

# THE WEEK IN REVIEW

March 29-April 4, 4(1), 2010

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## 1. COUNTRY REVIEW

### A. SOUTH ASIA

#### PAKISTAN

- **Lahore High Court debars A.Q. Khan from speaking to the media; Defence Minister Mukhtar: US to provide drones to Pakistan; Blake: Pakistan should take action against the Taliban in Punjab; Qureshi: Pakistan is in “no hurry” to conduct dialogue with India; NWFP to be renamed as Pakhtoonkhwa**

The Lahore High Court, indicating that the movement of disgraced nuclear scientist A.Q. Khan would no longer be restricted, disallowed him from speaking to the media. This was in tune with the agreement that Khan had with the government.<sup>1</sup>

Pakistan’s Defence Minister Ahmad Mukhtar, talking to media persons at the Lahore airport on March 30, stated that the US will provide drones by the end of this year as a result of understanding reached during the recently concluded Strategic Dialogue between the two countries in Washington. Mukhtar expressed happiness at the gains made by Pakistan at the Dialogue.<sup>2</sup>

US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, Robert Blake, at the Foreign Press Centre in Washington on April 1 urged Pakistan to take appropriate action against the Taliban in the Punjab province. Blake also ruled out the possibility of US mediation on Kashmir or over water issues between India and Pakistan.<sup>3</sup>

Foreign Minister Qureshi meanwhile stated Pakistan was in “no hurry” if India was not willing to hold a dialogue at the present moment. In a meeting with former Pakistani diplomats, Qureshi stated that Pakistan was keen on an early settlement of issues between the two countries.<sup>4</sup>

In other developments, the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment bill on constitutional reforms by the parliamentary committee proposed that the name of NWFP should be changed to Pakhtoonkhwa.<sup>5</sup>

#### BHUTAN

- **18 Bhutanese products given duty free access to Bangladesh; Main themes of SAARC Summit to be climate change, poverty alleviation**

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Dr AQ Khan barred from talking about N-proliferation’, *Daily Times*, March 30, 2010 at [http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\03\30\story\\_30-3-2010\\_pg1\\_3](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\03\30\story_30-3-2010_pg1_3)

<sup>2</sup> ‘America to give drones this year: Mukhtar’, *Dawn*, March 31 2010 at <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/16-america+to+give+drones+this+year+mukhtar-hs-02>

<sup>3</sup> ‘US urges Pakistan to act against Taliban in Punjab’, *The News*, April 2, 2010 at [http://www.thenews.com.pk/arc\\_default.asp?arc\\_date=4/2/2010](http://www.thenews.com.pk/arc_default.asp?arc_date=4/2/2010)

<sup>4</sup> ‘Pakistan not in hurry for talks: Qureshi’, *Dawn*, March 29, 2010 at <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/12-pak+not+in+hurry+for+talks+qureshi--bi-01>

<sup>5</sup> ‘Khyber-Pakhtoonkhwa new name for NWFP: Consensus at last’, *Daily Times*, April 1, 2010 at [http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\04\01\story\\_1-4-2010\\_pg1\\_1](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\04\01\story_1-4-2010_pg1_1)

**among others; Bhutanese PM in Kathmandu meets with his Nepalese counterpart**

After much controversy in Bangladesh over duty free access to Bhutanese products, eighteen products from Bhutan have finally got such access to Bangladesh. These include fresh and chilled vegetables, pulses, cardamom, ginger, fresh fruits, jam, fruit juices, mineral water, limestone, gypsum, calcium carbonate, particle board, ferro-silicon, semi-finished products of iron, non-alloy steel and others. These items can be exported without any export duty. While Bangladesh's exports to Bhutan are less than \$1 million, Bhutan exports goods worth \$14 million to Bangladesh.<sup>6</sup>

The main themes of the forthcoming SAARC summit to be held in Thimpu from April 28-29, 2010 are climate change, poverty alleviation, curbing terrorism and measures to promote economic cooperation. China, Japan, the European Union, South Korea, US, Australia, Mauritius and Iran would attend the summit as observers.<sup>7</sup>

The visiting Bhutanese PM Jigme Y Thinley met his Nepalese counterpart Madhav Kumar Nepal and discussed issues of mutual concern. Mr. Nepal brought to the attention of Mr. Thinley the status of Bhutanese refugees and the need to repatriate them. Mr. Thinley on his part urged more discussions on the issue.<sup>8</sup>

**B. EAST ASIA**

**CHINA**

- **China pledges continued cooperation with Afghanistan and Nepal: China-ASEAN Defense and Security Dialogue held in Beijing: China and DPRK to deepen bilateral military exchanges**

