

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

September 1-7, 9(1), 2008

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1. COUNTRY REVIEW

A. SOUTH ASIA

AFGHANISTAN

- **Suicide bomb attacks in Kandahar; Civilian casualties in NATO and Afghan military operations; Pakistan halts vital supplies to US-led coalition and NATO forces in Afghanistan**

In continuing attacks in Afghanistan, two suicide bombers attacked a police station in the southern city of Kandahar, killing at least two policemen and injuring at least 30 people, including civilians. The bombers targeted a senior police commander, Gen. Abdul Razaaq, who was injured.¹ Insurgents also killed 3 Canadian soldiers and injured 5 more in the same province. The incident brought the total number Canadian casualties in Afghanistan to 96. Around 2,500 Canadians are based in the southern part of the country.²

NATO and Afghan forces operations meanwhile killed five children in two separate operations in Paktika province and near Kabul on September 1. A US military spokesman however stated that no American troops took part in the operation in Paktika.³

Reports also noted that Pakistan has halted vital supplies, including fuel, to US-led coalition and NATO forces in Afghanistan, following three deadly cross-border raids inside its territory by foreign troops.⁴

PAKISTAN

- **Asif Ali Zardari elected as Pakistan's new President with clear majority; PPP to abolish 17th Amendment; Assassination attempt on PM Gilani's motorcade; Dozens killed in Swat and Peshawar**

Asif Ali Zardari, the PPP co-chief, won the presidential elections held on September 6 with a thumping majority. Having been acquitted of corruption charges in most of the cases, reports noted that Zardari's election would restore a complete democratic structure in the country.⁵ Earlier, speaking at the Prime Minister's residence on August 31, Zardari called for a 'national consensus' for solving critical issues facing Pakistan and stated that the PPP would work towards 'political and national unity.'⁶

¹ "Kandahar Rocked by Suicide Bombs," *BBC News*, September 7, 2008, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7602655.stm

² "Afghan Attack Kills Canada Troops," *BBC News*, September 3, 2008, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7596793.stm

³ "NATO Forces and Afghans Kill Children in 2 Attacks," *The New York Times*, September 1, 2008, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/02/world/asia/02afghan.html?ref=world>

⁴ "Pakistan stops NATO Supplies," *Pajhwok Afghan News*, September 6, 2008, at <http://www.pajhwok.com/viewstory.asp?lng=eng&id=61555>

⁵ Raja Asghar, "All eyes on President Zardari," *Dawn*, September 7, 2008 at <http://www.dawn.com/2008/09/07/top1.htm>

⁶ Rana Qaisar, "National unity government key to all problems," *Daily Times*, September 1, 2008 at http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008\09\01\story_1-9-2008_pg1_1

Prime Minister Gilani meanwhile, addressing the upper house Senate on September 2, reiterated the PPP's stand on the abolition of the 17th Constitutional Amendment. Gilani also stated that the president ought to play a neutral role in state affairs and that he should work towards forging unity amongst the various states.⁷ Gilani's motorcade was attacked in Islamabad on September 3. However, Gilani was not in the car as it was on its way to pick him up from the airport.⁸

In other incidents of violence, at least 17 militants and 9 civilians were killed in Swat on September 4.⁹ A suicide bomb attack in Peshawar claimed the lives of 30 people and injured as many as 79 on September 6.¹⁰

BHUTAN

- **DNC calls for giving Bhutanese refugees equal religious and cultural rights**

Druk National Congress (DNC), the political party in exile in Nepal called for giving Bhutanese refugees equal religious and cultural rights. The president of the Druk National Congress, Rongthong Kunley Dorji also called on the government of Bhutan and the exiled leaders to work together in solving the issues confronting the country.¹¹

In other developments, Bhutan would upgrade the Disaster Management Division (DMD) to include three divisions dealing with preparedness and mitigation, response and early warning and relief and reconstruction.¹²

