

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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1. COUNTRY REVIEW

A. SOUTH ASIA

AFGHANISTAN

APRIL 5-11

- **Obama: Karzai remains "a critical partner" in the fight against terrorism; NATO Chief: NATO gets very good cooperation from Karzai; Romania announces increase in troops level to 1,800; Taliban attacks Indian camp in Afghanistan; US officials allege that ISI released Afghan Taliban insurgents; Wolesi Jirga MPs rejects annual budget; Top Afghan election officials resign; McChrystal: US troops to stay in Afghanistan as long as needed; US Air Force 'Osprey' crashes in southern Afghanistan**

President Obama stated that Afghan President Hamid Karzai remained "a critical partner" with the US in the fight against terrorism despite Mr. Karzai's recent harsh criticism of the West. Obama stated that if the US is to ensure that Afghanistan is not a haven for extremist organizations, it must succeed on military and civilian fronts and that Mr. Karzai will have to be a major player in these efforts. Mr. Karzai had earlier charged that the UN and the international community had interfered in last year's presidential elections.¹ NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen in a speech at the University of Chicago also stated that NATO had "very good cooperation from President Karzai and his government and such cooperation is essential for our strategy in Afghanistan."²

Romanian President Traian Basescu meanwhile announced that Romania will increase its troop levels in Afghanistan to 1,800 from 1,073 by September 2010.³

Taliban militants attacked an Indian road construction camp in eastern Afghanistan in Khost province's Domanda district, burning vehicles and equipment. No deaths or injuries have however been reported, according to the Afghan interior ministry.⁴

Reports noted that while Pakistan's security forces worked with American forces to detain Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar and other insurgents, the ISI was involved in freeing at least two senior Afghan Taliban figures which it had captured on its own. The incident, another proof of support of Taliban activities

¹ 'Obama says Karzai must remain 'critical partner'', *The Washington Post*, April 9, 2010 at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/04/09/AR2010040901506.html>

² 'NATO head says Afghanistan's Karzai a good partner', *The Washington Post*, April 8, 2010 at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/04/08/AR2010040805082.html>

³ 'Romania to increase troops in Afghanistan to 1,800', *Associated Press*, April 8, 2010 at http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5iLtfJJjwNLhEAaUhond4bL6dV_AD9EV00C82

⁴ 'Militants attacks Indian camp in Afghanistan', *DNA India*, April 10, 2010 at http://www.dnaindia.com/world/report_militants-attacks-indian-camp-in-afghanistan_1369706

by the ISI, was detected by American spy agencies but was not publicly disclosed.⁵

A majority of Wolesi Jirga (lower house of parliament) members on April 7 rejected the annual budget due to 'discrimination in allocation of development spending for some provinces.' Around 115 parliamentarians out of the total 122 present raised 'red cards' to disapprove the budget. Earlier, Finance Minister Hazrat Omar Zakhelwal presented the developmental budget worth 115 billion Afghanis for general expenses and 82 billion Afghanis for developmental activities.⁶

The chairman of the Independent Election Commission (IEC) Azizullah Lodin and the Chief Electoral Officer Daud Ali Najafi resigned from their positions on April 7. President Karzai accepted their resignations. Karzai's spokesman told reporters that while Mr. Lodin's term was over, he did not reveal the reason for Mr. Najafi's resignation.⁷

Addressing a news conference in Kabul attended by around 400 representatives from southern provinces, Gen. McChrystal stated that US troops would remain in Afghanistan as long as the Afghans need them.⁸

In other developments, a US Air Force CV-22 Osprey airplane crashed in southern Afghanistan on April 9, killing three American military personnel and one civilian. The Taliban claimed that they had had shot down the Osprey with small-arms fire but Afghan officials denied the claim.⁹

APRIL 12-18

- **Holbrooke says Karzai's administration is "a government we can work with"; Obama: US will not be in Afghanistan "in perpetuity"; Kazakhstan to allow the US use of its air space for troops and weapons movement to Afghanistan; Germany to beef up its military presence; Six people including three foreigners killed in suicide car bomb attack in Kandahar**

The US Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke stated that President Karzai's administration was a "government we can work with" and that the US had a "good relationship with this government ..."¹⁰ President Obama meanwhile, in an interview to Australian Broadcasting

⁵ 'U.S. officials say Pakistani spy agency released Afghan Taliban insurgents', *The Washington Post*, April 10, 2010 at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/04/10/AR2010041002111.html>

