

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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EDITOR: S. SAMUEL C. RAJIV

REVIEW ADVISOR: S. KALYANARAMAN

CONTRIBUTORS

PRANAMITA BARUAH – Southeast Asia

LAXMAN KUMAR BEHERA – Defence Issues

SANJEEV KUMAR SHRIVASTAV - Afghanistan

GUNJAN SINGH – Japan

PRASHANT KUMAR SINGH – China

PRIYANKA SINGH - Pakistan



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

	IN THIS ISSUE	PAGE
I. COUNTRY REVIEWS	A. SOUTH ASIA	3-5
	B. EAST ASIA	5-7
II. DEFENCE REVIEW		7-8

1. COUNTRY REVIEW

A. SOUTH ASIA

AFGHANISTAN

- **PM Dr. Singh states that Kabul attacks “will not bend the will of the people of India”; Holbrooke expresses regret over his remarks on Kabul attack; Karzai assures NSA Menon of steps to protect Indians; Six dead in twin blasts in Kandahar; Afghan government announces restrictions on live coverage of militant attacks; Gen. McChrystal issues new directives to avoid night raids; PM Brown visits British troop bases**

With Maj. Ritesh Roy of Army Education Corps succumbing to his injuries in New Delhi on March 3, the number of Indians killed in the Kabul attack rose to seven.¹ Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh strongly condemned the attacks in Parliament, stating that “such attacks will not bend the will of the people of India.” Condemning the cowardly act, Dr. Singh pointed out that “Indian nationals were in Afghanistan on a mission of goodwill and friendship helping to construct the peaceful and democratic Afghanistan that our Afghan friends desire.”²

US Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke has meanwhile apologized for his remarks suggesting that Indians were not targeted in the February 26 suicide attacks in Kabul. Holbrooke clarified that he did not say Indians were not targeted, but that initially it appeared that the target was not an “official” Indian facility and added that “we all know that Indian citizens have and continue to be targeted by terrorists, including inside Afghanistan.”³

National Security Adviser Shiv Shankar Menon on a visit to Kabul met with Afghan President Hamid Karzai and discussed the security situation arising out of the attack on Indians. Karzai assured Mr. Menon that his government would take all steps to protect the lives of people engaged in humanitarian and reconstruction work.⁴ Mr. Menon however announced in a press conference that medical mission to Afghanistan has been “temporarily suspended.”⁵

Four civilians and a foreign soldier were killed on March 1 when a suicide car bomber hit a convoy of NATO troops near Kandahar. In another blast a few hours later outside the main police station in Kandahar, a police officer was

¹ ‘Army Major injured in Kabul attack dies’, *The Hindu*, March 3, 2010 at <http://beta.thehindu.com/news/national/article138991.ece>

² ‘Attack on Indians in Kabul will not bend our will: Manmohan’, *The Hindu*, March 5, 2010 at <http://beta.thehindu.com/news/national/article183134.ece>

³ ‘Holbrooke regrets remarks on Kabul attack’, *The Hindu*, March 5, 2010 at <http://beta.thehindu.com/news/article149090.ece>

⁴ ‘Karzai assures NSA of steps to protect Indians’, *The Hindu*, March 6, 2010 at <http://beta.thehindu.com/news/international/article183401.ece>

⁵ ‘India to continue work in Afghanistan’, *The Hindu*, March 7, 2010 at <http://beta.thehindu.com/news/article201621.ece>

killed and 16 people were injured.⁶ The Afghan government meanwhile announced broad restrictions on the live coverage of militant attacks, stating that it would also prohibit foreign and national news media from getting close to the scene of attacks.⁷

Gen. McChrystal issued new directives ordering coalition forces to avoid night raids or bring Afghan troops if they must enter homes after dark. The changes in the policy are intended to address complaints regarding coalition operations.⁸

Prime Minister Gordon Brown visited British troop bases in Afghanistan during the week. Brown expressed his gratitude to the nearly 4,000 British troops who took part in the opening phase of Operation Moshtarak and thanked them for "their dedication and their professionalism."⁹

PAKISTAN

- **Gilani: Terrorism "detering international investors"; Mullen advocates a tough approach towards militants; Pakistan denied reimbursements totaling \$400 million by US; Pakistan refuses to hand over arrested Taliban leaders to Afghanistan; Taliban commander among 5 killed in Swat**

Pakistan PM Gilani, in a radio address to the nation, promised to restore the 1973 constitution and pledged to eliminate terrorism from the country. Gilani stated that "the tide of terrorism" was "detering international investors" He added that his government was open to constructive criticism from the media and the opposition parties.¹⁰

The Chairman of US Joint Chiefs of Staff, Adm. Mullen, at the US Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth on March 5 advocated a tough approach towards militants and stated that the use of force should not be considered as the last option. He added that the experience of fighting extremist forces in the Af-Pak region over nine years showed that force "need not be the last resort."¹¹

⁶ 'Two blasts hit Afghanistan's Kandahar, six dead', *Reuters*, March 1, 2010 at <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE6200TM20100301>

