

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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1. COUNTRY REVIEW

A. SOUTH ASIA

AFGHANISTAN

- Karzai on a visit to India points out the “common struggle against terrorism and extremism” being waged by both the countries, expresses gratitude for Indian help in Afghan reconstruction, assures to take all possible measures to provide security to Indian citizens in Afghanistan; At SAARC Summit in Bhutan, Karzai urges greater collective resolve to fight terrorism; Pak Army officials: Flawed US strategy has strengthened Taliban; Afghan Interior Ministry: Civilian casualties on the rise; Pentagon: Violence levels in Afghanistan have gone up by 87 percent during October 2009-March 2010; Gen. Petraeus visits Kandahar

President Hamid Karzai was on a two day visit to India from April 26. In his talks with PM Dr. Manmohan Singh and other Indian leaders, he apprised them of efforts to reach out to the Taliban for a negotiated settlement of the Afghan conflict. After his meeting with Dr. Singh, Mr. Karzai told presspersons that they discussed "reintegration and reconciling of those elements of the Taliban and others who have accepted the Afghan Constitution, who are not part of al Qaeda, who are not part of any terrorist network."¹ Pointing out the “common struggle against terrorism and extremism” being waged by India and Afghanistan, the Afghan President expressed his gratitude to India for assisting in the reconstruction activities in Afghanistan. Dr. Singh stated that India remained “committed to assist the people of Afghanistan.”² The Indian PM also added that President Karzai had assured him that the government of Afghanistan will take “all possible measures for the security of Indians.”³ In a joint statement released at the end of the visit, both countries expressed grave concern over the threat posed by terrorism to Afghanistan's national development and resolved to work with the international community to combat the forces of terrorism.⁴

At the 16th South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Summit in Thimpu, Bhutan, President Karzai stated that the "most challenging threats we all face are that of terrorism, extremism, narcotics and organised crime" and urged for greater collective resolve to deal with these issues. He added that the SAARC Regional Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism and its Additional Protocol provided an excellent platform for cooperation. President Karzai also expressed confidence in the implementation of South Asia

¹ 'India, Afghanistan discuss Taliban, regional security', *Reuters*, April 26, 2010 at <http://in.reuters.com/article/southAsiaNews/idINIndia-48004420100426?sp=true>

² 'Fight against terrorism dominates Singh-Karzai talks', *The Hindu*, April 26, 2010 at <http://beta.thehindu.com/news/article410443.ece>

³ 'Karzai assures safety of Indians', *Pajhwok Afghan News*, April 26, 2010 at <http://www.pajhwok.com/viewstory.asp?lng=eng&id=93157>

⁴ 'Karzai assures full security for Indians', *The Hindu*, April 27, 2010 at <http://beta.thehindu.com/todays-paper/article411402.ece>

Free Trade Area (SAFTA). He noted that the signing of the SAARC Agreement on Trade in Services would significantly help member nations to move towards trade facilitation and cooperation.⁵

Reports quoted senior Pakistan Army officials as stating that the Americans committed a tactical error when they started their campaign in Afghanistan by allowing militants to escape across the border into Pakistan's tribal agencies. This they pointed out led to the Taliban nearly taking over Pakistan's tribal regions.⁶

The Afghan Interior Ministry stated that civilian casualties were on the rise in Afghanistan even as US and NATO operations continue with renewed vigour. The ministry reported 173 civilian deaths during the period from March 21-April 21, which was a 33 percent increase over the previous month.⁷ A Pentagon report for US Congress also noted that violence levels in Afghanistan had soared by over 87 percent between October 2009 and March 2010, compared with the same period a year ago. The report also noted that support for the Karzai-led government had reduced considerably.⁸

In other developments, the head of US Central Command Gen. David Petraeus visited areas around Kandahar even as thousands of US, NATO and Afghan forces prepare for an offensive against the Taliban stronghold.

PAKISTAN

- **FM Qureshi: 'Elimination of terrorism' a key goal for Pakistan; Manmohan Singh and Yousaf Gilani decide to 'revive' dialogue process; US reaffirms that its relationship with Pakistan is "absolutely vital"; US to supply two P-3 Orion surveillance aircraft to Pakistan; US State Department: India and Pakistan peace a "high priority"; UN urges Western countries to pour aid into areas liberated from Taliban influence**

Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi, addressing the 32nd session of the SAARC Council of Ministers in Thimpu on April 27, stated that the 'elimination of terrorism' from the region was the key goal of Pakistan and urged regional cooperation to achieve the objective. Qureshi also raised issues of water and energy security during the Summit.⁹

⁵ 'Karzai sees terror as key threat to Asia', *Pajhwok Afghan News*, April 28, 2010 at <http://www.pajhwok.com/viewstory.asp?lng=eng&id=93281>