⁶ 'MPs reject annual budget', *Pajhwok Afghan News*, April 7, 2010 at <http://www.pajhwok.com/viewstory.asp?lng=eng&id=92345>

⁷ 'Top Afghan election officials step down', *Pajhwok Afghan News*, April 7, 2010 at <http://www.pajhwok.com/viewstory.asp?lng=eng&id=92305>

⁸ 'US troops to stay until needed: McChrystal', *Pajhwok Afghan News*, April 6, 2010 at <http://www.pajhwok.com/viewstory.asp?lng=eng&id=92273>

⁹ 'US Air Force Osprey crashes in Afghanistan', *The Washington Post*, April 10, 2010 at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/04/09/AR2010040901341.html>

¹⁰ 'US seeks to ease strained relations with Afghanistan', *Los Angeles Times*, April 12, 2010 at <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/asia/la-fg-us-afghan12-2010apr12,0,1939741.story>

Corporation, reaffirmed his pledge to begin pulling American troops out of Afghanistan in mid-2011 and added that the US cannot be "there in perpetuity." While not agreeing with the assessment that the war in Afghanistan was getting worse, Mr. Obama stated that the momentum of the Taliban has been blunted, which had been "building up in the year prior to me taking office."¹¹

Kazakhstan has agreed to allow the US use of its air space for troops and weapons transportation to Afghanistan. The agreement was reached at a meeting in Washington between President Obama and President Nazarbayev, who was in Washington for the nuclear security summit. The new route to Bagram Air Base will allow US troops to fly direct from the US in a little more than 12 hours.¹²

German Defence Minister Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg made an unannounced visit to Afghanistan on April 14 and met with soldiers at the German base in Mazar-e-Sharif. Guttenberg stated that the German government has decided to beef up its military presence in Afghanistan by sending heavy artillery and other weapons to support its forces facing a rising Taliban insurgency.¹³

In other developments, six people including three foreigners were killed in a suicide car bomb blast in Kandahar. The blast occurred only a few hours after another car bomb blew up outside a hotel used by Afghan journalists in Kandahar.¹⁴

PAKISTAN

APRIL 5-11

- **Gilani to attend the Nuclear Security Summit; National Command Authority says country's nuclear assets are safe; Australia withholds sale of scientific equipment to Pakistan fearing WMD misuse; 18th amendment passed by National Assembly; Gilani says Army not interfering in government's affairs; 60 civilians killed in air strikes in Khyber Agency**

PM Gilani, leaving for Washington to attend the Nuclear Security Summit being hosted by President Obama on April 12-13, asserted that "Pakistan's nuclear program and weapons are in safe hands."¹⁵ He is also scheduled to separately meet with Mr. Obama, where efforts to strengthen bilateral strategic partnership

¹¹ 'Obama: We won't be in Afghanistan 'in perpetuity'', *USA Today*, April 15, 2010 at <http://content.usatoday.com/communities/theoval/post/2010/04/obama-we-wont-be-in-afghanistan-in-perpetuity/1>

¹² 'Kazakhstan to Permit Military Overflights to Afghanistan', *The New York Times*, April 12, 2010 at <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/13/world/asia/13kazakhstan.html>

¹³ 'Germany to beef up military presence in Afghanistan', *The Indian Express*, April 15, 2010 at <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/germany-to-beef-up-military-presence-in-afghanistan/606849/0>

¹⁴ 'Attacks increase tension in Kandahar', *ABC News*, April 16, 2010 at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/04/16/2874305.htm>

¹⁵ 'Gilani in Washington for summit', *Daily Times*, April 12, 2010 at http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\04\12\story_12-4-2010_pg1_3

will be discussed. Mr. Gilani also chaired the 17th meeting of the National Command Authority that was held in Islamabad on April 5, which again reiterated that Pakistan's nuclear weapons security was good.¹⁶

The Australian government on April 6 blocked the sale of two atomic absorption spectrophotometers manufactured by an Australian company to a Pakistani engineering firm due to apprehensions that the equipment could be used to analyse metals used in centrifuges and missiles. Canberra used the terms of the 1995 Weapons of Mass Destruction Act to justify this decision.¹⁷

