

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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1. COUNTRY REVIEW

A. SOUTH ASIA

PAKISTAN

- **Taliban Commander Baradar captured in Karachi, Holbroke says it is a “significant development”; Biden: 12 top al Qaeda militants killed in drone attacks; PM Gilani ahead of Foreign Secretary-level talks: “Vibes emanating from the other side have not been encouraging”: Gilani meets Chief Justice Chaudhury; Musharraf expresses a desire to return to active politics**

US Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke stated that the capture of Taliban commander Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar in Karachi in early February was a “significant development”.¹ The CIA on its part was reportedly not satisfied with the joint interrogation of Baradar in the presence of ISI officials in Pakistan and wanted to take him to an American prison in Afghanistan. Pakistan Interior Minister Rehman Malik confirmed that Baradar would be sent to Afghanistan after investigations in Pakistan were over.²

US Vice President Joe Biden meanwhile stated that at least 12 top al Qaeda militants have been killed by US forces in drone attacks on militant hideouts. Biden noted that their elimination had helped bring out several of their associates in the open. In a related development, a report published by the New America Foundation confirmed that drone attacks have been successfully used in the war against the Taliban.³

Pakistan meanwhile has expressed its unhappiness to US Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke on India’s position ahead of the Foreign Secretary-level talks. PM Gilani reportedly told Holbrooke that “the vibes emanating from the other side have not been encouraging.”⁴

In domestic developments, Prime Minister Gilani met with Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhury on February 17 to discuss issues which could lead to a possible confrontation between the executive and the Judiciary.⁵

In other developments, former President Pervez Musharraf, speaking at the Chatham House in London on February 15 expressed a desire to return to active politics in Pakistan.⁶

¹ ‘Baradar’s arrest ‘significant development’: Holbrooke’, *Daily Times*, February 18, 2010 at http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\02\18\story_18-2-2010_pg1_10

² Anwar Iqbal, ‘CIA wants Baradar sent to Afghanistan’, *Dawn*, February 21, 2010 at <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/06-cia-wants-baradar-sent-to-afghanistan-120-rs-05>

³ Anwar Iqbal, ‘Biden says twelve Al-Qaida leaders killed’, *Dawn*, February 15, 2010 at <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/19-12-al-qaeda-leaders%2C-100-associates-killed-biden-520-hh-03>

⁴ ‘Indian stance on talks not encouraging, US told’, *The News*, February 19, 2010 at http://thenews.jang.com.pk/arc_default.asp

⁵ ‘Gilani surrenders to CJ’, *The News*, February 18, 2010 at http://thenews.jang.com.pk/arc_default.asp

BHUTAN

- **Climate change to be the theme of Thimpu SAARC Summit; Japan providing funds for cyclone Aila relief and rehabilitation; Bangladeshi products to attract zero-tariff on entry into Bhutan; Ratan Tata meets PM Thinley, to expand their presence in Bhutan**

Bhutan's Foreign Minister Lyonpo Ugyen Tshering, on a visit to Sri Lanka from February 18-19 met his counterpart Rohitha Bogollagama and discussed a range of issues pertaining to the forthcoming SAARC summit. Climate Change will be the theme of the summit.⁷ The issue of locating the Secretariat for the SAARC Development Fund (SDF) in Thimphu was also discussed.

Japan is to provide Bhutan a grant of \$91,867 for work relating to reinforcing the banks of the Duchu and Pachu rivers in Paro that were seriously damaged by cyclone Aila in May 2009. The grant is part of the \$2 million commitment made by the Japanese for relief and reconstruction activities.⁸ The Japanese government is also involved in rural road construction activities having provided a grant of \$6 million.⁹

As part of the preferential trade agreement between Bangladesh and Bhutan, Bangladeshi products will now attract zero-tariff on entry into Bhutan. As part of the terms of the agreement, focus areas where greater synergies could be achieved include housing, energy and power, cement, garments, packaging and tea.¹⁰

The Chairman of the Tata group Ratan Tata met with PM Lyonchhen Jigmi Thinley and expressed an interest in increasing his company's presence in the country beyond the hydropower sector. PM Thinley welcomed the move and stated that "Bhutan aimed to be economically self-reliant through investments in hydropower, tourism, organic branding and positioning itself as a regional service hub in the fields of finance, education and health."¹¹