⁶ 'Flawed US strategy strengthened Taliban, says Pakistan Army', *The Hindu*, May 2, 2010 at <http://beta.thehindu.com/news/international/article419994.ece>

⁷ 'Afghan civilian deaths are rising, government says', *Associated Press*, May 2, 2010 at <http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5hvWEqwq3CrRvaQCmt21MfoYhjZJQD9FELH481>

⁸ 'Pentagon Report Shows Afghanistan Violence Up 87 Percent, Support for Karzai Low', *Fox News*, April 29, 2010 at <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2010/04/29/pentagon-report-shows-afghanistan-violence-percent-support-karzai-low/>

⁹ 'Elimination of terrorism Pakistan's primary job', *Daily Times*, April 28, 2010 at http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\04\28\story_28-4-2010_pg7_7

PM Dr. Manmohan Singh and his Pakistani counterpart Yousaf Gilani met on the sidelines of the SAARC summit and decided to 'revive' the dialogue process. Foreign Minister Qureshi told reporters that the talks were positive and that the framework for the renewed talks would be decided at the Foreign Secretary-level talks in consultation with respective Foreign Ministers.¹⁰

US Undersecretary of Defence for Policy Michele Flournoy testifying in the US Congress regarding the funding on counter-terrorism operations in Pakistan asserted that the US relationship with Pakistan was "absolutely vital" not only strategically but also on key areas like water and energy security.¹¹ The US also announced its decision to supply two P-3 Orion surveillance aircraft to Pakistan to assist its security forces in the fight against militancy.¹² Another senior official of the US State Department in a Congressional hearing on April 29 stated that resolving tensions between India and Pakistan was an issue of "high priority".¹³

In other developments, UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for Assistance to Pakistan, Jean-Maurice Ripert stated that it was essential that western donors pour aid to support people in areas where the Taliban has recently been defeated so that the people will not turn back to supporting the Taliban.¹⁴

B. EAST ASIA

CHINA

- **2010 marks 20th anniversary of China's participation in UN peacekeeping operations**

2010 marks the 20th Anniversary of the participation of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in UN peacekeeping operations. China has contributed more than 15,000 peacekeepers to 18 UN peacekeeping missions worldwide. Currently, around 1,960 Chinese peacekeepers are serving in 9 UN peacekeeping mission areas with the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO).¹⁵ In a

¹⁰ 'Pakistan, India agree to revive dialogue', *Daily Times*, April 30, 2010 at http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\04\30\story_30-4-2010_pg1_1

¹¹ 'Ties with Pakistan 'absolutely vital': US', *The News*, May 2, 2010 at http://www.thenews.com.pk/arc_default.asp?arc_date=5/2/2010

¹² Anwar Iqbal, 'Pakistan gets two P-3 surveillance aircraft', *Dawn*, May 1, 2010 at <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/pakistan-gets-two-p3-surveillance-aircraft-150>

¹³ 'US focused on reducing Indo-Pak tensions, says State Department', *Daily Times*, April 30, 2010 at http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\04\30\story_30-4-2010_pg1_2

¹⁴ 'Aid must follow military gains: UN', *Dawn*, April 28, 2010 at <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/aid-must-follow-military-gains-un-840>

¹⁵ 'PLA contributes a lot to UN peacekeeping operations', *PLA Daily*, April 25, 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-04/26/content_4194204.htm

related development, 273 officers and men of the 10th batch of Chinese peacekeeping troops left for Liberia on April 28.¹⁶

In other developments, PLA's National Defense University (NDU) hosted more than 30 Chinese and foreign senior officers. A discussion on 'core values' of servicemen was held.¹⁷

JAPAN

- **Chinese naval helicopter flies close to Japanese naval vessels, Beijing says it was a 'necessary defence measure' against Japanese surveillance activities; Taiwan and Japan sign MOU to advance cooperation across different fields; More than 90,000 Okinawans stage protest over the proposed relocation of a US Marine Corps airbase; Japan to open its first overseas army base in Djibouti**

Analysts noted that the appeasement policy towards China being followed by the administration of PM Yukio Hatoyama was likely responsible for aggressive Chinese naval activities in the seas around Japan. A Chinese Navy helicopter reportedly approached close to Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force destroyers on two occasions in April.¹⁸ Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa stated that Beijing informed Tokyo that one of its navy helicopters flew around a Japanese destroyer off Okinawa Prefecture as a "necessary defense measure" in response to Japanese surveillance activities.¹⁹

Taiwan and Japan signed a memorandum of understanding to advance cooperation and exchanges across a wide range of sectors, including economic, legal, cultural, security, environmental, technological and scholastic ties. The development signified an improvement in their bilateral cooperation after a period of tension stemming from competing sovereignty claims. The MOU was signed between Taiwan's East Asia Relations Commission and Japan's mission in Taiwan, the Interchange Association.²⁰