SRI LANKA

- **Lankan Minister: Tamils singled out for scrutiny in Colombo; UN calls for establish safe corridors for vulnerable civilians; Military: 19 dead bodies of soldiers handed over by LTTE through ICRC**

Sri Lanka's defence spokesman Minister Keheliya Rambukwella acknowledged that Tamils were singled out for scrutiny in Colombo, because rebels routinely hide among the capital's large Tamil community. He added that the policy was for the good of the Tamil community.¹³ However, reports noted that a section of the Tamils were expressing apprehensions as the government was also targeting innocent people. Some human rights activists also accused the government of

⁷ "PPP to abolish 17th Amendment: Gilani," *Daily Times*, September 3, 2008, at http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008\09\03\story_3-9-2008_pg1_1

⁸ Shakeel Anjum, "Shots fired at PM's motorcade," *The News*, September 4, 2008, at http://www.thenews.com.pk/arc_default.asp

⁹ Hameedullah Khan, "17 militants, 9 civilians killed in Swat," *Dawn*, September 5, 2008, at <http://www.dawn.com/2008/09/05/top2.htm>

¹⁰ Waseem Ahmad Shah, "Suicide bomber kills 30; target was 'some other place,'" *Dawn*, September 7, 2008 at <http://www.dawn.com/2008/09/07/top3.htm>

¹¹ "Rongthong appeals Jr Jigme and PM," *Bhutan News Service*, August 22, 2008, at <http://www.apfanews.com/news/?id=31313233>

¹² "Disaster Management division upgraded," *KueselOnline*, September 4, 2008, at <http://www.kueselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=11095>

¹³ "Tamils singled out for a reason: Minister," *The Daily Mirror*, September 3, 2008, at http://www.dailymirror.lk/DM_BLOG/Sections/frmNewsDetailView.aspx?ARTID=25130

"ethnic profiling" and that it would lead to further polarising an already divided nation.

Meanwhile, with the Sri Lankan military closing in on the LTTE areas from virtually all sides, reports noted the increasing vulnerability of civilians in places like Vanni. The UN's Colombo office urged the parties to establish a safe passage for these civilians.¹⁴ The UN's Resident Representative in the country, Neil Buhne, reiterated that any displaced person was "entitled to freedom of movement according to international principles."¹⁵

In other developments, search operations were underway to locate soldiers reported missing in the Nachchikuda area in Kilinochchi.¹⁶ The military also claimed that it had received 19 dead bodies of soldiers from the LTTE through the ICRC.¹⁷

MALDIVES

- **Adhaalath Party files a case against Gayoom for not being Sunni**

The Adhaalath Party (AP), which is a conservative religious party in Maldives, filed a case against President Gayoom arguing that according to the new constitution, the presidential candidate should be a Sunni, which was a criterion that President Gayoom did not fulfill.¹⁸ The AP also brought to the attention of the court that President Gayoom was contesting for the seventh term, a provision that the constitution did not support.

The World Bank and the Asian Development Bank advised the Maldivian government to cut back on subsidies for electricity in order to stabilize its economy. The country has been experiencing a sharp rise in inflation over the past few months. Analysts believed that its adverse effects have so far not been felt due to the weakening US Dollar and the country's vibrant tourist industry.¹⁹

¹⁴ "Establish safe corridor: UN," *BBC Sinhala*, September 4, 2008, at http://www.bbc.co.uk/sinhala/news/story/2008/09/080904_ungordon.shtml

¹⁵ B. Muralidhar Reddy, "U.N. plea on displaced in Sri Lanka," *The Hindu*, September 5, 2008, at <http://www.hindu.com/2008/09/05/stories/2008090553511600.htm>

¹⁶ "Search for missing soldiers continues," *The Daily Mirror*, September 5, 2008, at http://www.dailymirror.lk/DM_BLOG/Sections/frmNewsDetailView.aspx?ARTID=25371

¹⁷ "More SLA bodies handed over," *BBC Sinhala*, September 4, 2008, at http://www.bbc.co.uk/sinhala/news/story/2008/09/080904_nachchikudah_more.shtml