In domestic developments, the 18th amendment was unanimously passed by the National Assembly on April 8. Among other provisions, the office of the Prime Minister became more powerful and NWFP was renamed as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. 47 members abstained from voting for the bill.¹⁸ PM Gilani, addressing a luncheon organized to celebrate the passage of the 18th amendment, stated that the armed forces were not meddling in the affairs of the state.¹⁹

In other developments, at least 60 civilians and 35 militants were reported killed in air strikes in Tirah Valley in Khyber Agency on April 10.²⁰

APRIL 12-18

- **PM Gilani: Pakistan's participation at the nuclear security summit endorses the legitimacy of its nuclear programme; Obama reiterates scope for further improvement in Pakistan's nuclear weapons security; UN report states lack of 'adequate security' was responsible for Benazir Bhutto's assassination in 2007; 7 people killed and 100 injured in protests against renaming of NWFP in Abbottabad**

PM Gilani attended the 47-nation Nuclear Security Summit hosted by President Obama in Washington. Speaking to media persons on April 14 at the end of the summit, Mr. Gilani asserted that the legitimacy of Pakistan's nuclear programme was endorsed as a result of participating in the summit.²¹ President Obama on

¹⁶ 'Pakistan's strategic assets in safe hands: NCA', *Daily Times*, April 6, 2010 at http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\04\06\story_6-4-2010_pg1_5

¹⁷ 'Australia blocks Pakistan shipment over WMD fears', *Dawn*, April 7, 2010 at <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/australia-blocks-pakistan-shipment-over-wmd-fears-740>

¹⁸ Raja Asghar, 'NA unanimously adopts 18th Amendment', *Dawn*, April 9, 2010 at <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/na-unanimously-adopts-18th-amendment-parliament-asserts-supremacy-erasure-of-dictatorial-vestiges-from-constitution-approved-khyber-pakhtunkhwa-okayed-940>

¹⁹ 'Army not interfering in govt's affairs, says Gilani', *Daily Times*, April 10, 2010 at http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\04\10\story_10-4-2010_pg1_1

²⁰ Said Nazir Afridi and Ashrafuddin Pirzada, '60 civilians killed in Tirah bombing Sunday', *The News*, April 11, 2010 at http://www.thenews.com.pk/arc_default.asp?arc_date=4/11/2010

²¹ 'Legitimacy of Pak nuclear programme recognised: Gilani', *Daily Times*, April 15, 2010 at http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\04\15\story_15-4-2010_pg1_1

his part, while expressing faith in the security of Pakistan's nuclear weapons, reiterated the scope for further improvement in the area.²²

The UN in its report on the assassination of former Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto stated that the lack of 'adequate security' was responsible for Ms. Bhutto's death in 2007.²³ The report indicted the police for not carrying out investigations in an appropriate manner. In the wake of the report, the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) repeated its charge that former President Musharraf had "failed" to ensure proper security for Ms. Bhutto which led to her assassination.²⁴

In other developments, at least 7 people were killed and 100 injured on April 12 in Abbottabad when police opened fire to disperse protesters who were opposing the renaming of NWFP as Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa.²⁵

B. EAST ASIA

CHINA

APRIL 5-11

- **Russian and Chinese defence officials discuss bilateral defence ties; Guided-missile frigate involved in anti-piracy operations strengthens its training programme; China International Defense Electronics Exhibition to be held from May 12-14, 2010**

The President of the Foreign and Defense Policy Council (FDPC) of Russia Sergey Karaganov and Nikolay Bordyuzha, Secretary General of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) were in China on April 2 at the invitation of the China Institute for International Strategic Studies (CISS). They met with Ma Xiaotian, deputy chief of general staff of the PLA among others. Both sides took stock of the bilateral relationship as well as military-to-military ties.²⁶

The 'Chaohu' guided-missile frigate of the 5th Chinese naval escort taskforce strengthened its training procedures to better carry out its escort tasks in the Gulf of Aden and the waters off the Somali coast.²⁷ Reports noted that the Nanjing Military Area Command carried out a drill containing elements like unexpected-incident rescue, disaster prevention, emergency handling and risk evasion. Over 60 kinds of unexpected situations that could be encountered in

²² 'Obama confident of Pak nuclear safety', *Daily Times*, April 14, 2010 at http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\04\14\story_14-4-2010_pg1_2

²³ 'Musharraf govt failed to provide adequate security to Benazir: UN', *The News*, April 16, 2010 at http://www.thenews.com.pk/arc_default.asp?arc_date=4/16/2010

