

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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I. COUNTRY REVIEW

A. EAST ASIA

CHINA

- **Chinese delegation visits US to attend the defense consultations; Chinese military leadership receives host of foreign military leaders; The foreign contact work of the PLA applauded; The Chinese naval taskforces sailing in the Gulf of Aden attracts international attention; The taskforces have escorted 3,014 Chinese and foreign ships of 50 countries in the Gulf of Aden; The PLAN's warships pay good-will visits to foreign ports; Chengdu Military Area Command (MAC) builds a massive transport infrastructure**

A Chinese military delegation, led by Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Ma Xiaotian, left Beijing on Thursday for the United States to attend the 11th annual round of defense consultations. The delegation is visiting the United States at the invitation of the U.S. defense ministry. The official communiqué issued by the Chinese Ministry of National Defence maintained that the two sides were scheduled to “exchange views on military ties, maritime military security and other international and regional security issues”. The mechanism of annual China-U.S. defense consultations was established in 1997.¹

Chinese Defense Minister Liang Guanglie met with the visiting Indonesian Army Chief of Staff George Toisutta in Beijing on December 7. On this occasion, Liang said that China attached great importance to promoting relationship with Indonesia, an important regional country. Toisutta also responded that the Indonesian army was willing to enhance bilateral military cooperation in areas such as personnel exchanges and training.² Meanwhile, Mongolian defence minister Bold Luvsanvandan visited Beijing and met with Chinese National Defense Minister Liang Guanglie on December 7. The both the leaders pledged to enhance military ties between the two countries.³ Chen Bingde, Chief of the General Staff of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), held a meeting

¹ “Chinese military delegation leaves for China-U.S. defense consultations”, *PLA Daily* (Online), 10 December 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-12/10/content_4350495.htm

² “Chinese defense minister meets Indonesian guest”, *PLA Daily* (Online), 7 December 2010, at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-12/07/content_4348236.htm

³ “China, Mongolia pledge closer military ties”, *PLA Daily* (Online), 7 December 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-12/07/content_4348646.htm

with the Chief of General Staff of Austrian army Edmund Entacher who was on an official tour to China last week. The two leaders met on December 8. On this occasion, Chen said that China-Austria military relations had developed smoothly through frequent high-level visits as well as active interaction in various fields such as training and logistics. He also appreciated Austria's support to the One-China principle.⁴ Later Edmund Entacher met with Chinese Defense Minister Liang Guanglie on December 9.⁵ However, during the week under review, Chinese Defense Minister Liang Guanglie also hosted Ricardo David, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines on December 8. On this occasion, he appreciated that China-Philippines military relations had scored sound cooperation in high-level contacts, personnel training and logistics.⁶

Meanwhile, Director-General of the Foreign Affairs Office of the Ministry of National Defense of the People's Republic of China Qian Lihua, has informed that the PLA has enhanced the friendship with the foreign militaries all over the world in the year 2010. It has expanded the exchanges and mutual learning with them in aspects like national defense and army building through carrying out high-level contacts, deepening military mutual trust, strengthening pragmatic cooperation and actively participating in activities of international peacekeeping, naval escort and humanitarian rescue, making new contributions to the maintenance of world and regional peace and stability. He reiterated that, in the year 2011 also, the PLA would be willing to join hands with the foreign militaries to jointly cope with various traditional and non-traditional security threats and make enduring efforts to keep peoples all over the world away from war and enjoy lasting peace. He was speaking on behalf of Chen Bingde, member of the Central Military Commission and Chief of General Staff of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), at the annual gathering of foreign military attachés corps in Beijing on 3 December 2010.⁷

Reports noted that Chinese naval escort taskforces in the Gulf of Aden and waters off Somali coast have escorted ships from more than 50 countries so far. It also noted that as many as 3,014 Chinese and foreign ships had been escorted by the Chinese naval escort taskforces till then. It claimed that the efforts put by the Chinese taskforces were receiving international appreciation. It quoted David Sedney, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, saying in the US Congress that the Chinese military exerted a lot of influences in the waters off the Somali

