

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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1. COUNTRY REVIEW

A. SOUTH ASIA

AFGHANISTAN

- **Karzai meets with Obama and Clinton in Washington; US and Afghanistan reaffirm shared goals to achieve a "stable, strong and prosperous Afghanistan"; Obama supports Karzai's efforts to reach out to moderate sections of Taliban; Over 50 Taliban militants killed in joint Afghan-NATO operations in Kunduz and Ghazni provinces; 11 civilians killed in a NATO raid in Nangarhar**

President Karzai on a visit to the US met with President Obama on May 12. Both leaders reaffirmed their shared goals to achieve a "stable, strong and prosperous Afghanistan."¹ They also reiterated their commitment to a long-term partnership between the US and Afghanistan. A joint statement issued after the meeting noted that they "recognised the importance of Afghan-led peace and reconciliation efforts. Towards that end, the United States pledged its support for Afghanistan's reintegration and reconciliation processes".² Obama also supported Karzai's efforts to reach out to sections of the Taliban. He stated that as long as those elements renounced their ties to Al Qaeda and extremism, the Afghan government could "reintegrate those individuals into Afghan society."³

Obama acknowledged the progress made in the areas of security, economic development and rule of law, but added that there was still a long way to go. He argued that the US-led military surge had "reversed the momentum" of the Taliban, but warned that there would be difficult days ahead in fighting a "ruthless" insurgency.⁴ Obama added that by July 2011, more responsibility would be given to the Afghan security forces. He however added that the US will not suddenly depart from the country by the summer of 2011.⁵

Earlier on May 11, President Karzai met with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Both leaders vowed to work together to build a stable and prosperous Afghanistan.⁶

Reports noted that at least 50 Taliban militants were killed in joint operations carried out by Afghan-NATO forces in Kunduz and Ghazni

¹ 'US, Afghanistan show a united front', *Pajhwok Afghan News*, May 12, 2010 at <http://www.pajhwok.com/viewstory.asp?lng=eng&id=94065>

² 'Obama lends his weight to Karzai's peace initiative', *Pajhwok Afghan News*, May 12, 2010 at <http://www.pajhwok.com/viewstory.asp?lng=eng&id=94066>

³ 'Avoiding Tensions, Obama Reassures Karzai', *The New York Times*, May 12, 2010 at <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/13/world/asia/13karzai.html?scp=5&sq=afghanistan&st=cse>

⁴ 'US, Afghanistan show a united front', *Pajhwok Afghan News*, May 12, 2010 at <http://www.pajhwok.com/viewstory.asp?lng=eng&id=94065>

⁵ 'Obama: July 2011 is only the start of Afghanistan withdrawal', *USA Today*, May 13, 2010 at <http://content.usatoday.com/communities/theoval/post/2010/05/obama-july-of-2011-is-the-only-the-start-of-afghanistan-withdrawal/1>

⁶ 'Karzai, Clinton agree on long-term partnership', *Pajhwok Afghan News*, May 11, 2010 at <http://www.pajhwok.com/viewstory.asp?lng=eng&id=93992>

provinces. The operation was backed by close air support and no civilian casualties were reported.⁷ However, 11 civilians were killed in a NATO raid in the eastern province of Nangarhar on May 13. President Karzai strongly condemned this NATO raid and the loss of civilian lives.⁸

PAKISTAN

- **Holder: TTP responsible for the Times Square bombing bid; Clinton satisfied with Pakistan's cooperation in Times Square investigations; Qureshi: Resumption of dialogue process an "important step forward in bilateral relations"; Baroness Warsi becomes the first woman of Pakistani origin to be a UK cabinet minister; 64 people abducted near the border area of Kurram Agency and Hangu district**