²⁴ Saeed Minhas, 'Musharraf responsible for BB's murder', *Daily Times*, April 18, 2010 at http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\04\18\story_18-4-2010_pg1_1

²⁵ 'Anti-Pakhtunkhwa protest claims seven lives in Abbottabad', *The News*, April 13, 2010 at http://www.thenews.com.pk/arc_default.asp?arc_date=4/13/2010

²⁶ 'Ma Xiaotian Meets Russian Guests', *PLA Daily*, April 6, 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-04/06/content_4172484.htm

²⁷ 'Chaohu' Warship Conducts All-weather Training to Enhance Escort Capability', *PLA Daily*, April 7, 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-04/07/content_4173490.htm

accomplishing diversified military tasks were visualized in a bid to enhance troop capability in accomplishing diversified military tasks.²⁸

The 7th China International Defense Electronics Exhibition (CIDEX) will be held from May 12-14, 2010. Over 300 manufacturers from China, US, Switzerland, Germany, France, Singapore, Japan, Norway, Finland, the UK and Austria, as well as Hong Kong and Taiwan would attend it.²⁹

APRIL 12-18

- **PLA involved in relief operations in earthquake-hit Qinghai; Beijing assuages concerns about its naval flotilla; Exclusive show of J-10 fighters organized for foreign military attaches**

Reports noted that the PLA was involved in extensive relief operations in the earthquake-hit Qinghai province. The General Staff Headquarters (GSH) and the General Political Department (GPD) of the PLA instructed troops and the People's Armed Police Force (APF) to "make all-out efforts to support the ongoing earthquake relief actions in west China's Qinghai Province."³⁰ More than 1,000 people were rescued from the debris in Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.³¹

The Ministry of National Defense sought to assuage apprehensions of neighbours about its naval flotilla currently navigating the East China Sea and waters off the coast of Japan's Miyakojima Island. A spokesperson stated that the maneuver was a routine training exercise and added that "training in international waters was an international practice."³² Another PLA Navy task force completed a five-day visit to the Philippines.³³

The PLA conducted an aerobatics show for over 50 foreign military attaches on April 13 involving the indigenously-made J-10 fighter. This was the first time that the J-10 was displayed to foreign observers since it was started being used in 2009.³⁴

²⁸ 'Joint Logistics Sub-department Highlights Emergency Handling in Routine Training', *PLA Daily*, April 12, 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-04/12/content_4178185.htm

²⁹ '300 Manufacturers to Attend 7th China International Defense Electronics Exhibition', *PLA Daily*, April 7, 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-04/09/content_4176038.htm

³⁰ 'PLA and APF Urged to Fully Support Quake Relief in Qinghai', *PLA Daily*, April 16, 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-04/16/content_4184640.htm

³¹ 'Quake Relief in Action: PLA, Armed Police Save More than 1,000 Survivors in Quake Zone', *PLA Daily*, April 15, 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-04/15/content_4182871.htm

³² 'China Announces Navy Training in International Waters', *PLA Daily*, April 16, 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-04/16/content_4183813.htm

³³ 'Chinese Naval Fleet Leaves Manila for Home', *PLA Daily*, April 18, 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/2010-04/18/content_4185944.htm

³⁴ 'China Gives J-10 Aerobatics Show for Foreign Diplomats', *PLA Daily*, April 14, 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-04/14/content_4180436.htm

JAPAN

APRIL 5-11

- **PM Hatoyama urges greater transparency in Chinese military capabilities; Okada welcomes new US policy of limiting the use of nuclear arms; Approval rating for Hatoyama cabinet falls to 33 per cent; New 'Stand up Japan' party formed ahead of July polls; Okada tells Clinton that the plan to relocate the Futenma airfield as agreed in 2006 "would be difficult to realize"**

PM Hatoyama in an interview to *Time* magazine stated that Japan will continue to urge China to increase transparency about its military capabilities. He added that China's development will also help Japan to grow.³⁵

Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada meanwhile welcomed the new US policy of limiting the use of nuclear arms, and termed it "a big step toward a world without nuclear weapons." Okada urged other nuclear powers to follow the US lead in not using nuclear arms against non-nuclear countries.³⁶

A Kyodo News poll showed that the approval rating for PM Hatoyama's Cabinet fell to 33 percent while the disapproval rating topped the 50 percent mark for the first time since he took over power last year.³⁷