¹⁸ "Adhaalath To Take Gayoom To Supreme Court," *MinivanNews*, August 22, 2008, at www.minivannews.com/news/news.php?id=4916

¹⁹ "World Bank And ADB To Help Tackle Budget Crisis," *MinivanNews*, August 22, 2008, at <http://www.minivannews.com/news/news.php?id=4913>

B. SOUTHEAST AND EAST ASIA

MYANMAR

- **ICG: Myanmar crisis remains static; Suu Kyi awarded the 'Dundee Freedom Award'**

In its monthly bulletin released on September 2, the International Crisis Group (ICG) noted that the crisis in Myanmar remained unchanged. Despite the much anticipated 20th year anniversary of the 8-8-88 nationwide uprising and the much maligned visits of the UN Special Envoy Ibrahim Gambari to the country, the bulletin noted that the conflict in Myanmar neither significantly improved nor deteriorated during the course of the last month. It noted that the failure of Gambari to secure meetings with either junta leader Senior General Than Shwe or Aung San Suu Kyi brought into question the 'efficacy of the UN effort'.²⁰

Meanwhile, Suu Kyi was honoured with the 'Dundee Freedom Award' for her courageous struggle to restore human rights and democracy in Myanmar by the Dundee City Council of Scotland in a ceremony on September 3. The award will be received on her behalf by Anna Roberts, the Director of the Burma Campaign United Kingdom, a group that has been vigorously advocating for human rights and democracy in Myanmar.²¹

CHINA

- **Beijing submits its second report to UN Military Budget Transparency Mechanism; Chinese Foreign Minister visiting India September 7-10; Guangdong province and ASEAN sign an MoU**

The Chinese government submitted the second report of its 2007 military expenditure to the UN, the second time that China did so since it joined the UN Military Budget Transparency Mechanism last year. The report included basic data of the country's military spending for the latest fiscal year.²²

Beijing once again expressed the hope that the international community could "create favourable conditions" to promote a peaceful resolution of Russian-Georgian conflict.²³

On the eve of Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi's visit to India on September 7, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman noted that bilateral relations between China and India were on a sound footing, due to cooperative partnership and the "Ten-Item Strategy."²⁴

²⁰ "Burmese crisis remains static: ICG," *Mizzima*, September 3, 2008, at <http://www.mizzima.com/news/world/984-burmese-crisis-remains-static-icg.html>

²¹ "Aung San Suu Kyi honoured with Dundee freedom award," *Mizzima*, September 4, 2008, at <http://www.mizzima.com/news/world/990-aung-san-suu-kyi-honoured-with-dundee-freedom-award.html>

²² "China submits 2007 military expenditure report to UN," *People's Daily*, September 4, 2008, at <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90776/90785/6493285.html>

²³ "China calls for int'l efforts to resolve Russia-Georgia conflict," *People's Daily*, September 4, 2008, at <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6493286.html>

²⁴ "Chinese FM to visit India, Sri Lanka," *People's Daily*, September 2, 2008, at <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6491625.html>

Members of the Berlin-Taiwan Parliamentary Circle of Friends (FRG), on a visit to Taiwan, expressed support for Taiwan's latest bid to join the UN. The group appreciated Taiwan's "one step at a time, gradual method" as a very positive approach.²⁵

Chinese President Hu Jintao met with German President Horst Koehler on the sidelines of the Beijing Paralympic games. Both the leaders agreed to expand their bilateral relationship, with the German President stating that his country attached great importance to the cooperative relationship between the two countries.²⁶

In other developments, China's Guangdong province and ASEAN signed an agreement aimed at deepening the trade and economic partnership through a joint mechanism. The MOU was signed by ASEAN Deputy Secretary-General Nicholas Tandi Dammen and Vice-Governor of Guangdong Province Wan Qingliang in Jakarta. The two sides would explore opportunities for cooperation in various areas, including in agriculture, information and communication technology, trade and investment, tourism promotion, energy and environment, education and public health. ASEAN Secretary-General Surin Pitsuwan pointed out that Guangdong was "the southern gateway of China" and that links between Guangdong and ASEAN were growing.²⁷