US Attorney General Eric Holder on May 16 stated that the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) was responsible for the Times Square bombing attempt and that the US had credible evidence to prove its involvement.⁹ After earlier warning Pakistan that it will face severe consequences if terror links of the New York bomber to elements on its soil were proved, Hillary Clinton seemed satisfied with Pakistan's cooperation in the on-going investigations into the incident. Talking to a think-tank audience on May 13, she admitted that the US and Pakistan were cooperating in the investigations and that the cooperation was "working well together".¹⁰ Meanwhile, amidst reports of differences between the US and Pakistan in the aftermath of Times Square incident, the US has denied that Gen. McChrystal had asked Gen. Kayani to launch a military offensive in North Waziristan to rein in the Taliban.¹¹

Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi addressing presspersons after his telephonic conversation with his Indian counterpart S.M. Krishna on May 11 stated that the resumption of the dialogue process was an "important step forward in bilateral relations".¹² Qureshi and Krishna are scheduled to meet on July 15 in Islamabad.

⁷ '51 Taliban killed in Kunduz, Ghazni', *Pajhwok Afghan News*, May 13, 2010 at <http://www.pajhwok.com/viewstory.asp?lng=eng&id=94073>

⁸ 'Karzai condemns NATO raid', *Pajhwok Afghan News*, May 15, 2010 at <http://www.pajhwok.com/viewstory.asp?lng=eng&id=94180>

⁹ 'TTP behind NY bomb plot: US', *Daily Times*, May 10, 2010 at http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\05\10\story_10-5-2010_pg1_2

¹⁰ 'Pakistan reciprocating US concern on terrorism: Hillary Clinton', *Daily Times*, May 15, 2010 at http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\05\15\story_15-5-2010_pg1_5

¹¹ Anwar Iqbal, 'Kayani was not asked to launch new operation: US', *Dawn*, May 11, 2010 at <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/kayani-was-never-asked-to-launch-new-operation-us-general-150>

¹² 'Indo-Pak FMs to hold talks on July 15', *The News*, May 12, 2010 at http://www.thenews.com.pk/arc_default.asp?arc_date=5/12/2010

Baroness Sayeeda Warsi became the first woman of Pakistani origin to become a cabinet minister in the newly-elected government of David Cameron. Warsi will also concurrently be the chairperson of the Conservative Party.¹³

In other developments, at least 64 people were abducted by members of an unidentified armed group near the border area between the Kurram Agency and the Hangu district on May 15.¹⁴

B. EAST ASIA

CHINA

- **China, Australia pledge to work towards ensuring peace, stability and development of Asia-Pacific region; Defense Minister Liang says Cambodia is China's good neighbor, friend and partner; Chinese Naval Escort Force intensifies training regimen in Gulf of Aden:**

Gen. Guo Boxiong, Vice-Chairman of China's Central Military Commission on a visit to Australia during the week met with Minister for Defense John Faulkner. The two leaders vowed to strengthen exchanges between their respective armed forces. In the joint statement issued after the meeting, China and Australia pointed to their shared common interests and pledged to work for ensuring the peace, stability and development of the Asia-Pacific region.¹⁵

The commander-in-chief of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces visited Beijing and held discussions with top military leadership. Defense Minister Liang Guanglie stated that Cambodia was China's good neighbor, friend and partner.¹⁶

Reports noted that the 5th batch of the Chinese naval escort taskforce deployed in the Gulf of Aden had intensified its training regimen, to further enhance its quick response capability.¹⁷

In other developments, graduating cadets of the Engineer Command College (ECC) of the PLA participated in 'Vanguard 2010' exercises held at a tactics training base in Anhui Province in eastern China. The exercises aimed at testing the 'talent cultivation quality' of military academies.¹⁸

¹³ Murtaza Ali Shah, 'Pak-origin woman made party chief, cabinet minister', *The News*, May 13, 2010 at http://www.thenews.com.pk/arc_default.asp?arc_date=5/13/2010

¹⁴ 'Gunmen kidnap 64 on Kurram Agency border', *The News*, May 16, 2010 at http://www.thenews.com.pk/arc_default.asp?arc_date=5/16/2010

¹⁵ 'China, Australia to Strengthen Exchanges between Armed Forces', *PLA Daily*, May 16, 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-05/16/content_4219997.htm