In other domestic developments, former finance minister Kaoru Yosano and four other political veterans launched a new 'Stand up Japan' party ahead of polls in July. Former trade minister Takeo Hiranuma will be the head of the new party which consists of former members of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which lost its more than 50 year grip on power in the 2009 lower house election.³⁸

Former Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone revealed that he had received an explanation about a secret pact made between Japan and the US regarding the introduction of nuclear weapons into Japan during his premiership.³⁹

Foreign Minister Okada told US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton that the plan to relocate the Futenma airfield as agreed in 2006 "would be difficult to realize." He also conveyed PM Hatoyama's determination to settle the issue by the end of May 2010.⁴⁰

³⁵ 'Japan to continue to urge China to boost transparency on military: PM', *Associated Press*, April 10, 2010 at http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9EVPOO80&show_article=1

³⁶ 'Okada hails new U.S. policy of limiting nukes', *Japan Times*, April 8, 2010 at [http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20100408a2.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed:+japantimes+\(The+Japan+Times:+All+Stories\)&utm_content=Google+Reader](http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20100408a2.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed:+japantimes+(The+Japan+Times:+All+Stories)&utm_content=Google+Reader)

³⁷ 'Support rate for Hatoyama Cabinet drops to 33%: Kyodo poll', *Associated Press*, April 4, 2010 at http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9ES7C900&show_article=1

³⁸ 'Japan rebels launch new opposition party', *Associate Foreign Press*, April 10, 2010 at http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20100410/wl_asia_afp/japanpolitics_20100410110301

³⁹ 'Former PM Nakasone admits he was briefed on secret Japan-U.S. pact', *Mainichi Japan*, March 31, 2010 at <http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/news/20100331p2a00m0na011000c.html>

⁴⁰ 'Okada, Clinton discuss Futenma', *Asahi Shimbun*, March 30, 2010 at <http://www.asahi.com/english/TKY201003300476.html>

Okada also met with his German counterpart Guido Westerwelle on the sidelines of a Group of Eight foreign ministers' meeting in Canada. Both of them agreed to cooperate for a successful outcome at the upcoming NPT Review Conference in May. The two sides also urged the G-8 to send a "powerful" message to realize a nuclear weapons-free world in support of President Obama.⁴¹

APRIL 12-18

- **Chinese naval flotilla raises concerns; Foreign Minister Okada welcomes US NPR negative security assurances; Japan grants visa to Dalai Lama and Uyghur rebel leader despite Chinese protests**

A Chinese flotilla of 10 naval vessels including two submarines was spotted in international waters between Okinawa Island and Miyakojima island on April 17. Reports noted that the development was indicative of efforts of the Chinese Navy to expand its range of operations.⁴²

Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada, at the Lower House Foreign Affairs Committee session on April 14 welcomed negative security assurances detailed in the newly-released US Nuclear Posture Review (NPR). He added that "lobbying efforts" by Japan were also responsible for the change in the US position.⁴³

In other developments, the Japanese government decided to grant visa to Uyghur leader Rebiya Kadeer and the Dalai Lama despite protests by China. A government spokesperson stated that Japan "will not receive them as important person, and the visa is issued in accordance with the law." The Dalai Lama's visit in June will be his 14th visit to Japan.⁴⁴

SOUTHEAST ASIA

APRIL 5-11

- **16th ASEAN Summit meeting held in Hanoi; Agreement for \$2 billion 1200 MW coal-fired thermal power plant project in Hai Duong Province in Vietnam signed; Malaysia to emphasize on the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes; Thai government declares state of emergency, seeks truce talks with the UDD; NLD decides not to contest upcoming general elections**

At the 16th ASEAN summit at Hanoi, Malaysian PM Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak stated that the inclusion of the US and Russia within an ASEAN+8 frame work will be discussed in detail by the foreign ministers of the member states and a

⁴¹ 'Japan, Germany agree to cooperate toward successful NPT conference', *Associated Press*, March 30, 2010 at http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9EP0UPG1&show_article=1

⁴² 'Chinese Navy expanding role, Government to closely monitor activities in areas around Japan', *The Yomiuri Shimbun*, April 15, 2010 at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/20100415TDY02T03.htm>

⁴³ 'Okada in uphill nuclear battle', *Asahi Shimbun*, April 16, 2010 at <http://www.asahi.com/english/TKY201004150381.html>