C. WEST ASIA

IRAN

- **Syrian President emphasizes the need to resolve Iran issue peacefully; Iran dismisses Sarkozy's warning on an Israeli attack; GCC condemns Iran's establishment of two administrative offices on Abu Musa Island; IRGC to conduct exercises involving anti-aircraft defence systems**

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, in a joint press conference with the visiting French President, Nicolas Sarkozy stated that it would be a catastrophe if a peaceful solution to the Iranian nuclear row was not found. Sarkozy's two-day visit to Syria was the first by a Western head of state in five years. Assad had visited Paris in July. Sarkozy, in an interview to a newspaper, asserted that Syria could provide valuable inputs to solve Middle East concerns. The French President also offered his support for direct peace talks between Israel and

²⁵ "German parliamentarians encouraged by Taiwan's 'mild' U.N. bid," *Central News Agency*, September 4, 2008, at <http://www.cna.com.tw/cnaeng/EnglishTopNews/TopNewsDetail.aspx?TopNewsSerialnum=2127&strTopNewsDate=20080904&strTopNewsID=200809040019>

²⁶ "Chinese president meets German counterpart, Japanese guest," *People's Daily*, September 8, 2008, at <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6494775.html>

²⁷ "ASEAN, China's Guangdong Province sign cooperation deal," *People's Daily*, September 5, 2008, at <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6493934.html>

Lebanon, whenever they could take place. Israeli officials on their part have warned that Europe should be 'very careful in its relationship with Syria.'²⁸

Tehran on its part dismissed a warning by Mr. Sarkozy that the Islamic Republic was taking a dangerous gamble over its nuclear programme, due to the possibility of an Israeli attack. Government spokesman Gholamhossein Elham accused Israel of threatening global peace but reiterated Tehran's publicly stated view that Tel Aviv was not in a position to attack Iran.²⁹

The six-member Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) meanwhile urged Iran to remove the offices it had installed on the disputed island of Abu Musa and backed the United Arab Emirates' (UAE) claim to the territories. Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs, located near key shipping lanes in the Gulf, are controlled by the non-Arab Iran but have been claimed by the UAE with broad Arab support. Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Hassan Qashqavi charged that the GCC statement amounted to interference in Iran's internal affairs and called on Gulf countries to be 'realistic.'³⁰

Reports noted that Iran's armed forces would begin three days of war games involving anti-aircraft defence systems starting from September 8. The aim of the exercises was to maintain and upgrade the combat readiness of relevant units as well as to test new weapons and defence plans. Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman had in the previous week denied reports, based on comments from Israeli defence sources, that Iran had bought Russia's advanced S-300 anti-aircraft missile systems.³¹

IRAQ

- **Anbar handed over to Iraqi security; Petraeus: US combat troops could pull out of Baghdad; Plan to shift US Forces from Iraq to Afghanistan; Iraqi government gives ultimatum to members of MKO to leave; Chalabi confirms assassination attempt on his motorcade**

The American military handed over responsibility for the security of the western province of Anbar to Iraqi security forces. Anbar was once a stronghold of the Sunni insurgency. Officials noted that the transfer was made possible due to an increase in the number of Iraqi security forces and a reduction of violence, largely attributed to the working of local forces known as 'Awakening Councils.' US President George Bush hailed the handover, and appreciated the "courage"

²⁸ "Solve Iran peacefully urges Syria," *BBC News*, September 3, 2008, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7595138.stm

²⁹ "Iran rejects French warning it risks Israeli strike," *Khaleej Times*, September 6, 2008, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2008/September/middleeast_September79.xml§ion=middleeast

³⁰ "Gulf Arabs urge Iran close offices on disputed island," *Khaleej Times*, September 3, 2008, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2008/September/middleeast_September40.xml§ion=middleeast