⁷ 'Afghanistan Aims to Ban Live Coverage of Attacks', *The New York Times*, March 2, 2010 at <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/03/world/asia/03afghan.html?scp=6&sq=afghanistan&st=cse>

⁸ 'NATO details its Afghan night raids policy', *Associated Press*, March 6, 2010 at <http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5hvWEqwq3CrRvaQCmt21MfoYhjZJQD9E8TVL00>

⁹ 'Gordon Brown visits Afghan troops amid defence row', *BBC*, March 6, 2010 at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/8553316.stm

¹⁰ 'Pakistan will be rid of terrorists soon: Gilani', *Daily Times*, March 6, 2010 at http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\03\06\story_6-3-2010_pg1_1

¹¹ Anwar Iqbal, 'Use of force should not be last option, says Mullen', *Dawn*, March 7, 2010 at <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/06-use-of-force-should-not-be-last-option%2C-says-mullen-730-rs-06>

The US Embassy in Islamabad meanwhile dissociated itself from US plan to provide 'special protection' to its diplomatic missions in Pakistan.¹²

Pakistan failed to secure reimbursements totaling \$400 million from the US on grounds of "inadequate substantiation" and "over-billing" under the Coalition Support Fund (CSF). The development is being seen as proof of new 'enhanced oversight and accountability' guidelines put in place by the US.¹³

Pakistan has declined the request of Afghan and US authorities to hand over arrested Taliban leaders Mulla Baradar and others. The Afghan Interior Minister had visited Pakistan for the purpose during the week.¹⁴

In other developments, a key Taliban commander Maulana Muhammad Alam and four others were killed in the Madyan area in Swat on March 1. Alam played a key role in the Taliban capture of Buner district in April 2009.¹⁵

B. EAST ASIA

CHINA

- **Defence spending to increase by 7.5 per cent: China and Pakistan to hold a joint anti-terrorism training exercise: Egypt's Defence Minister meets PLA Deputy Chief: Vietnamese Deputy Defence Minister visits China: Modernization of coastal defence forces stressed**

A draft budget report indicated that China planned to increase its national defense spending by 7.5 percent to 519.082 billion yuan (\$76.3 billion) in 2010. The figure is about 36 billion yuan more than that of last year.¹⁶

The Information Office of the Ministry of National Defense announced that Chinese and Pakistani armies would hold a joint anti-terrorism exercise soon. 'Friendship-2010' will be the third in the series of exercises to take place in China.¹⁷

Egypt's Defence Minister Mohammed Hussein Tantawi met with the visiting PLA Deputy Chief of General Staff Ma Xiaotian on March 3 in Cairo. Gen. Tantawi stated that close bilateral cooperation in military, political and

¹² 'Security squad not to be used outside missions: US', *Dawn*, March 3, 2010 at <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/06-security-squad-not-to-be-used-outside-missions%2C-says-us-330-rs-05>

¹³ Baqir Sajjad Syed, 'Pakistan loses \$400m to 'enhanced oversight'', *Dawn*, March 3, 2010 at <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/06-pakistan-loses-%24400m-to-enhanced-oversight-330-rs-08>

¹⁴ 'Pakistan refuses to hand over Taliban big guns to US', *The News*, March 4, 2010 at http://thenews.jang.com.pk/arc_default.asp

¹⁵ 'Senior Taliban commander among five killed in Swat', *The News*, March 2, 2010 at http://thenews.jang.com.pk/arc_default.asp

¹⁶ 'China's Defense Spending to Increase 7.5% in 2010: Draft Budget', *PLA Daily*, March 6, 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-03/06/content_4147585.htm

¹⁷ 'China, Pakistan to Hold Anti-terrorism Military Training in Summer', *PLA Daily*, March 7, 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-03/07/content_4147945.htm

economic fields had contributed to regional stability.¹⁸ Chinese Defence Minister Liang Guanglie met with Vietnam's Deputy Defence Minister Nguyen Chi Vinh on March 1.¹⁹

In other developments, a PLA official of the Jinan Military Area Command (MAC) urged the establishment of an integrated equipment system by relying on modern technological means for coastal defense troops.²⁰

JAPAN

- **US says Japan has "a very critical role" to play in international efforts to limit Iran's nuclear ambitions; Tokyo says it is "unaware of" whether US warships carried nuclear weapons on Japanese territory; Support for the Hatoyama Cabinet drops to 37 percent; Japan to provide \$3 million in emergency aid to Chile; China's new ambassador takes up duties**

US Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg stated that Japan had "a very critical role" to play in international efforts to limit Iran's nuclear ambitions. Japan is set to take over the rotating chair of the UN Security Council in April.²¹ The Nikkei business daily on its part reported that Japan has offered to enrich uranium for Iran.²²

Tokyo stated that it is "unaware of" whether US warships carried nuclear weapons on Japanese territory. The government had earlier maintained that no US ships or aircraft carrying nuclear weapons had made port calls or passed through Japanese territory.²³

In domestic developments, support for the Hatoyama Cabinet dropped to 37 percent, according to a poll conducted by Asahi Shimbun. The percentage of those who did not support the government stayed at about the same figure (at 46 percent, compared with 45 percent in the previous poll in February).²⁴