⁴⁴ 'Japan decides to grant visa to Rebiya Kadeer and Dalai Lama', *China Tibet Information Center*, April 16, 2010 at <http://chinatibet.people.com.cn/6953937.html>

decision will be arrived at the next Summit meeting. Najib emphasized on the need to have both the countries participating in the proposed framework.⁴⁵

At the sidelines of the Hanoi Summit, Najib Razak also held talks with his Vietnamese counterpart Nguyen Tan Dung. Bilateral, regional and global issues were discussed. An agreement for the \$2 billion 1200 MW coal-fired thermal power plant project in Hai Duong Province in Vietnam was signed.⁴⁶

Najib Razak was also one of the 46 leaders who will be attending the two-day nuclear summit in Washington.⁴⁷ Najib is expected to highlight Malaysia's stance on using nuclear power exclusively for developmental purposes.⁴⁸ He will also hold a separate meeting with President Obama.⁴⁹

To deal with rising anti-government protests led by the United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship (UDD), a state of emergency was declared by the Thai government on April 7 in Bangkok along with a few other provinces like Samut Prakan, Nonthaburi, Pathum Thani and Nakhon Pathom and Ayutthaya.⁵⁰ Despite this however, over 100 soldiers were injured in clashes with UDD supporters on April 9. In the aftermath of this incident, the government appointed PM's Secretary General Korbsak Sabhavasuu to begin truce talks with UDD leaders.⁵¹ The Puea Thai Party meanwhile urged the Thai government to dissolve the House to deal with the ongoing political crisis within the country.⁵²

In Myanmar, the National League for Democracy (NLD) has decided to abstain from taking part in the upcoming general elections. Aung San Suu Kyi expressed her delight over the party's decision. Reports indicated that the decision may aggravate the debates over the credibility of the upcoming election.⁵³

⁴⁵ 'Najib: ASEAN+8 which includes US, Russia to be decided at next Summit', *Bernma.com*, April 9, 2010 at <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsindex.php?id=489382>

⁴⁶ 'Najib meets Vietnamese PM', *Bernama.com*, April 8, 2010 at <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsindex.php?id=489023>

⁴⁷ 'Najib arrives in Washington for Nuclear Summit', *Bernma.com*, April 11, 2010 at <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsindex.php?id=489616>

⁴⁸ 'Najib to stress on use of nuclear for peace', *Bernama.com*, April 11, 2010 at <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsindex.php?id=489647>

⁴⁹ 'Najib, Obama Bilateral talks before Nuclear Summit', *Bernama.com*, April 11, 2010 at <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsindex.php?id=489464>

⁵⁰ 'PM declares state of emergency', *Bangkok Post*, April 7, 2010 at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/173944/pm-declares-state-of-emergency>

⁵¹ 'Govt. seeks talks for truce with reds', *Bangkok Post*, April 10, 2010 at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/174323/govt-seeks-talks-for-truce-with-reds>

⁵² 'Puea Thai calls on PM to dissolve House', *Bangkok Post*, April 10, 2010 at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/174255/pt-calls-on-pm-to-dissolve-house>

⁵³ 'Myanmar's Suu Kyi pleased party didn't register', *The Jakarta Post*, April 7, 2010 at <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/04/07/myanmar039s-suu-kyi-pleased-party-didn039t-register.html>

APRIL 12-18

- **Malaysia's Razak meets with Obama in Washington, reiterates willingness to participate in the Trans-Pacific Partnership initiated by Obama administration; Razak arrives at Tokyo on April 18 on a four-day visit; Multiple bomb blasts in Rangoon kill 9 and injure over 75; Thai and Cambodian troops exchange fire near the border**

Malaysian PM Najib Razak met with US President Barack Obama for the first ever bilateral talks on April 13 at the sidelines of the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington. During the 40-minute interaction, both the leaders discussed economic cooperation, nuclear proliferation among other issues. Najib expressed Malaysia's willingness to participate in the Trans-Pacific Partnership initiated by the Obama administration to promote economic integration in the region.⁵⁴ Razak also extended support to the current US stance on Iran's nuclear programme. He however stated that the international community will have to make it clear to Iran that while it has a right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purpose, it should abstain from developing nuclear weapons.⁵⁵

Najib Razak arrived at Tokyo on April 18 on a four-day visit. This is Razak's first visit to Japan after assuming office. He is scheduled to have an audience with the Japanese Emperor and hold bilateral talks with his counterpart Yukio Hatoyama.⁵⁶