¹⁶ 'China, Cambodia Seek to Strengthen Military Ties', *PLA Daily*, May 12, 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-05/12/content_4217900.htm

¹⁷ 'China's 5th Naval Escort Taskforce Intensifies Anti-piracy Training', *PLA Daily*, May 14, 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-05/14/content_4219583.htm

¹⁸ 'ECC Holds 'Vanguard 2010' Comprehensive Exercise', *PLA Daily*, May 14, 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-05/14/content_4219582.htm

JAPAN

- **Foreign ministers of Japan, China and South Korea agree to 'calmly follow' on-going investigations into the sinking of South Korean vessel; Clinton to visit Japan on May 21; Hatoyama likely to meet Okinawa Governor to secure his support for base re-location**

The foreign ministers of Japan, China and South Korea meeting in Gyeongju, South Korea have agreed that their countries should "calmly follow" the ongoing investigation into the sinking of a South Korean naval vessel in March. Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada however stated that if North Korean involvement in the incident became apparent, Tokyo "would not allow for the holding of the six-party talks".¹⁹

Reports meanwhile noted that PM Hatoyama had likely given up on settling the issue of the relocation of a US Marine base in Okinawa by his self-imposed May 31 deadline in the light of fierce opposition from local residents to moving the base within the prefecture.²⁰ Hatoyama will likely visit Okinawa on May 23 for talks with Okinawa Governor Hirokazu Nakaima. It is believed that Hatoyama wants to obtain Mr. Nakaima's acceptance for a government plan to transfer most functions of the US Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station within the prefecture. His earlier visit to Okinawa on May 4 had failed to win the support of local leaders.²¹ US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is also likely to visit Japan on May 21.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

- **Thai PM warns of legal action if UDD does not stop its protest rally; UDD wants the surrender of Deputy PM Thaugsuban, holding him responsible for the April 10 incident; Four people killed in political violence in the Philippines; US envoy Campbell arrives in Myanmar; India to invest in highways connecting India, Bangladesh and Myanmar; Malaysia and Germany to boost bilateral cooperation**

Thai PM Abhisit Vejjajiva warned the United Democratic Front for Democracy (UDD) with legal action if it failed to decide on a definite date regarding ending their protest rally at the Ratchaprasong intersection.²² The UDD on its part stated that it would end its protest rally if Deputy PM Suthep Thaugsuban surrenders. The UDD alleges that Thaugsuban had ordered the crackdown on the 'Red Shirt' protesters on April 10, which left 25 people dead and injured more than 800

¹⁹ 'No nuke talks if probe fingers North', *Japan Times*, May 16, 2010 at [http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20100516a5.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/nn20100516a5.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed:+japantimes+(The+Japan+Times:+All+Stories)&utm_content=Google+Reader)

²⁰ 'Hatoyama gives up on settling Futenma issue by May 31: sources', *Associated Press*, May 10, 2010 at http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9FJRUOG0&show_article=1

²¹ 'Hatoyama to revisit Okinawa around May 23 over US base issue', *Associated Press*, May 11, 2010 at http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9FKKDJ00&show_article=1

²² 'UDD threatened with legal action', *Bangkok Post*, May 10, 2010 at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/177423/udd-gets-threat-of-legal-action>

people.²³ The government indicated that if the UDD protest rally continued even after May 12, then the tentative plan to hold national election on November 14 under the terms of the PM's 're-conciliation plan' would be scrapped. The possibility of further talks between the government and the UDD was also rejected as all the demands raised by the UDD had already been discussed by the government.²⁴

In two separate incidents of violence that took place during the national elections held in the Philippines on May 10, four people were killed and ten others were wounded. During the last four months, at least 33 people have been killed in political violence in the country.²⁵

US Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell arrived in Myanmar on May 9 for a two-day visit. Campbell met with Information Minister Kyaw Hsan among others. He was also scheduled to meet with Suu Kyi on May 10.²⁶

