

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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EDITOR: SANJEEV KUMAR SHRIVASTAV

REVIEW ADVISOR: S. KALYANARAMAN

CONTRIBUTORS

PRANAMITA BARUAH – Southeast Asia

MAHTAB ALAM RIZVI – Iran, Iraq

SANJEEV KUMAR SHRIVASTAV - Afghanistan

PRIYANKA SINGH- Pakistan

PRASHANT KUMAR SINGH- China



**INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES,
1, DEVELOPMENT ENCLAVE, RAO TULA RAM MARG, NEW DELHI – 110010**

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1. COUNTRY REVIEW

A. SOUTH ASIA

AFGHANISTAN

- A three day 'Peace Jirga' held in Kabul; Taliban targets Jirga with gunfire and rocket attacks; President Karzai call on Taliban and Hizb-i-Islami to join the reconstruction process of Afghanistan; US to control British troops in Helmand province of Southern Afghanistan; German President quits after being criticised for his comments on Germany's military mission in Afghanistan; US Defence Secretary Robert Gates visits Azerbaijan to shore up a link for its Afghan supply chain; Afghan financial intelligence unit: Funds from Saudi donors are fuelling terror in Afghanistan; Senior Taliban commander killed in a NATO air strike in Kandahar

A three-day "Peace Jirga" was held in Kabul to discuss how to end the nine-year war in Afghanistan. It began on June 2nd and concluded on June 4. Peace Jirga is an assembly of elders and religious figures comprising around 1,600 delegates. The Jirga issued a 16-article non-binding declaration which advocates peace talks with armed opposition groups. It recommended that the Afghan government should hold talks with the Taliban and other militant groups. At the end of Jirga, Afghanistan's President Hamid Karzai said, "I want to call on Taliban and Hizb-i-Islami to use this opportunity to join with us and join in the reconstruction of this country."¹ Earlier Taliban targeted the opening session of Jirga on Wednesday with gunfire and rocket attacks. Meanwhile, it was clearly pointed out in the Jirga that those Taliban fighter who are connected with Al Qaeda are not welcome.² On the other hand, Taliban has vehemently opposing the Peace Jirga and stressed that it would participate in reconciliation efforts only when foreign forces leave Afghanistan.³

Reports noted that the US will take control of about 8,000 British troops in Helmand province in Southern Afghanistan. This decision has been taken as a part of a restructuring of NATO forces in Southern Afghanistan where command and control will be split into the two. Welcoming the changes, British Defence

¹ "Engage Taliban in talks: Jirga", *The Hindu*, June 4, 2010, at <http://beta.thehindu.com/news/international/article446687.ece>

² "Afghanistan Taliban attack Hamid Karzai's 'peace jirga'", *The Christian Science Monitor*, June 2, 2010 at <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/terrorism-security/2010/0602/Afghanistan-Taliban-attack-Hamid-Karzai-s-peace-jirga>

³ "Engage Taliban in talks: Jirga", *The Hindu*, June 4, 2010, at <http://beta.thehindu.com/news/international/article446687.ece>

Secretary Dr. Liam Fox said that the changes were "based on sound military rationale" and in the interests of the coalition strategy. The UK force level in Afghanistan is currently totals at nearly 10,000 which include Special Forces as well.⁴

German President Horst Koehler has resigned after being criticized for his remarks on Germany's military mission in Afghanistan. In a Radio interview on May 22, he had suggested that German military engagement is necessary to protect Germany's economic interests. His remarks resulted in strong protests by opposition lawmakers with a demand of withdrawal of remarks. After announcing his resignation in Berlin on May 31, Koehler said, "I regret that my comments could lead to misunderstanding for a question that's important and difficult for our nation." However, he asserted that the criticism "lacks any foundation" because it "goes so far as to accuse me of favoring military operations" not covered by Germany's constitution which "undermines the necessary respect for my office."⁵

US Defense Secretary Robert Gates visited Azerbaijan capital Baku in order to shore up a link for its supply chain to Afghanistan. Azerbaijan is a transit point which had complained that it was not getting enough attention by Obama administration. Since 2001, tens of thousands of military aircraft and supply trucks have crossed Azerbaijan by air and land, carrying U.S. and NATO forces and equipment to Afghanistan. Gates is most senior member of the Obama administration who has visited Azerbaijan till date.⁶

Director-General of Afghan financial intelligence unit Fintraca has claimed that millions of dollars from Saudi donors routed to Afghanistan through Pakistan's tribal areas have fuelled terrorism in Afghanistan during the last four years. He figured out that funds, which are more than 920 million pounds in total, entered from Pakistan where it is converted into rupees or dollars, which is a favoured currency for terrorist operations.⁷

In other development, a senior Taliban commander Haji Amir who was one of the top two rebel commanders in Kandahar's Panjwayee district and some of his

⁴ "US military takes command of UK troops in Afghanistan", *BBC News*, June 1, 2010 at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk/10200681.stm>