Defense Minister Liang Guanglie pledged military cooperation with Afghanistan and Nepal during his meetings with the visiting defence ministers of both the countries. Liang told Afghan Defense Minister Abdul Rahim Wardak that China would continue its assistance to the Afghan National Army (ANA) so that it will be better prepared to safeguard Afghanistan's national sovereignty, territorial integrity and domestic stability. During his meeting with Nepalese Defense Minister Bidya Devi Bhandari, Liang reiterated that China attached great importance to bilateral ties with Nepal and that Beijing was willing to boost

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<sup>6</sup> 'Bhutan gets duty-free access for 18 product', *Bangladesh News*, March 31, 2010 at <http://bdnews24.com/details.php?id=157112&cid=2>

<sup>7</sup> 'SAARC Summit to focus on climate battle', *Daily Star*, April 2, 2010 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=132646>

<sup>8</sup> 'Bhutan PM meets Nepali counterpart', *Himalayan Times*, April 2, 2010 at <http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=Bhutan+PM+meets+Nepali+counterpart&NewsID=236609>

personnel exchanges and cooperation to contribute to the security and stability of the two countries and the region at large.<sup>9</sup>

China-ASEAN Defense and Security Dialogue was held in Beijing on March 31. Guan Youfei, Deputy Director-General of the Foreign Affairs Office of the Chinese Ministry of National Defense stated that the Dialogue would enhance understanding and mutual trust in defense field between China and ASEAN member states, forge a consensus on certain issues of regional security, situation and threats and was an expression of the general will of both the partners to further intensify bilateral security cooperation.<sup>10</sup>

Xu Caihou, Vice Chairman of CMC stated that China was ready to work with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to deepen bilateral exchanges and cooperation. He was meeting the visiting director of the foreign affairs department of the DPRK's Ministry of the People's Armed Forces.<sup>11</sup>

In other developments, a team of 80 soldiers returned to China after an eight month peacekeeping mission to the Democratic Republic of Congo.<sup>12</sup>

#### KOREAN PENINSULA

- **US says reports of North Korean leader visiting China “speculation”; Seoul to bolster control of Dokdo; South Korean Navy ship sinks off the Yellow Sea, nearly 50 sailors reported missing; US to consider restarting food aid to North Korea**

The US welcomed remarks by a North Korean envoy that Pyongyang will return to the six-party talks before June.<sup>13</sup> US diplomats dismissed as “speculation” reports that North Korea’s Kim Jong-Il was preparing to visit China. They however hoped that such a trip could lead to the resumption of international talks on Pyongyang's nuclear issue.<sup>14</sup> US officials also expressed the hope that the landmark agreement between the US and Russia for a new START treaty will help prevent nuclear proliferation by countries like North Korea and Iran.<sup>15</sup> US

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<sup>9</sup> ‘China Pledges Military Co-op with Afghanistan, Nepal’, *PLA Daily*, March 26, 2010 at [http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-03/26/content\\_4160122.htm](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-03/26/content_4160122.htm)

<sup>10</sup> ‘China-ASEAN Defense and Security Dialogue Wins Positive Fruits’, *PLA Daily*, April 2, 2010 at [http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-04/02/content\\_4170679.htm](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-04/02/content_4170679.htm)

<sup>11</sup> ‘China, DPRK Armed Forces Vow to Further Co-op’, *PLA Daily*, March 31, 2010 at [http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/today-headlines/2010-03/31/content\\_4168626.htm](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/today-headlines/2010-03/31/content_4168626.htm)

<sup>12</sup> ‘Chinese Peacekeeping Force Returns from Democratic Republic of Congo’, *PLA Daily*, March 31, 2010 at [http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-03/31/content\\_4168663.htm](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-03/31/content_4168663.htm)

<sup>13</sup> ‘US welcomes N. Korean envoy's remarks on 6-way talks reopening: State Dept.’, *Yonhap News*, March 19, 2010 at <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2010/03/20/0301000000AEN20100320000100315.HTML>

<sup>14</sup> ‘US diplomat expressed hope for resumption of N. Korea nuclear talks’, *Yonhap News*, April 2, 2010 at <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2010/04/02/0301000000AEN20100402008000315.HTML>

<sup>15</sup> ‘U.S. hopes Russia nuke deal to help prevent nuke proliferation by N. Korea: State Dept.’, *Yonhap News*, March 29, 2010 at <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2010/03/30/0301000000AEN20100330000100315.HTML>

Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell meanwhile met with South Korea's top nuclear negotiator in Seoul and discussed issues of mutual concern.<sup>16</sup>

South Korean President Lee Myung-bak stated that his administration will study ways to bolster Seoul's control of Dokdo, as the country's parliament issued a strongly-worded resolution against Japan's continued territorial claims on the East Sea Islets.<sup>17</sup>