³¹ "Iran to hold three-day war games: media," *Khaleej Times*, September 7, 2008, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2008/September/middleeast_September96.xml§ion=middleeast

of US troops, the Iraqi Security Forces, and “the brave tribes and other civilians from Anbar who worked alongside them.” The US military had reduced the number of American troops in Anbar, to 25,000 from 37,000 in February, and the strength of the Iraqi police forces had grown to 28,000, up from 5,000 three years ago.³²

Gen. David Petraeus, in an interview with *Financial Times*, stated that US combat troops could be pulled out of Baghdad within 10 months due to declining levels of violence. While Iraqi leaders have stated that the US and Iraq had agreed on a 2011 date for US troops to leave the country, US officials have been insisting that negotiations were still continuing. Washington on its part has been reluctant to embrace fixed timetables for withdrawal. Democratic contender Barack Obama was pushing for a 16-month timeframe for withdrawal, while Republican John McCain has argued against a set timeline for removing troops.³³

Reports also noted that Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had recommended that an Army brigade and a Marine battalion (consisting of about 4,500 troops) be sent to Afghanistan by early next year from Iraq. American commanders in Afghanistan have been asking for three more brigades to combat a resurgent Taliban.³⁴

Iraq’s Interior Ministry spokesman Brig. Gen. Abdul Kareem Khalaf meanwhile stated that the government had given Mojahedin Khalq Organization (MKO), a terrorist grouping, a six-month deadline to leave the country. Iraqi lawmakers had earlier urged the Iraqi government to expel the MKO from Iraqi territory, noting that the organization was a part of the oppressive regime of Saddam Hussein. The MKO was set up in the mid-1960s to oppose the US-backed Iranian regime of the late Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. It participated in the 1979 Islamic Revolution but soon launched a campaign of assassinations and bombings in Iran. The MKO was supported by Saddam Hussein’s Baathist regime in the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war but was disarmed after the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003.³⁵

In other developments, Iraqi Shiite politician Ahmad Chalabi’s office confirmed that he had escaped an assassination attempt when a car bomb targeted his motorcade in western Baghdad. Chalabi, who was a deputy prime minister for some time after the invasion of Iraq, was currently the chairman of the De-Baathification Authority and the Committee for Popular Mobilization in

³² “US Hands Back a Quieter Anbar,” *The New York Times*, September 1, 2008, at http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/02/world/middleeast/02anbar.html?_r=1&hp&oref=slogin

³³ “US troops could quit Baghdad ‘by July’: paper,” *Khaleej Times*, September 4, 2008, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2008/September/middleeast_September51.xml§ion=middleeast

³⁴ “Plan Would Shift Forces From Iraq to Afghanistan,” *The New York Times*, September 4, 2008, at http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/05/world/middleeast/05military.html?_r=1&hp&oref=slogin

³⁵ “MKO given ultimatum to leave Iraq: report,” *Tehran Times*, September 1, 2008, at http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=176730

the Law Imposition Plan, a body concerned with restoring basic services in the country.³⁶

II. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

JAMMU AND KASHMIR

- **PDP flays Amarnath Accord, NC welcomes it; Separatist leaders released from jail; Malik asks India and Pakistan to recognize Kashmir as an “independent, sovereign” country**

The Amarnath Accord, signed between the Sri Amarnath Yatra Sangarsh Samiti (SAYSS) and the government, under which the Shrine Board would be making temporary use of 40-hectares of land during the yatra period, drew mixed reaction from parties in Jammu and Kashmir. PDP leader Mehbooba Mufti decried it as a “unilateral decision” and stated that the decision over-ruled the sensitivities of the state’s majority community. She charged that “Jammu appeasement policy will further increase the alienation of Kashmiris.” Former Chief Minister and NC leader Farooq Abdullah termed the accord as “a very good sign.”³⁷ Chairman of the Hurriyat Conference (G) Syed Ali Shah Geelani rejected the agreement.³⁸