⁴ "China, Austria militaries seek further cooperation", *PLA Daily* (Online), 9 December 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-12/09/content_4349716.htm

⁵ "China, Austria seek closer military ties", *PLA Daily* (Online), 10 December 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-12/10/content_4350496.htm

⁶ "Chinese defense minister meets Philippine guest", *The PLA Daily* (Online), 9 December 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-12/09/content_4349717.htm

⁷ "Chen Bingde attends annual party of foreign military attachés corps", *PLA Daily* (Online), 6 December 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-12/06/content_4348119.htm

coast; and the crack Chinese sailors were in command of amazing tactics and in close cooperation with the navies of other countries including the US. Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, former NATO Secretary General, is also reported to have expressed his appreciation for the escort action of the Chinese Navy in the waters off the Somali coast. He is quoted as saying that the Chinese Navy has made significant contributions to anti-piracy in the international community.⁸

The media also noted that “Weishanhu” ocean-going comprehensive replenishment ship of the Navy of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) has participated in the escort missions of the 1st, 2nd, 5th and 6th Chinese naval escort taskforces in succession and performed escort missions for more than 500 days in the aggregate in the Gulf of Aden. According to the Chinese media, it has created records in material replenishment to the warships on the sea, duration of performing tasks consecutively and voyage.⁹

The visiting Chinese naval ship formation consisting of the “Kunlunshan” warship and the “Weishanhu” warship reached Al Manamah, capital city of Bahrain, on December 9. The ship has gone there to pay a 5-day-long good-will visit. Before arriving in Al Manamah, the formation had visited Saudi Arabia. Incidentally, this is the first time for the Chinese naval warships to visit Bahrain.¹⁰ On the other side, The “Xiangfan” guided-missile frigate of the PLA Navy sailed into a military port in Sanya, south China’s Hainan Province on 8 December 2010 after successfully accomplishing the 10th joint patrol of the Chinese and Vietnamese navies and the visit to Danang of Vietnam. It departed from Sanya on Tuesday 30 November for the Beibu Gulf to participate in the joint patrol. It also paid a visit to Danang City of Vietnam from December 4 to 7.¹¹

The media reported that the Chengdu Military Area Command (MAC) of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) had established 4 aviation military representative offices in Guiyang, Chongqing, Xichang and Lhasa in nearly one year. It is leading in the PLA to provide a complete coverage of the aviation military transportation system within a theatre. In collaboration with civilian airlines, the Chengdu MAC has also established the 1st “plateau emergency aviation transportation team” in the country, which has enhanced the emergency

⁸ “Chinese naval escort taskforces escort over 3,000 merchant ships”, *PLA Daily* (Online), 6 December 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-12/06/content_4348120.htm

⁹ “Chinese “Weishanhu” ship creates new records in open sea support”, *PLA Daily* (Online), 6 December 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-12/06/content_4348121.htm

¹⁰ “Chinese warships visit Bahrain”, *PLA Daily* (Online), 10 December 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-12/10/content_4350930.htm

¹¹ “Xiangfan” warship accomplishes 10th Sino-Vietnamese joint patrol in Beibu Gulf”, *PLA Daily* (Online), 9 December 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-12/09/content_4350189.htm.

maneuver and rapid projection ability of the troops. All cantonments of the Chengdu MAC are connected by the expressway network. Above 80% troop units stationed in Sichuan, Guizhou and Yunnan provinces and Chongqing municipality have easy accesses to expressways. The military requirements of the Chengdu MAC have been taken into account in the development of local express railway. It is important to note that the military needs were taken into account in the building of the 4-hour express railway transportation circle from Chengdu to the capital cities of neighboring provinces including Xi'an, Lanzhou, Guiyang, Kunming and Wuhan, and the 8-hour express railway transportation circle from Chengdu to Beijing and Tianjin municipalities and Hebei province, the Pearl River Delta and the Yangtze River Delta.¹²