In a contentious incident, a South Korean Navy ship on a routine patrolling mission sank off the Seoul-controlled island of Baengnyeong in the Yellow Sea. Nearly 50 sailors were reported missing.<sup>18</sup> North Korea also charged that the South Korean military had "committed grave armed provocation" at the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) dividing the two countries. South Korean officials however denied the allegations.<sup>19</sup>

Gen. Walter Sharp, commander of US forces in Korea testified before a House Appropriations Committee that Kim Jong-Il has tried hard for the past year to establish his third and youngest son as heir apparent amid growing complaints over a worsening economy.<sup>20</sup>

The US on its part indicated that it will consider restarting food aid to North Korea. The aid was suspended in early 2009 amid heightened tensions over Pyongyang's nuclear and missile tests.<sup>21</sup> South Korea meanwhile significantly reduced import quotas for eight North Korean agricultural goods, in a strong enforcement of UN economic sanctions.<sup>22</sup>

#### SOUTHEAST ASIA

- **Peace talks between Thai government and UDD end in stalemate; Thailand to urge Myanmar to make upcoming elections 'open' for all political opponents and ethnic minorities; Indonesia signs science and technology cooperation agreement with the US; Indonesia urges Israel to halt its military activities in Gaza Strip**

Peace talks between the Thai government and the United Democratic Front against Dictatorship (UDD) ended in stalemate due to unresolved differences

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<sup>16</sup> 'Senior U.S. diplomat visits Seoul to discuss N. Korea', *Yonhap News*, April 2, 2010 at <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2010/04/02/0301000000AEN20100402007500315.HTML>

<sup>17</sup> 'Lee says gov't to bolster control of Dokdo against Japan's claim', *Yonhap News*, April 2, 2010 at <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2010/04/02/0301000000AEN20100402005200315.HTML>

<sup>18</sup> 'S. Korean Navy ship sinks in Yellow Sea', *Yonhap News*, March 26, 2010 at <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2010/03/26/0301000000AEN20100326008300320.HTML>

<sup>19</sup> 'N. Korea accuses South of armed provocation in DMZ', *Yonhap News*, April 4, 2010 at <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2010/04/04/0401000000AEN20100404002600315.HTML>

<sup>20</sup> 'Kim Jong-il is pushing son as heir apparent: Gen. Sharp', *Yonhap News*, March 24, 2010 at <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2010/03/25/0301000000AEN20100325000300315.HTML>

<sup>21</sup> 'U.S. considers resuming food aid to N. Korea', *Yonhap News*, March 23, 2010 at <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2010/03/24/0301000000AEN20100324000100315.HTML>

<sup>22</sup> 'S. Korea cuts import quotas for N. Korean farm products', *Yonhap News*, March 21, 2010 at <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2010/03/21/0301000000AEN20100321001400315.HTML>

between the two parties. The UDD stuck to its demand that the government dissolve parliament within 15 days.<sup>23</sup>

Thai Foreign Minister Kasit Piromya stated that during the upcoming Mekong River Regional Commission meeting, Thailand will urge Myanmar to open the upcoming elections to all political opponents and ethnic minorities. Kasit noted that electoral laws recently announced by the Myanmar authorities seemed 'discriminatory' as amnesty has been provided exclusively to the military leadership and not to the rest of the political opposition. Kasit added that the issue will also be discussed by Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva during his meeting with Myanmar's leaders in the upcoming ASEAN Summit in Hanoi.<sup>24</sup>

Indonesia and the US signed a new science and technology cooperation agreement covering over 20 fields, including agriculture, biotechnology, medical and biomedical sciences among other areas. The agreement was signed by Indonesian Minister of Research and Technology Suharna Surapranata and US Ambassador to Indonesia Cameron Hume.<sup>25</sup>

In other developments, the Indonesian government urged Israel to halt its offensive in the Gaza Strip and charged that the operations were a violation of international law.<sup>26</sup>

## C. WEST ASIA

### IRAN

- **Ahmadinejad: New sanctions will not work; Iran's President says he saw no change in hostile US attitude after Mr. Obama delivers another Iranian New Year message**

President Ahmadinejad asserted that new international sanctions over his country's nuclear programme would not work and will only make his country more self-sufficient. He stated that US pressure on Iran had backfired and 'isolated' Washington. President Obama had stated more serious punitive sanctions would be imposed on Tehran for failing to halt its nuclear programme. China however has not confirmed US reports that it had dropped its opposition to possible new sanctions.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> 'UDD: No more talks, protest intensified', *Bangkok Post*, March 30, 2010 at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/173266/udd-no-more-talks-protest-intensified>

<sup>24</sup> 'Thailand to press Myanmar to open elections', *The Jakarta Post*, April 2, 2010 at <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/04/02/thailand-press-myanmar-open-elections.html>