More than 90,000 Okinawans staged a protest over the proposed relocation of a US Marine Corps airbase. Reports noted that the development could have implications for ability of US to effectively balance Chinese naval power in East Asia and was indicative of the strain in US-Japan relations following the election of Mr. Hatoyama's Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ).²¹

¹⁶ 'Chinese Peacekeeping Troops Leave for Liberia', *PLA Daily*, April 25, 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-04/29/content_4211393.htm

¹⁷ 'NDU Strengthens Joint Training of Chinese and Foreign Officers', *PLA Daily*, April 26, 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-04/29/content_4211648.htm

¹⁸ 'China actions due to govt weakness', *The Yomiuri Shimbun*, May 1, 2010 at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T100430004385.htm>

¹⁹ 'China defends navy chopper approach as 'necessary measure': minister', *Associated Press*, April 22, 2010 at http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9F8FUDO0&show_article=1

²⁰ 'Taiwan, Japan sign memorandum to enhance ties', *Associated Press*, April 30, 2010 at http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9FD85I00&show_article=1

²¹ 'Japan base row causes regional ripples', *Asia Times Online*, April 30, 2010 at <http://atimes.com/atimes/Japan/LD30Dh01.html>

Reports also noted that the US rejected the idea of relocating the Futenma base to Tokunoshima Island, as favored by the Hatoyama administration.²²

In other developments, Japan has decided to open its first overseas army base in the strategically located African state of Djibouti, at the southern end of the Red Sea on the Gulf of Aden, to counter rising piracy in the region. The \$40 million base is expected to be completed by early 2011 and is part of international efforts to curb pirate attacks by gunmen from Somalia.²³

C. WEST ASIA

IRAN

- **Russia says new sanctions against Iran possible as long as Iran does not “demonstrate the required restraint”; Clinton warns Iran and Syria against supplying militants in south Lebanon and Gaza with sophisticated weaponry; 14 Republican Senators urge Clinton not to give visa to Ahmadinejad to attend the NPT RevCon**

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev in one his strongest attacks on Iran’s nuclear programme stated that as long as Iran was “not demonstrating the required restraint and is behaving quite irresponsibly,” Russia would support further UN Security Council sanctions against Tehran, if all other means were exhausted. Medvedev’s comments reflected Moscow’s impatience at Tehran failing to accept a UN-brokered nuclear fuel swap deal involving Russia.²⁴

In the light of reports that Syria transferred long-range missiles to Hezbollah, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton warned Iran and Syria to desist from such activities and added that America’s commitment to Israel’s security was unshakable. She added that Syrian transfers of sophisticated weaponry to militants in southern Lebanon and Gaza could spark a new conflict in the Middle East.²⁵

US lawmakers denounced Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s plans to address the NPT Review Conference in New York and urged against granting a visa to him. 14 Republican Senators wrote to Secretary Clinton stating that “the US must not allow this dangerous tyrant to use our freedoms and our

²² ‘US says no way on Tokunoshima’, *Japan Times*, April 23, 2010 at [http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20100423a3.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/nn20100423a3.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed:+japantimes+(The+Japan+Times:+All+Stories)&utm_content=Google+Reader)

²³ ‘Piracy rattles Japan to open first foreign military base’, *Associate Foreign Press*, April 23, 2010 at http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20100423/wl_asia_afp/djiboutijapanmilitarypiracyshipping_20100423173104

²⁴ ‘Iran behaving ‘irresponsibly’ in nuclear crisis: Russia’, *Khaleej Times*, April 27, 2010 at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2010/April/middleeast_April437.xml§ion=middleeast

²⁵ ‘Clinton warns Iran, Syria on threats to Israel’, *Khaleej Times*, April 30, 2010 at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2010/April/middleeast_April506.xml§ion=middleeast

obligations as a host country for the UN to force himself upon our country to spread his message of hate and violence.”²⁶

IRAQ

- **8 killed in car bomb blast in Baghdad; Amnesty International says political uncertainty contributing to increase in attacks**

8 people were killed in a car bomb attack in Baghdad. Over 20 people were injured. A report by Amnesty International stated that political uncertainty was contributing to a rise in the number of attacks and civilian deaths. The report pointed out that more than 100 civilians have been killed in the first week of April alone. Amnesty charged that many civilians were being targeted by armed groups because of their religious, ethnic or sexual identity.²⁷

²⁶ 'US lawmakers denounce Ahmadinejad visit', *Khaleej Times*, May 1, 2010 at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2010/May/middleeast_May6.xml§ion=middleeast

²⁷ 'Bomb blast in Iraq as recount due', *BBC News*, April 30, 2010 at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8653242.stm