JAPAN

- **Japan-United States conduct joint military exercises; Japan decides not to relax the arms export ban; declassified reports highlight debates over nuclear future of Japan**

In a very important development at the backdrop of the tensions on the Korean Peninsula the United States and Japan wrapped up seven days of joint military exercises. About 40,000 U.S. and Japanese military personnel took part in these exercises. This was called the largest joint field training exercise between the two nations. This was the 10th such exercise since 1986.¹³ Meanwhile, this exercise was temporarily suspended when two Russian reconnaissance planes were spotted over the Sea of Japan. This was stated by the Defense Ministry sources. The Self-Defense Forces and U.S. forces were conducting an exercise which included simulating the interception of ballistic missiles off Noto Peninsula. It was reported that the Russian planes flew from north to south over the area where the missile-intercepting exercise was being conducted, and they continued to fly over the Sea of Japan for a few hours after that.¹⁴

On the domestic front, the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) executives have decided that they will not rule out the possibility of penalizing the ruling party's powerbroker Ichiro Ozawa if he ignores a request to explain to parliament about a money scandal involving him.¹⁵

¹² "Military transportation ability improved significantly in southwest theatre", *PLA Daily* (Online), 8 December 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-12/08/content_4349552.htm.

¹³ "Japan, U.S. wrap up joint military exercises" *News on Japan*, December 10, 2010 at <http://newsonjapan.com/html/newsdesk/article/85643.php>

¹⁴ "Japan, U.S. halt drill after Russian spy planes spotted" *News on Japan*, December 9, 2010 at <http://newsonjapan.com/html/newsdesk/article/85614.php>

¹⁵ "DPJ may penalize Ozawa, trying to deepen ties with New Komeito party+", *Associated Press*, December 9, 2010 at http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9K0DQOO0&show_article=1

There are also reports which suggest that the government's decision not to relax the nation's de facto arms export ban in new defense guidelines will result in Japan being left out of joint projects involving defense equipment with nations other than the United States. There are two sides involving this development while some in the government have voiced concern the nation's defense industry will lag behind in technology, others have said the decision may negatively affect relations with the United States.¹⁶

In other developments, according to reports, Japanese declassified diplomatic documents have shown that the Foreign Ministry of Japan had long debates over the issue whether to give up the right to possess nuclear weapons. This was prior to Japan becoming a signatory of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1970. The 15 documents released by the ministry which include the diplomatic policy guidelines in 1969, suggest that the ministry was wavering between leaving an option to arm Japan with nuclear weapons in the future and joining the NPT.¹⁷

SOUTHEAST ASIA

- **Singapore Official's comments on neighbouring countries creates furore; Vietnam-China Friendship Festival in Hanoi; Indonesia holds terror suspect Abu Tholut; Indonesian cleric faces terrorism charges; Malaysia to reach 100 percent literacy rate by 2016**

According to the Wikileaks revelations, Singaporean diplomats have made comments on the leaders of some close Asian allies, including neighbouring Malaysia, calling them corrupt, incompetent or stupid. Confidential diplomatic notes given by the Web site to Australia's Fairfax media group contained unflattering assessments of key figures in Malaysia, Thailand, India and Japan.¹⁸

The Vietnam- China festival was flagged- off in Hanoi on December 11. The festival presented an overview of friendship activities launched by the two countries during the Vietnam-China Friendship Year 2010 as well as the

¹⁶ "Fallout of keeping arms export ban / Choice could lead to lag in technology development, harm ties with U.S.", *The Yomiuri Shimbun*, December 9, 2010 at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T101208005063.htm>

¹⁷ "Declassified documents show Japan balked at signing nuclear weapons treaty in 1970" *Mainichi*, November 30, 2010 at <http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/news/20101130p2a00m0na012000c.html>