⁵ "German President Quits After Afghanistan Criticism", *Bloomberg Businessweek*, May 31, 2010 at <http://www.businessweek.com/news/2010-05-31/german-president-quits-after-afghanistan-criticism-update2-.html>

⁶ "Gates, in Baku, seeks to shore up Afghan supply chain", *Reuters*, June 6, 2010 at <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE6550XE20100606>

⁷ "Saudi fund fuelling terror in Afghanistan: Afghan intelligence", *The Hindu*, June 1, 2010, at <http://beta.thehindu.com/news/international/article443386.ece>

associates have been killed in a NATO air strike in the southern province of Kandahar, NATO sources told in a statement.⁸

PAKISTAN

- **Admiral Mike Mullen: Pakistan and US reach to an understanding on conducting operations in North Waziristan; CIA refuses to cut down the drone attacks even though UN opposes it; Pakistan and NATO express willingness to promote non military ties; Finance Advisor Dr Hafeez Shaikh: the recovery of Pakistan's economy is 'fragile'; Defence expenditure allocation in the budget increases by 28.9 per cent for the upcoming fiscal year**

An understanding was reached between Pakistan and US on conducting operations in North Waziristan according to US Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Admiral Mike Mullen. Mullen was addressing the press in Washington on May 30 wherein he refused to divulge the details on the nature and timing of the operations.⁹ In addition to this, the CIA refused to cut down the drone attacks inside Pakistan even though UN opposed it on humanitarian grounds. According to US officials, drone attacks have proved an "effective tool" in targeting militants in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border and therefore it is not feasible to stop them.¹⁰

Meanwhile, Pakistan and NATO expressed willingness to promote non military ties and work on strengthening future relations between the two. This was stated by Prime Minister Gilani after meeting NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen at the NATO headquarters in Brussels on June 4.¹¹ Making a reference to India's Cold Start doctrine on the same occasion, Gilani pressed NATO to take interest in the south Asian security affairs.¹²

⁸ "NATO airstrike kills senior Taliban leader in Kandahar", *The Hindu*, May 31, 2010 at <http://beta.thehindu.com/news/international/article442722.ece>

⁹ 'Pakistan, US agree on Waziristan operation', *Dawn*, May 31, 2010 at <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/pakistan,-us-agree-in-principle-on-waziristan-operation-150>

¹⁰ 'UN criticism not likely to stop CIA drone strikes', *Daily Times*, June 4, 2010 at http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\06\04\story_4-6-2010_pg1_8

¹¹ 'Nato and Pakistan seek to boost non-military ties', *Dawn*, June 5, 2010 at <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/21-nato-and-pakistan-seek-to-boost-nonmilitary-ties-560-sk-08>

¹² Muhammad Saleh Zaafir & Asim Yasin, 'India can thrust war on Pakistan, PM tells Nato', *The News*, June 5, 2010 at http://www.thenews.com.pk/arc_default.asp?arc_date=6/5/2010

In other developments, the recovery of Pakistan's economy was termed as 'fragile' by the Finance Advisor to the Prime Minister, Dr Hafeez Shaikh, soon after the Economic Survey 2009-10 was launched in Islamabad on June 4.¹³ Meanwhile, the allocation for defence expenditure in the budget was increased by 28.9 per cent or Rs 99.26 billion for the upcoming fiscal year. The figure for this years defence spending stands at Rs 442.173 billion against Rs 342.913 billion in the previous year.¹⁴

B. EAST ASIA

CHINA

- **Ma Xiaotian Calls for Reciprocity in US-China Relations: China - Oman Pledges for Cooperation against Piracy: Chen Bingde Meets Tanzanian President: NDU Organizes a Seminar for Latin American Officials: Tibet Military Command Organizes a Joint Training: China Launches the 4th Beidou Navigational Satellite**

Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, Ma Xiaotian, has said that China-U.S. relationship was among one of the most important bilateral relations for China. However, the responsibility of having a sustained and reliable military- to-military relations between China and the United States rested with both sides. He made these remarks while responding to a query in one of the question and answer sessions of the 9th Asian Security Summit in Singapore.¹⁵ During this summit, he also reiterated that the development of China's national defense capabilities was not aimed at challenging, threatening or invading any other country, but to maintain its own security.¹⁶

Last week, Chinese Defense Minister Liang Guanglie met his Omani counterpart Aayyid Badr Bin Saud Bin Hareb Al-Busaidi who was on an official visit to China. During the discussion the two countries pledged to enhance military

¹³ Sajid Chaudhry, 'Economic recovery fragile', *Daily Times*, June 5, 2010 at http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\06\05\story_5-6-2010_pg1_1

¹⁴ 'Defence budget up by Rs 99 billion', *Daily Times*, June 6, 2010 at http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\06\06\story_6-6-2010_pg1_3

¹⁵ "Sino-US Military Relations Rely on Efforts from Both Sides: Chinese Official", *PLA Daily* (Online), 6 June 2010, at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-06/06/content_4233507.htm