Meanwhile, senior separatist leaders Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Mohammad Yasin Malik were released on September 1. They were arrested after defying orders and marched towards Lal Chowk in Srinagar on August 25.³⁹

JKLF chairman Yasin Malik meanwhile on September 2 called on India and Pakistan to recognize Kashmir as an “independent sovereign” country and added that the people of Kashmir would accommodate the concerns of both the countries.⁴⁰

In other developments, Independents registered an overwhelming victory in the second general election of Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) Kargil, by bagging 17 out of 26 seats. National Conference and Indian National Congress won six and one seat respectively, while the results of two seats were yet to be declared.⁴¹

³⁶ “Iraqi politician Chalabi escapes assassination attempt,” *Khaleej Times*, September 6, 2008 at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2008/September/middleeast_September80.xml§ion=middleeast

³⁷ “PDP flays accord, NC welcomes it,” *Daily Excelsior*, September 1, 2008, at <http://www.dailyexcelsior.com/web1/08sep01/news.htm#7>

³⁸ “Geelani rejects agreement between SAYSS. Govt,” *Kashmir Times*, September 3, 2008, at <http://kashmirtimes.com/main.htm>

³⁹ “Geelani, Malik, Mirwaiz freed on Ramzan eve,” *Kashmir Times*, September 2, 2009, at <http://kashmirtimes.com/front.htm>

⁴⁰ “India, Pak should recognize J&K as independent, sovereign: Yasin,” *Kashmir Times*, September 3, 2008, at <http://kashmirtimes.com/news2.htm>

⁴¹ “Independents sweep LAHDC Kargil polls,” *Kashmir Times*, September 6, 2008, at <http://kashmirtimes.com/news7.htm>

MAOIST INSURGENCY

- **CPI-Maoists back independence for Kashmir; Jharkhand Police: Former Army personnel training Maoists; CPI-Maoists call for ban on Hindu fanatical groups**

The Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPI-Maoist), in a press statement on September 1, supported independence for Kashmir. Its spokesperson Azad called upon the CPI-M cadres to mobilise people in support of the Kashmiri people's struggle for freedom and called on the people of Kashmir to come out with a slogan: 'Neither India nor Pakistan, but a sovereign independent Kashmir.' Azad noted that history had demonstrated repeatedly that no nation, however small or weak, can be kept enslaved forever by another strong and mighty.⁴²

The CPI-Maoist also expressed its support to the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI). In a statement, it called for a ban on the "Hindu fanatical gangs" such as the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Bajrang Dal, Shiv Sena, Bharatiya Janata Party and Hindu Munnani.⁴³

Five security forces personnel were killed in a Maoist ambush in Chhatisgarh's Balrampur district, bordering Jharkhand, on September 4. Seven others were wounded in the attack.⁴⁴

Telegraph quoting an intelligence report noted that the Maoists have started operating in Singur area of West Bengal and that they were persuading villagers to resist the Tata Motors' bid to resume work at the Nano plant. The report stated that extremists working under the cover of social welfare organisations were instigating villagers to launch a violent movement.⁴⁵

Jharkhand Police meanwhile claimed that the CPI-Maoist cadres were being trained in guerrilla and jungle warfare by former Army personnel. Following the arrest of hardcore Maoist Shankar Bhuiyan alias Sanjay Ram from Latehar on August 28, the state police recovered a training manual of Maoists. The 200-page book was divided into two sections, containing minute details of planning and assault strategies in different terrains.⁴⁶

NORTHEAST INSURGENCY

- **Four police personnel killed in Mizoram**

Four police personnel were killed when suspected militants ambushed a vehicle in Kolasib district in Mizoram on September 2. Three other police personnel were

⁴² "CPI-Maoist backs independence for Kashmir," *South Asia Terrorism Portal*, September 2, 2008, at http://satp.org/satporgtp/detailed_news.asp?date1=9/2/2008#15