In other developments, the chairman of the United Revolutionary Front of Bhutan, Ramesh Subba was shot dead in Jhapa, Nepal. Reports indicated that the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) might have played a role in the

⁶ 'Gen Musharraf hints at return to politics', *Daily Times*, February 16, 2010 at http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\02\16\story_16-2-2010_pg1_3

⁷ 'Lanka assures support for SAARC Summit in Bhutan', *The Kuensel*, February 22, 2010 at <http://www.dailynews.lk/2010/02/22/news11.asp>

⁸ 'Japan grant to strengthen Paro riverbanks', *The Kuensel*, February 22, 2010 at <http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=14780>

⁹ 'Japanese aid for farm road construction', *Bhutan Times*, February 14, 2010 at http://www.bhutanimes.bt/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1843&Itemid=1

¹⁰ 'Bangladesh offered zero-tariff entry to Bhutan', *Nation*, February 18, 2010 at <http://nation.ittefaq.com/issues/2010/02/18/news0216.htm>

¹¹ 'Tata interested in bolstering its presence in Bhutan', *Bhutan Times*, February 18, 2010 at http://www.bhutanimes.bt/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1842&Itemid=1

killing.¹² Subba had announced the establishment of URFB in Samste district and declared an armed rebellion for the establishment of a republic of Bhutan.

B. EAST ASIA

CHINA

- **PLA Deputy Chief meets with UK Chief of Defence Staff; CMC Vice Chief urges PLA to “improve the capability of accomplishing diversified military tasks ...”; Guided-missile attack and defense exercise conducted: Chinese and Russian frontier defense troops hold joint exercises; Volume on Military Space Technology published**

The visiting Deputy Chief of General Staff of the PLA Ma Xiaotian met with the Chief of British Defence Staff Sir Jock Stirrup and pledged to take steps to further strengthen bilateral ties.¹³

The Vice chairman of the Central Military Commission Guo Boxiong, speaking on the occasion of Spring Festival at an aviation division urged that “all troop units of the PLA should expand and deepen the readiness of military struggle, actively carry forward the transformation of military training, constantly improve the capability of accomplishing diversified military tasks with the capability of winning local war under information-based conditions at the core, try to create a new situation in the army building from the new starting point and resolutely fulfill various tasks entrusted by the CPC and the people.”¹⁴

A brigade of the Second Artillery Force (SAF) conducted a guided-missile attack-and-defense exercise under information-based conditions in a mountainous region.¹⁵ Chinese and Russian frontier defense troops also conducted a joint exercise along the Argun River east of Inner Mongolia from January 25-26.¹⁶

A volume on Military Space Technology was published by the Publishing House of the Encyclopedia of China. The volume has been compiled over a period of 5 years by more than 150 experts belonging to military and civilian units dealing with space issues. The General Armaments Department of the PLA facilitated the publication.¹⁷

¹² ‘Bhutan refugee shot dead’, *The Himalayan Times*, February 20, 2010 at <http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=Bhutan+refugee+shot+dead&NewsID=228875>

¹³ ‘Britain, China Pledge Closer Military Ties’, *PLA Daily*, February 4, 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-02/04/content_4131603.htm

¹⁴ ‘Guo Boxiong Urges to Create New Situation in Army Building’, *PLA Daily*, February 10, 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-02/10/content_4135590.htm

¹⁵ ‘Beijing MAC Creates Military-Civilian Integrated Equipment Support System’, *PLA Daily*, February 21, 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-02/21/content_4139159.htm

¹⁶ ‘Sino-Russian First Joint Patrol Conducted along Boundary River’, *PLA Daily*, February 5, 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-02/05/content_4132833.htm

¹⁷ ‘Military Space Technology of Chinese Military Encyclopedia Published’, *PLA Daily*, February 4, 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-02/04/content_4132292.htm

JAPAN

- **Japanese officials briefed on ongoing US nuclear posture review; Historic Japanese maps not including Korea's Dokdo islands presented potentially weakening Japanese claims; Japan and Australia set to sign a defence logistics agreement**