Three bomb blasts rocked a park in Rangoon, Myanmar when thousands of people gathered to celebrate an annual water festival. Nine people reportedly lost their lives while 75 others were injured. Several such incidents have occurred in recent times and the ruling authorities blame armed groups and ethnic rebels for the incidents.⁵⁷

Reports noted that 24 prominent leaders of anti-government UDD protesters in Thailand have decided to surrender to the police by May 15. However, the organisation vowed to continue its protests while seeking immediate dissolution of the House.⁵⁸

Thai and Cambodian troops exchanged fire on April 18 near the border region. A meeting of commanders of both the sides was held. No casualty was however reported.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ 'Najib and Obama bring fresh momentum to bilateral ties', *Bernama.com*, April 13, 2010 at <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsindex.php?id=490340>

⁵⁵ 'US, Malaysia take anti-Iran stance', *Bangkok Post*, April 13, 2010 at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/174557/us-malaysia-take-anti-iran-stance>

⁵⁶ 'Najib arrives in Tokyo for four-day official visit to Japan', *Bernama.com*, April 18, 2010 at <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsindex.php?id=491496>

⁵⁷ 'Nine dead by Burma festival bombs', *Bangkok Post*, April 15, 2010 at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/174809/burma-urges-vigilance-after-deadly-bombs>

⁵⁸ 'Red shirts to surrender 'next month'', *Bangkok Post*, April 17, 2010 at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/174944/thai-protests-continue-as-leaders-vow-to-surrender>

⁵⁹ 'Cambodia border clash, no casualties', *Bangkok Post*, April 18, 2010 at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/174984/cambodia-border-clash-no-casualties>

C. WEST ASIA

IRAN

APRIL 5-11

- **Iran prepared for a fuel swap on its own territory; Third generation centrifuges unveiled; Dr. El-Baradei: Western nations seeking harsher sanctions 'out of frustration'**

Foreign ministry spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast told reporters that Tehran was ready to discuss a solution to its nuclear stand-off with the West but only on the condition that foreign powers agree to a fuel swap on Iranian territory. He insisted that Iran will not go back on securing its nuclear rights despite pressure from the West. The US meanwhile was continuing with its efforts to seek the support of other member of UN Security Council for tougher new sanctions.⁶⁰

Iran's nuclear chief Ali Akbar Salehi revealed new 'third-generation' centrifuges which can enrich uranium faster than current technology. These are reportedly six times more powerful than first generation centrifuges and could potentially shorten the time it takes to build a nuclear bomb.

Dr. Mohamed El-Baradei, the former head of the IAEA meanwhile stated that Western nations were seeking harsher sanctions 'out of frustration.' He added that he did not think Iran was developing a nuclear weapon and that the world also did not have new information that Iran was currently developing a nuclear weapon.⁶¹

APRIL 12-18

- **US military official says Iran is another three to five years from actually producing a "deliverable weapon"; Former president Khatami barred from traveling abroad; Khamenei: Use of nuclear arms against Islam**

Lt. Gen. Ronald Burgess, director of the US Defense Intelligence Agency in a Senate hearing stated that centrifuges at Iran's Natanz plant were producing low-enriched uranium and were not yet being used to produce highly-enriched uranium needed for weapons.⁶² He added that Iran would take another three to five years to actually produce a "deliverable weapon that is usable." The assessment came even as Iran declared that it had produced its first significant batch of more highly-enriched uranium. Meanwhile, negotiations resumed at the UN on the possibility of tougher sanctions.

Iran's former president and reformist politician Mohammad Khatami was barred from leaving the country. He was to attend a nuclear disarmament conference in Japan. Khatami has been under strong pressure from the Iranian

⁶⁰ 'Iran says still ready to negotiate nuclear swap', *Khaleej Times*, April 5, 2010 at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle09.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2010/April/middleeast_April84.xml§ion=middleeast

⁶¹ 'Iran unveils 'faster' centrifuges', *BBC News*, April 9, 2010 at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8611864.stm

⁶² 'Iran needs 'six years for bomb'', *BBC News*, April 14, 2010 at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/8621245.stm>

government following the disputed presidential elections of June 2009. The government of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has placed severe restrictions on the opposition leadership in the aftermath of protests following that election.⁶³

In other developments, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei stated that the use of nuclear weapons was "haram," or "prohibited by religion." Khamenei added that the world's "only atomic criminal [US] lies and presents itself as being against nuclear weapons proliferation ..."⁶⁴