⁴³ "CPI-Maoist asks for ban on Hindu fanatical organizations," *South Asia Terrorism Portal*, September 5, 2008, at http://satp.org/satporgtp/detailed_news.asp?date1=9/5/2008#16

⁴⁴ "Rebel mine kills five," *Telegraph*, September 5, 2008, at http://telegraphindia.com/1080905/jsp/frontpage/story_9790508.jsp

⁴⁵ "Naxalites involved in the Singur protests, says Intelligence report," *South Asia Terrorism Portal*, September 1, 2008, at http://satp.org/satporgtp/detailed_news.asp?date1=9/1/2008

⁴⁶ 'Former Army personnel training Maoists, says Jharkhand Police,' *South Asia Terrorism Portal*, September 3, 2008, at http://satp.org/satporgtp/detailed_news.asp?date1=9/3/2008#4

wounded. Police suspected the involvement of Hmar People's Conference-Democracy (HPC-D).⁴⁷

III. ENERGY SECURITY REVIEW

AUSTRALIA

- **Concophilips bids \$8B for Australia's Origin Energy**

Houston-based ConocoPhillips on September 8 stated that it had agreed to pay up to \$8 billion for half of the share of the gas assets of Australia's Origin Energy Ltd. The company would make an upfront payment of \$5 billion, followed by four additional payments of \$500 million, as part of a joint venture that would process coal seam gas into liquefied natural gas for export to Asia.⁴⁸

INDIA

- **India to seek nuclear trade**

EAM Pranab Mukherjee stated that India would seek international nuclear commerce after the nuclear supplier group (NSG) lifted a decades-old ban on trading with India. He added that this would be after the deal is ratified by the US Congress. Mukherjee's comments came even as US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice urged India not to ignore US firms should the deal hit a roadblock at the current Congress session, which concluded at the end of the month. The EAM hailed the waiver by the NSG and the IAEA as "passports for India to enter into international nuclear trade."

With India aiming to boost its share of nuclear power to 7 per cent by 2030, a host of companies from France, Russia, and the US have been jockeying for a slice of India's atomic market.⁴⁹

IRAN

- **Russia: Launch of Iran nuclear plant in final stage**

The Russian state-run company building Iran's first nuclear plant, Atomstroieksport Company, stated on September 1 that preparations for the reactor's launch had entered their final stage. The company spokeswoman however noted that the launch date would be determined after talks between Russian and Iranian nuclear officials later in the month.

Analysts like David Albright of the Washington-based Institute for Science and International Security suggested that the steps referred to by Russia probably involved the loading of fuel into the reactor. Iran was paying Russia

⁴⁷ "Four police personnel killed in Mizoram," *South Asia Terrorism Portal*, September 3, 2008, at http://satp.org/satporgtp/detailed_news.asp?date1=9/3/2008#4

⁴⁸ "Concophilips bids \$8B for Origin Energy assets," *Market Watch*, September 8, 2008, at <http://asianenergy.blogspot.com/2008/09/conocophillips-bids-8b-for-origin.html>.

⁴⁹ "India to seek nuclear trade after a go ahead from US Congress," *Market watch*, September 8, 2008, at <http://asianenergy.blogspot.com/2008/09/india-to-seek-nuclear-trade-after-go.html>

more than \$1 billion to build the 1,000-megawatt light-water reactor, construction of which had been held up earlier by disputes between Tehran and Moscow.⁵⁰

- **Iran involved in building dams and hydropower plants in 10 countries**

Iran's deputy energy minister for water and wastewater affairs stated on September 7 that Iran was involved in the construction of dams and power plants in 10 countries, including the Sangtudeh dam and its 220MW power plant in Tajikistan, a joint venture in Azerbaijan, a dam and hydropower plant on the Aras River in Armenia, and Sri Lanka, among others. Iran had already built the Doosti Dam northeast of Mashhad near the Turkmenistan-Iran border, the Anzab tunnel in Tajikistan, a wind power plant in Armenia, and the Iran-Armenia gas pipeline.⁵¹