In other developments, Japan has decided to provide up to \$3 million in emergency aid to Chile to help the country cope with the massive earthquake.²⁵

¹⁸ 'Egypt, China Pledge Closer Military Cooperation', *PLA Daily*, March 4, 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-03/04/content_4146151.htm

¹⁹ 'Liang Guanglie Meets Vietnamese Guest', *PLA Daily*, March 2, 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-03/02/content_4144977.htm

²⁰ NPC Delegate Gui Hengshan: Strengthen Construction of Coastal Defense Troops', *PLA Daily*, March 5, 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-03/05/content_4147008.htm

²¹ 'US sees 'critical role' for Japan on Iran', *Bangkok Post*, March 5, 2010 at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/asia/170520/us-sees-critical-role-for-japan-on-iran>

²² 'Japan offers to enrich uranium for Iran: report', *Associate Foreign Press*, February 24, 2010 at http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20100224/wl_mideast_afp/irannuclearpoliticsjapan_20100224071051

²³ 'Tokyo to shut its eyes on nukes', *The Asahi Shimbun*, March 5, 2010 at <http://www.asahi.com/english/TKY201003040406.html>

²⁴ 'Cabinet support rate slides further to 37%', *The Asahi Shimbun*, February 23, 2010 at <http://www.asahi.com/english/TKY201002220338.html>

²⁵ 'Japan to provide \$3 million in emergency aid to quake-struck Chile', *Associated Press*, March 1, 2010 at http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9E5OD282&show_article=1

China's new ambassador to Japan, Cheng Yonghua arrived in Japan on February 28 and took up his official duties.²⁶

SOUTHEAST ASIA

- **Thai Prime Minister: China should not be blamed for the water shortages faced by the countries of the Mekong river basin; India and Burma to conduct 'coordinated operation' to deal with illegal border trade; Cambodia successfully tests Russian-made BM-21 rocket launcher**

Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva stated that China should not be blamed for the water shortages being faced by the countries of the Mekong river basin.²⁷ He added that China's assistance in better managing the water resources of the river should be sought so that countries in Southeast Asia would not be negatively affected.²⁸

India and Burma have meanwhile decided to conduct a 'coordinated operation' to deal with illegal border trade. Currently, illegal trades as well as rebel operations are reportedly going on along the 1,640 km border.²⁹

Cambodia successfully tested the Russian-made BM-21 rocket launcher. Though Defense Minister Tea Banh stated that the launch of the truck-mounted, 122-mm rockets was part of efforts to protect Cambodia's territory, PM Hun Sen stated that the launch was a routine military drill and not intended to show off Cambodia's military strength. Reports however noted that the launch was expected to further aggravate ongoing tensions between Cambodia and Thailand.³⁰

II. DEFENCE REVIEW

NATIONAL

- **Private sector sidelined in RS. 10,000 cr TCS project**

Reports noted that the Ministry of Defence (MoD) is "abandoning competitive bid" to award a Rs. 10,000 crore contract to develop Tactical Communication System (TCS) for the Army. The move could sideline six private sector companies - Wipro, Mahindra Defence Systems, Tata Power, L&T, Rolta and HCL, who were earlier vetted to participate in the contract. The state-owned Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL) is most likely to get the contract. The TCS will be a

²⁶ 'New Chinese Ambassador Cheng arrives in Tokyo', *Associated Press*, February 28, 2010 at http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9E55LI00&show_article=1

²⁷ 'China 'not retain water intentionally', *Bangkok Post*, March 6, 2010 at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/170640/china-not-retain-mekong-water-intentionally>

²⁸ 'Govt. to ask China to tackle drought', *Bangkok Post*, March 7, 2010 at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/170677/govt-to-ask-china-to-tackle-mekong-drought>

²⁹ 'India to join Burma in bid to stop illegal Border Trade', *Indo-Burma news*, March 2, 2010 at <http://www.indoburmanews.net/archives-1/2010/march/india-to-join-burma-in-bid-to-stop-illegal-border-trade>

³⁰ 'Cambodia tests rocket launcher in show of force', *The Jakarta Post*, March 4, 2010 at <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/03/04/cambodia-tests-rocket-launcher-show-force.html>

fully mobile network which will allow the Army to “safely communicate and transfer data.”³¹

INTERNATIONAL

- **China's 2010 defence budget to grow by 7.5 per cent**

China’s defence budget for 2010 is planned to grow by 7.5 per cent to 532.115 billion yuan (\$78 billion), according to a spokesman of the National People's Congress (NPC). Accounting for 6.4 per cent of total fiscal expenditure, the defence budget will be “mainly spent to support the reform of the country's military and improve its capability to deal with varied threats and complete diversified tasks.”³²

³¹ Ajai Shukla, ‘MoD sidelines pvt sector in crucial defence project’, *The Business Standard*, March 3, 2010 at <http://www.business-standard.com/india/news/mod-sidelines-pvt-sector-in-crucial-defence-project/387352/>

³² ‘China's defense budget to grow 7.5% in 2010: spokesman’, Xinhuanet.com, March 4, 2010, at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-03/04/c_13196769.htm