IRAQ

APRIL 5-11

- **Serial bomb blasts kill 35 in Baghdad**

Series of bomb blasts killed over 30 people in mainly Shia areas of Baghdad and wounded more than 100. The explosions came just days after suicide blasts near foreign embassies in the capital killed more than 40 people. The bombings ended a period of relative calm following the March parliamentary elections.⁶⁵

APRIL 12-18

- **Secular Alliance wants Iranian support**

The Sunni-backed secular coalition that was placed first in Iraq's parliamentary elections sought to garner Iranian support by stating that it would never let Iraq be used as a launching pad for an attack on its Shiite neighbor. The announcement came on the heels of a surprise statement in the previous week by Iran's ambassador in Baghdad urging Iraq's major coalitions to play a constructive role in the formation of a new government.⁶⁶

II. DEFENCE REVIEW

APRIL 5-11

- **Chidambaram justifies India's defence expenditure**

Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram justified India's defence allocation of Rs. 1,47,344 crore for 2010-11 as "absolutely necessary and inevitable." He stated that had "neighbouring countries been stable, peaceful and were oriented in a friendly manner towards India, our allocation of such a big fund for defence in the budget would not have arisen." The Minister added that the government was

⁶³ 'Iran ex-president 'in travel ban', *BBC News*, April 16, 2010 at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/8624956.stm>

⁶⁴ 'Use of nukes prohibited by religion: Khamenei', *Khaleej Times*, April 16, 2010 at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2010/April/middleeast_April247.xml§ion=middleeast

⁶⁵ 'Baghdad blasts kill at least 35', *BBC News*, April 6, 2010 at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8604392.stm

⁶⁶ "Iraq's Allawi courts Iranian support," *Khaleej Times*, April 16, 2010, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2010/April/middleeast_April231.xml§ion=middleeast

expecting to spend Rs. 40,000 crore in the current fiscal year to meet the requirements of the paramilitary and police forces.⁶⁷

- **DRDO developing sub-sonic 1000 km cruise missile**

V.K. Saraswat, Scientific Advisor to Defence Minister and DRDO Chief stated that India was developing a sub-sonic cruise missile, the 'Nirbhay' with a range of 1000 km. Dr. Sarawat noted that the missile can be put to use for a "variety of applications."⁶⁸

- **IAF's new airbase at Phalodi, Rajasthan**

Air Chief Marshal P.V. Naik inaugurated a new airfield with 'modern infrastructure' at Phalodi in Rajasthan. The airfield, located between Jaisalmer and Jodhpur, is around 100 km from the international border with Pakistan. A government note stated "with specific consideration to the geo-political scenario and the need for in-built flexibility in operational requirements," the new air base was approved by the government in April 2000.⁶⁹

- **Report: Chinese hackers steal India's strategic secrets**

A report published by Canada-based Information Warfare Monitor and the Shadowserver Foundation notes that hackers from Chengdu, China have successfully stolen vital information from India's defence establishments, External Affairs Ministry and National Security Council Secretariat. The 58-page report showed documents marked variously as "SECRET", "RESTRICTED", and "CONFIDENTIAL".⁷⁰

⁶⁷ 'Hefty allocation for defence is necessary: Chidambaram', *Press Trust of India*, April 11, 2010 at http://www.ptinews.com/news/604506_Hefty-allocation-for-defence-is-necessary--Chidambaram

⁶⁸ 'India developing sub-sonic 1000 km cruise missile', *Press Trust of India*, April 11, 2010 at http://www.ptinews.com/news/605033_India-developing-sub-sonic-1000-km-cruise-missile

⁶⁹ Government of India, Press Information Bureau, 'Air Chief to Inaugurate New Air field in Phalodi', MoD Press Release, April 5, 2010, at <http://www.pib.nic.in/release/release.asp?relid=60056&kwid=>; 'Soon, an Air Force airfield along Pak border', *NDTV*, April 5, 2010 at <http://www.ndtv.com/news/india/soon-an-air-force-airfield-along-pak-border-19254.php>

⁷⁰ Information Warfare Monitor Shadowserver Foundation, 'Shadows in the Cloud: Investigating Cyber Espionage 2.0', <http://www.infowar-monitor.net/2010/04/shadows-in-the-cloud-an-investigation-into-cyber-espionage-2-0/>