SLOVAKIA

- **Slovakia's PM: Russia-EU pipeline could be re-nationalised**

Slovakia's Prime Minister Robert Fico stated on September 5 that his government could re-nationalise the main Russia-EU gas pipeline from its Western shareholders. Fico came to power in 2006 on a welfare platform, which included a pledge to better protect workers and stop utility price hikes. Analysts expressed doubts whether Fico would actually go ahead with his threat but expressed surprise at his comments.⁵²

IV. SPACE AND MISSILE REVIEW

EUROPE

- **Increased air activity over European skies**

Reports noted that NATO's jet fighters were on alert, following the deployment of Russian bombers over the skies of Europe. At the Bodoe airbase on the eastern border of Norway, two F-16s were placed on alert. Norwegian officials stated that there has been no slowdown in the number of Russian bombers spotted.⁵³

⁵⁰ "Russia: Preparation for launch of Iran nuclear plant in final stage," September 8, 2008, at <http://asianenergy.blogspot.com/2008/09/russia-preparation-for-launch-of-iran.html>

⁵¹ "Iran plans to build dams, power plants in 10 countries," MNA, September 7, 2008, at <http://asianenergy.blogspot.com/2008/09/iran-to-build-dams-power-plants-in-10.html>

⁵² "Slovakia could re-nationalise Russia-EU pipeline," Reuters, September 6, 2008, at <http://asianenergy.blogspot.com/2008/09/slovakia-could-re-nationalise-russia-eu.html>

⁵³ "Russian bombers again cloud skies in Europe's far north", September 1, 2008, at http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/PoliticsNation/Russian_bombers_again_cloud_skies_in_Europes_far_north/articleshow/3447100.cms

MISSILE DEFENCE

- **Czechs expect first US funds from anti-missile deal**

The first cash to fund Czech research stemming from Prague's agreement to host part of a US anti-missile shield would be received by the end of September, a Czech scientist told the CTK news agency on September 2. The research funds would be one of the issues under discussion between Czech deputy foreign minister Tomas Pojar and his US counterpart William Burns in Washington later in the week.⁵⁴

- **Taiwan not to deploy long range missiles**

In a sign of improving ties between Taiwan and the PRC, Taiwan's government decided not to deploy missiles capable of hitting Shanghai. Taiwan's defence ministry officials noted that priority would be placed on improving the quality of the existing cruise missiles.⁵⁵

SPACE

- **NASA postpones Atlantis mission**

US space officials moved the target launch date for the Shuttle Atlantis mission to the Hubble Space Telescope to October 10.⁵⁶ Servicing Mission 4 was originally scheduled for launch on August 28 but later postponed until October 8.

- **China to launch third manned space flight in September**

China's third manned space flight, which will feature China's first attempted space walk, would blast off in late September. The launch of the Shenzhou VII will take place "at an appropriate time between September 25 and 30," *Xinhua* reported quoting an unnamed spokesman at the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwestern Gansu Province.⁵⁷

- **China launches environmental satellites**

Chinese officials stated that they have launched two natural disaster and environment monitoring satellites. The first of their kind put into space by China, the satellites were expected to enhance the country's natural disasters forecasting capabilities.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ "Czechs expect first U.S. funds from anti-missile deal: report," September 2, 2008, at http://www.tehrantimes.com/Index_view.asp?code=177075

⁵⁵ "Taiwan won't deploy longer-range missiles: report," September 1, 2008, at <http://www.thenews.com.pk/updates.asp?id=53812>

⁵⁶ "NASA postpones Atlantis mission to Hubble again", September 1, 2008, at <http://en.rian.ru/science/20080901/116438507.html>

⁵⁷ "China space mission set for late September: report," September 2, 2008, at <http://uk.news.yahoo.com/afp/20080902/tsc-china-space-f55c36c.html>

⁵⁸ "China launches environmental satellites," September 6, 2008, at http://www.spacemart.com/reports/China_launches_environmental_satellites_999.html