¹⁸ "Singapore Patronizes allies in Wikileaks cables", *Jakarta Globe*, 12 December, 2010, <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/home/singapore-patronizes-allies-in-wikileaks-cables/411326>

initiatives for the propaganda and education on the traditional friendship between the two countries.¹⁹

Meanwhile, Abu Tholut who is suspected of plotting attacks in Jakarta and assassination of political leader has been arrested by Indonesian authorities. Abu Tholat is suspected of helping to set up training camps for terrorists in Aceh province of Indonesia. In 2004, Tholut was imprisoned for seven years, but was later released on grounds of good behaviour.²⁰ However, the Indonesian police have charged Abu Bakar Ba'asyir with inciting terrorism in the country, a charge the cleric has been denying. He has served a 26 month jail term earlier on similar grounds.²¹

In other developments, according to the Deputy Rural and Regional Minister of Malaysia, the country is expected to achieve 100 percent literacy rate for adults by the year 2016. According to the reports, literacy rate in Malaysia is currently at 96 percent.²²

B. CENTRAL ASIA & RUSSIA

- **President Medvedev visits Poland for Russia-Polish talks aimed at normalization in the relationship; President Medvedev hopeful of clearing up all of the difficulties between Russia and Poland; Russia-EU Summit held in Brussels; Russian-EU talks on the Russia's joining the World Trade Organization (WTO) completed; European Union supports Russia's bid to join WTO; Kazakhstan-Russia to work with a Joint Action Plan for 2011-2012**

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev visited Poland on Monday which is a sign of improvement in the long-troubled relationship between nations.²³ Russia and Poland have decided to establish normal relations by putting aside their history of differences which was mired in mutual distrust and conflict. Welcoming the Russian President, Polish President Bronislaw Komorowski noted that there is a "the need to normalise our relations, and we have all the conditions for doing this today, as we just discussed in our one-on-one meeting."²⁴ It was agreed

¹⁹ "Vietnam- China Friendship Festival 2010 Launched in Hanoi" , 12 December, 2010 <http://english.vovnews.vn/Home/VietnamChina-Friendship-Festival-2010-launched-in-Hanoi/201012/122257.vov>

²⁰ "Indonesia holds 'terror trainer' Abu Tholat", *BBC News*, 10 December, 2010

²¹ "Indonesian Cleric Ba'asyir facing terrorism charges", *BBC News*, 12 December, 2010

²² "Malaysia expected to reach 100 percent adult literacy rate by 2016", *Bername News*, 12 December, 2010, <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsindex.php?id=549519>

²³ "Medvedev visits Poland to boost ties", *The News Today*, December 6, 2010 at http://www.newstoday.com.bd/index.php?option=details&news_id=14190&date=2010-12-07

²⁴ "Speech at Russian-Polish talks in expanded format", *President of Russia: Events*, December 6, 2010 at <http://eng.pda.kremlin.ru/transcripts/1421>

upon that normalization in the relationship can be achieved through mutual consultation and with full attention and consideration for each other. There is also need to intensify economic cooperation especially on bilateral trade and also to carry out joint projects in the future. Both the leaders also discussed such as European security issues and opportunities for Russia's cooperation with the EU and NATO as well as supervision of humanitarian cooperation, in particular stepping up youth exchanges, cooperation in economic, energy, and transport sectors. Both the leaders oversaw the signing of several agreements, including a declaration on cooperation in economic modernisation, intergovernmental agreements on sea transport and cooperation in protecting the Baltic Sea from pollution by oil and other harmful substances, and a protocol of intent on establishing centres for dialogue and harmony in Russia and Poland.²⁵ Agreements related to postal and electronic communications as well as on cooperation between the two countries' prosecutor generals' offices were also signed two countries.²⁶ Reports noted that Katyn massacre case also featured in the talks between the two sides. It would be worth noting that Soviet secret police NKVD had allegedly carried out Katyn massacre of more than 20,000 Polish nationals in April–May 1940.