Japan and the United States held discussions in Washington on the ongoing US nuclear posture review. The issue of US nuclear guarantees to Japan was also reportedly discussed.¹⁸ Meanwhile, in what is being described as the worst crisis in decades in Japan-US relations, the controversy over the relocation of the Futenma air base in Okinawa continued even as the two sides celebrated the 50th anniversary of the US-Japan Security Treaty in January.¹⁹

In a development that could weaken Japan's claim on Dokdo islands, Japanese maps that do not include Korea's Dokdo islets as part of Japanese territory were unveiled at the Northeast Asian History Foundation.²⁰

In other developments, reports indicated that Japan and Australia will sign the acquisition and cross-servicing agreement early next month in an attempt to strengthen security ties.²¹

SOUTHEAST ASIA

- **ONGC and GAIL to invest in China's pipeline in Myanmar; Independent intelligence unit of Assam Rifles to be deployed along Myanmar border; UN envoy in Myanmar to probe human rights situation**

Reports noted that the government of India has given the go ahead for ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL) and GAIL India to invest in a pipeline project currently being undertaken by China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) in Myanmar. This pipeline is to transport gas from two offshore blocs in Myanmar (A-1 and A-3) to Yunnan province in China. While OVL will have 8.35 percent stake, GAIL has been permitted to invest 4.17 percent.²²

Meanwhile, reports noted that an independent intelligence unit of Assam Rifles will be deployed along the Myanmar border to boost intelligence support in the region.²³

¹⁸ 'Japan, U.S. hold working-level talks over nuclear umbrella', *Associated Press*, February 19, 2010 at http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9DV6GQO0&show_article=1

¹⁹ 'US-Japan Ties in Question over Air Base', *The Diplomat*, February 17, 2010 at http://www.the-diplomat.com/001f1281_r.aspx?artid=394

²⁰ 'More Maps Weaken Japan's Claim to Dokdo', *Chosun*, February 18, 2010 at http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2010/02/18/2010021800465.html

²¹ 'Defence ties with Tokyo to be strengthened', *smh.com*, February 15, 2010 at <http://www.smh.com.au/environment/defence-ties-with-tokyo-to-be-strengthened-20100214-nzf4.html>

²² 'ONGC, GAIL can invest in China's Myanmar's gas project', *Indo Burma News*, February 19, 2010 at <http://www.indoburmanews.net/archives-1/2010/february/ongc-gail-can-invest-in-china-s-myanmar-gas-project>

²³ 'Assam Rifles to deploy spy unit along Myanmar border', *Indo Burma News*, February 18, 2010 at <http://www.indoburmanews.net/archives-1/2010/february/assam-rifles-to-deploy-spy-unit-along-myanmar-border>

In other developments, UN envoy Tomas Ojea Quintana arrived in Myanmar to examine the human rights situation ahead of national elections to be held in the current year. During his five-day visit, Quintana met with diplomats, UN staff and lawyers of detained pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi.²⁴ Quintana also met with Tin Oo, the 83-year old Vice Chairman of the National League for Democracy (NLD) after the latter was released from detention.²⁵

C. WEST ASIA

IRAN

- **IAEA accuses Iran of developing nuclear weapons; Supreme Leader denies the charges; Iran launches first home-made naval destroyer**

The IAEA in its latest report accused Tehran of working towards developing a nuclear-armed missile, even as the US warned Iran of “consequences” for disregarding international demands to stop its atomic program. The report noted that Iran had conducted work related to triggering mechanism of a nuclear weapon.²⁶ Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei however denied charges that Iran was developing nuclear weapons. He added that Iranian “beliefs bar us from using such weapons.”²⁷

Iran meanwhile launched its first domestically made guided-missile destroyer – *Jamaran*, equipped with anti-ship and surface-to-air missiles as well as torpedoes and naval cannons. The ship has a top speed of 30 knots and can carry 120 to 140 personnel.²⁸

IRAQ

- **Suicide blast kills 11 in western Anbar province; Iraq-Turkey re-start railway service**