Reports noted that India will invest more than \$357 million to construct a 100 kms highway to ensure better transportation facilities among northeastern states of India and the border areas of Myanmar and Bangladesh. The road could also offer India an access to the Sittway Port, currently under construction, to transport commodities from the Northeastern region.²⁷

In other developments, Germany and Malaysia in talks held in Kuala Lumpur decided to strengthen their bilateral cooperation in various fields, including in trade, investment, education, tourism, and research and development. Germany is one of the largest trading partners of Malaysia, with bilateral trade in 2009 amounting to RM 33.25 billion.²⁸

C. WEST ASIA

IRAN

- **William Hague says Iran's behaviour "intolerable"; Brazilian President says he is optimistic of convincing Ahmadinejad to agree to a nuclear deal to prevent further sanctions; Pakistan's Ambassador to Tehran injured in an attack by an Afghan national**

²³ 'Rally to end when Suthep charged', *Bangkok Post*, May 10, 2010 at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/177459/udd-vows-to-end-rally-once-suthep-surrenders>

²⁴ 'Korbask: Election off if rally continues', *Bangkok Post*, May 12, 2010 at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/177663/korbsak-no-nov-14-poll-if-rally-continues>

²⁵ '4 dead in Philippines poll day violence', *Bangkok Post*, May 10, 2010 at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/177399/four-dead-in-philippine-election-day-violence>

²⁶ 'US envoy to meet Suu Kyi', *Bangkok Post*, May 10, 2010 at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/177412/us-envoy-to-meet-burma-opposition-leader-suu-kyi>

²⁷ 'India to invest US\$ 300 m on highways linking Myanmar, Bangladesh, India', *Indo Burma News*, May 11, 2010 at <http://www.indoburmanews.net/archives-1/2010/may-2010/india-to-invest-us-300m-on-highways-linking-myanmar-bangladesh-india>

²⁸ 'Malaysia, Germany hold talks to boost cooperation', *Bernama.com*, May 12, 2010 at <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsindex.php?id=497675>

Britain's new Foreign Secretary William Hague, ahead of his first visit to Washington, condemned Iran's nuclear programme. He stated that "Iran's behaviour in recent years has been intolerable to the great majority of the international community." Hague indicated that Britain would continue to push for UN Security Council sanctions. US officials on their part pointed out that they had received "good response" from not only Russia but also China regarding new sanctions.²⁹

Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva in Iran to attend the G-15 summit stated that he was 'optimistic' of persuading President Ahmadinejad to reach an agreement with the West, in an effort to avoid sanctions.³⁰

In other developments, Pakistan's Ambassador to Iran Mohammad Bakhsh Abbasi was injured in an attack by an Afghan national in Tehran. Mr. Abbasi, who was reportedly traveling without bodyguards or a driver, was not seriously injured.³¹

IRAQ

- **Over 100 killed in series of attacks across Iraq even as political stalemate continues**

Over 100 people were killed in renewed violence across Iraq, including in Baghdad and other cities. Police and army checkpoints, as well as markets, a mayor's office and a textile factory were targeted. The attacks occurred amidst a prolonged dispute over the results of the country's election results held more than two months ago. Officials blamed the political standoff for creating a security vacuum that extremists were exploiting.³²

²⁹ 'New British foreign secretary slams Iran ahead of US trip', *Khaleej Times*, May 14, 2010 at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2010/May/middleeast_May227.xml§ion=middleeast

³⁰ 'Brazil's Lula in Iran for 'last chance' nuclear talks', *Khaleej Times*, May 16, 2010 at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2010/May/middleeast_May257.xml§ion=middleeast

³¹ 'Pakistan's Iran envoy 'attacked'', *BBC News*, May 11, 2010 at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8675988.stm

³² Steven Lee Myers, 'Coordinated Attacks in Iraqi Cities Kill More Than 100', *New York Times*, May 10, 2010 at <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/11/world/middleeast/11iraq.html?ref=world>