However, President Medvedev reassured that this cooperation will continue and will help to clear up all of the difficulties in the two countries' relations.²⁷ In the Russian-Polish Public Forum, President Medvedev presented the Order of Friendship to the Polish filmmaker Andrzej Wajda, for his outstanding contribution to the development of cultural ties between Russia and Poland.²⁸

In another significant development, the 26th EU-Russia Summit was held in Brussels on December 7. This summit follows from the previous summit held on May 31 – June 1, 2010 at Rostov-on-Don in Russia. President Dmitry Medvedev headed the Russian delegation, and the European Union was represented by President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy, and President of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso.

During the Summit, official announcement was made on the completion of talks between EU and Russia on the latter joining the WTO. Russia has taken a significant step in its bid to join the World Trade Organization with the signing of a 'milestone'²⁹ agreement with the European Union. A memorandum of

²⁵ "Russian-Polish talks", *President of Russia: Events*, December 6, 2010 at <http://eng.pda.kremlin.ru/news/1422>

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ "Russian-Polish Public Forum", *President of Russia: Events*, December 6, 2010 at <http://eng.pda.kremlin.ru/news/1424>

²⁹ "EU Backs Russia's WTO Bid, New Europe", 12 December 2010, <http://www.neurope.eu/articles/EU-backs-Russias-WTO-bid/103870.php>

understanding was signed by Russian Economic Development Minister Elvira Nabiullina and EU Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht. The memorandum of understanding removes one of the last major obstacles in Moscow's nearly two-decade long effort to join the world trade body. Earlier this year, Russia achieved the backing of the United States for its bid. After this, the EU had remained only major block which opposed to Russia's bid to become a member of WTO.

However, in other developments during the Russia-EU Summit, one of the key discussions was on easing the visa regime for short trips by Russian citizens to the European Union. In this regard, milestones were set for the subsequent integrated work in this area, which includes taking into account the draft agreement on abolishing visa requirements for Russian and EU citizens, which was handed to the EU at the summit in Rostov-on-Don.³⁰ President Medvedev utilised the occasion to relay the measures taken to improve the financial and economic climate and encourage investment. Discussions were held on a broad range of issues such as global economic situation and ways to overcome the effects of the global economic crisis, on the implementation of decisions made at the G20 summit to reform the global financial system, on Euro-Atlantic security including in the context of results of Russia-NATO Council meeting in Lisbon and decisions made at the OSCE summit in Astana.³¹

In other developments in the region, reports noted that Russia and Kazakhstan have come up with a joint plan of action for the next two years that will give a boost to the strategic relationship between the two countries based on 'friendship, good neighbourhood partnership and mutual benefit.' The agreement was signed in Moscow by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and Kazakh President Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev³². This was in fact the tenth meeting between the two heads of states in this year.

C. WEST ASIA

IRAN

• Iran and 5+1 powers met in Geneva to discuss nuclear issue of the Islamic Republic of Iran; Both sides agreed to cooperate on common ground

Iran's Chief nuclear negotiator, Saeed Jalili, has stated that "both sides (Iran and 5+1) have agreed that the talks will be about cooperation on common ground." Jalili statements came after the end of the two-day talks with the representatives of the six major powers in Geneva, which had resumed after a

³⁰ "EU-Russia summit held in Brussels", *President of Russia: Events*, December 7, 2010 at <http://eng.pda.kremlin.ru/news/1433>

³¹ Ibid

³² "Meeting with President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev", *President of Russia website*, December 10, 2010, <http://eng.pda.kremlin.ru/news/1457>.

14-month hiatus. The two sides have also agreed to hold the next round of talks in Istanbul in late January. Jalili also articulated that the next round of negotiations will focus on finding common ground for cooperation, but Iran will not negotiate on its inalienable rights, including uranium enrichment.³³

³³ "Iran-5+1 talks to focus on common ground," *Tehran Times*, December 8, 2010, at http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=231756