<sup>25</sup> 'RI, US sign science, technology cooperation deal', *The Jakarta Post*, March 29, 2010 at <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/03/29/ri-us-sign-science-technology-cooperation-deal.html>

<sup>26</sup> 'RI calls Israel to halt attack at Gaza Strip', *The Jakarta Post*, April 2, 2010 at <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/04/02/ri-calls-israel-halt-attack-gaza-strip.html>

<sup>27</sup> 'Sanctions aid Iran: Ahmadinejad', *Khaleej Times*, April 3, 2010 at [http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle09.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2010/April/middleeast\\_April49.xml&section=middleeast](http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle09.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2010/April/middleeast_April49.xml&section=middleeast)

President Ahmadinejad also rejected calls from the US to engage diplomatically to overcome the nuclear standoff. Insisting that he saw no change in Washington's hostile policy, he said that he saw nothing substance in Mr. Obama's New Year message to the Iranian people.<sup>28</sup>

## IRAQ

- **Allawi blames Iran for trying to prevent him from becoming prime minister; Suicide bombs outside three embassies kill 32**

Iyad Allawi, who won the largest number of seats in the Iraqi parliamentary elections, has accused Iran of trying to prevent him from succeeding Mr. al-Maliki. Mr. Allawi's Iraqiyya secular bloc defeated the State of Law alliance of PM al-Maliki by just two seats. However, he is much short of a majority and drew much of his support from the Sunni minority.<sup>29</sup>

Suicide car bombs were detonated near the German, Egyptian and Iranian embassies in Baghdad killing at least 32 people and wounding more than 100. The attacks further deepened worries that insurgent groups were capitalising on the political turmoil following the March parliamentary elections.<sup>30</sup>

## II. DEFENCE REVIEW

### NATIONAL

- **India launches third indigenous destroyer, INS Chennai**

India launched its third destroyer, *INS Chennai* at the Mazgoan Docks. The 130-meter long indigenously designed warship, code named Project 15-Alpha, will be inducted into Navy in August 2013. The advanced ship will have stealth features and will be armed with supersonic BrahMos surface-to-surface missile system. The 'Pontoon Assisted Launching' method will be used while constructing the ship, to be built in collaboration with Baltisky Zavod of St. Petersburg, Russia.<sup>31</sup>

- **HAL's Light Combat Helicopter makes successful maiden flight**

HAL's Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) made its first flight test in Bangalore. The 5.5 ton indigenously designed and developed attack helicopter, which is a derivative of HAL's Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH), flew for 20 minutes and performance of various parameters was found 'satisfactory'. The helicopter

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<sup>28</sup> "Ahmadinejad rejects Obama's 'beautiful words'," *Khaleej Times*, April 3, 2010 at [http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle09.aspx?xfile=data/middleeast/2010/April/middleeast\\_April51.xml&section=middleeast](http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle09.aspx?xfile=data/middleeast/2010/April/middleeast_April51.xml&section=middleeast)

<sup>29</sup> "Allawi accuses Iran over election," *BBC News*, March 30, 2010 at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/8595207.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8595207.stm)

<sup>30</sup> "Baghdad suicide blasts target embassies; 32 dead," *Khaleej Times*, April 4, 2010 at [http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle09.aspx?xfile=data/middleeast/2010/April/middleeast\\_April67.xml&section=middleeast](http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle09.aspx?xfile=data/middleeast/2010/April/middleeast_April67.xml&section=middleeast)

<sup>31</sup> Government of India, Press Information Bureau, "India's third indigenous Naval destroyer INS Chennai launched", *MoD Press Release*, April 1, 2010 at <http://www.pib.nic.in/release/release.asp?relid=60026&kwid=>

features stealth characteristics and has crashworthy Wheel Landing Gear. It will be inducted into the armed forces after initial operational clearance by December 2012.<sup>32</sup>

- **ISRO aims for low-cost access to space**

ISRO Chairman K. Radhakrishnan stated that ISRO was working on GSLV Mk3 with indigenous cryogenic technology that will help reduce launch cost by about half from the current rate of Rs. 20,000 per kg. Mr. Radhakrishnan also noted that the country's human space flight programme that will put two Indians in an orbit around the Earth has been submitted to the government for approval.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd, "Maiden Flight of HAL's Light Combat Helicopter (LCH)", Press Release, <http://www.hal-india.com/LCH-mar10.asp>; Stephen David, "India test flies light combat chopper successfully", *India Today*, March 30, 2010 at <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/site/Story/90559/India/India+test+flies+light+combat+chopper+successfully.html>

<sup>33</sup> "ISRO exploring low-cost access to space", *The Hindu*, April 4, 2010 at <http://beta.thehindu.com/news/states/article387440.ece?homepage=true>