. We got their security plans, so we could augment them in case of a breach of security," Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs Adm. Michael Mullen however indicated that he was "not aware of our receipt of any such information." Washington was also reportedly funding the training of Pakistani military personnel handling nuclear weapons.³⁶

³⁶ "Pakistan Could Allow US to Secure Nukes During Crisis, Report Says," Monday, November 9, 2009, at http://gsn.nti.org/gsn/nw_20091109_2306.php