At least 11 people were killed and 20 injured in a suicide bomb attack at a checkpoint near government offices and courts in the city of Ramadi in western Anbar province. Violence has been steadily rising ahead of the general elections scheduled for March. In late December 2009, twin suicide blasts in the city killed 25 people and severely injured Governor Qassim Mohammed.²⁹

²⁴ ‘UN Rights envoy arrives in Burma’, *Bangkok Post*, February 15, 2010 at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/168498/un-human-rights-envoy-arrives-in-burma-official>

²⁵ ‘UN envoy meets Suu Kyi aide’, *Bangkok Post*, February 18, 2010 at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/168921/un-envoy-meets-freed-suu-kyi-aide>

²⁶ ‘IAEA fears Iran working now on nuclear warhead’, *Khaleej Times*, February 19, 2010 at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2010/February/middleeast_February497.xml§ion=middleeast

²⁷ ‘Iran leader denies nuclear claims’, *BBC News*, February 19, 2010 at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8523340.stm

²⁸ ‘Iran launches first locally built naval destroyer’, *Khaleej Times*, February 19, 2010 at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle09.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2010/February/middleeast_February499.xml§ion=middleeast

²⁹ ‘Deadly explosion hits Iraqi city’, *BBC News*, February 18, 2010 at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8521475.stm

In other developments, a railway line linking northern Iraq and Turkey reopened after a seven-year gap following the US-led invasion. The move is being seen as an effort to boost economic and political relations with neighbouring countries.³⁰

II. DEFENCE REVIEW

NATIONAL

- **Mos Pallam Raju: Defence offsets worth Rs.49,000 crores to be finalised in next couple of years**

In a speech at the conference organised by the PHD Chamber at DefExpo 2010, Minister of State for Defence Pallam Raju stated that India will finalise defence offsets worth Rs. 49, 000 crores in the next few years. He pointed out that “41 offset contracts” were at various stages of negotiations. The MoD has so far signed 10 offset contracts worth Rs. 8,200 crores. Apart from state-owned DPSUs and OFs, 31 private companies have also received offsets.³¹

- **Akash missiles to be deployed in North-East from 2011**

Reports noted that India will deploy eight squadrons of surface-to-air Akash missile in the North-East. The deployment is expected to cost over Rs. 6,100 crores by 2015, with the first squadron being expected to come up by 2011. The move is being seen as an effort to “counter China’s massive build-up of military infrastructure all along the unresolved 4057-km Line of Actual Control (LAC).”

The Indian Army is also raising two infantry mountain divisions and an artillery brigade in Arunachal Pradesh. The infantry division, which will have 1260 officers and 35,011 soldiers, is expected to become operational in 2012. The IAF is raising two squadrons of Su-30 MKI aircraft, in Tezpur and Chabua in Assam.³²

- **Army wants to ‘dump’ INSAS rifle**

Reports noted that the Indian Army wants to ‘dump’ the indigenous assault rifle INSAS, developed by DRDO. A global RFP (request for proposal) has been issued by the Army for a new assault rifle, stipulating that the rifle’s weight needs to be lighter than 3.5 kg. The INSAS, which weighs 4.1 kg, may find it difficult to compete in the tender, unless some modification is carried out. The

³⁰ ‘Iraq-Turkey railway reopens after 7-year halt’, *Khaleej Times*, February 19, 2010 at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle09.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2010/February/middleeast_February503.xml§ion=middleeast

³¹ Government of India, Press Information Bureau, ‘Defence imports affects National Security, Foreign Policy: Pallam Raju’, Press Release (Ministry of Defence), February 16, 2010 at <http://pib.nic.in/release/release.asp?relid=57904&kwd=>

³² Rajar Pandit, ‘India to deploy Akash missiles in North-East to deter China’, *The Economic Times*, February 16, 2010

Army's reported lack of enthusiasm for INSAS is due to the fact that "it does not measure up its requirements."³³

³³ Josy Joseph, 'Now, army wants to dump the indigenous Insas rifle', *Daily News & Analysis*, February 18, 2010 at http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report_now-army-wants-to-dump-the-indigenous-insas-rifle_1349259