¹⁶ "Chinese Military Official: China's National Defense Capability Not to Challenge Any Country", *PLA Daily* (Online), 6 June 2010, at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-06/06/content_4233506.htm

relations, including joint efforts to combat piracy off Somalia.¹⁷ Chief of the General Staff of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Chen Bingde visited Tanzania and met with President Jakaya Kikwete in capital Dar es Salaam. On this occasion, they discussed as to how to further deepen bilateral ties of the two countries and the two militaries.¹⁸

The National Defense University (NDU) of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) recently organized a seminar of senior officers from Latin America. The theme of the seminar was "Future-Oriented Sino-Latin American Friendship and Cooperation". More than 20 senior officers from around 10 Latin American countries participated in this seminar. At the conclusion of seminar, Liu Yazhou, political commissar of the NDU, distributed certificates to the participants.¹⁹

On May 27, 2010, several combat units under the Tibet Military Command (MC) including a mechanized infantry brigade and an electronic confrontation regiment organized a joint confrontation drill in a valley in central Tibet at 4,500 meters above sea level. In fact, since the beginning of 2010, the Tibet MC has launched a number of joint exercises in the plateau environment, in which the combat units of different arms has enhanced their fighting skills.²⁰

Meanwhile, on June 2, China successfully launched the 4th Beidou navigational satellite into the pre-designated orbit with the "Long March 3C" carrier rocket from the Xichang Satellite Launch Center. The successful launch symbolizes China's another important step forward in building the Beidou satellite navigational system.²¹

¹⁷ "Chinese, Omani Defense Chiefs Discuss Stronger Ties, Anti-Piracy Operation", *PLA Daily* (Online), 4 June 2010, at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-06/04/content_4232411.htm

¹⁸ "Tanzanian President Meets with Senior Chinese Military Officer on Bilateral Ties", *PLA Daily* (Online), 4 June 2010, at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-06/04/content_4232412.htm

¹⁹ "Seminar of Senior Officers from Latin America Concluded", *PLA Daily* (Online), 3 June 2010, at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-06/03/content_4232080.htm

²⁰ "Troops of Multiple Arms in Tibet MC Carry Out Joint Exercises", *PLA Daily* (Online), 3 June 2010, at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-06/03/content_4232136.htm

²¹ "China Launches 4th Beidou Navigational Satellite", *PLA Daily* (Online), 3 June 2010, available at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-06/03/content_4232133.htm

SOUTHEAST ASIA

- **Chinese PM arrives at Myanmar on a two-day visit; Thai Prime Minister wins the no-confidence motion; Malaysia and Laos sign three MoUs; Malaysia condemns Israeli attack on the Gaza aid flotilla; Malaysia and Pakistan reiterate their commitment to enhance the bilateral defence ties; Three Indian naval ships are to visit Malaysian port from June 20-23; Malaysia**

On June 2, Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jia Bao arrived in Myanmar capital Rangoon on a two-day visit. This is the first trip by a Chinese Prime Minister to Myanmar in the last 16 years. A number of key contracts, including the ones related to energy and hydropower projects, are expected to be signed between Myanmar and China during Jiabao's visit. The Chinese Prime Minister is also scheduled to meet Senior General Than Shwe, head of Myanmar's ruling junta.²²

Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva and his deputy on security affairs Suthep Thaugsuban won the no-confidence motion tabled against him by the opposition on the charges of two-month long military crackdown on the anti-government red shirt protesters recently that left 89 dead and 1884 injured.²³

Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak went on his first official visit to Laos on June 2. Malaysia's International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed, Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin, Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Ahmad Shabery Cheek, and some fifty members of the Malaysian business community were also part of Najib's delegation.²⁴ During this visit, the two countries signed three MoUs on education, sports and avoidance of double taxation.²⁵ Malaysia has also assured to provide assistance to Laos in producing capital and developing national athletes.²⁶

While terming the recent attack by the Israeli defence force on the Gaza aid flotilla as 'a serious breach of international law', Malaysia has condemned that

²² "Chinese PM in Burma", *Bangkok Post*, June 2, 2010, at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/179929/chinese-pm-in-burma-ahead-of-rare-elections>

²³ "Abhisit survives no-confidence vote", *Bangkok Post*, June 2, 2010, at <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsindex.php?id=502917>

²⁴ "Najib arrives at Laos for a two-day Visit", *Bernama.com*, June 2, 2010, at <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsindex.php?id=503100>

²⁵ "Najib given red-carpet welcome in Laos", *Bernama.com*, June 3, 2010, at <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsindex.php?id=503157>

²⁶ "Malaysia to help Laos develop human capital, Athletes", *Bernama.com*, June 3, 2010, at <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsindex.php?id=503409>

act and urged the UN Security Council (UNSC) to take action against Israel.²⁷ However, UNSC's failure in condemning the Israeli act has disappointed Malaysia.²⁸

Among other recent developments, during a high-level Malaysian defence delegation's visit to Pakistan recently. Both the countries reiterated their commitment to enhance and reinforce the bilateral defence ties and explore new avenues of cooperation. Both the states also agreed to increase the interaction between their armed forces, especially in the sphere of military training.²⁹

While commemorating the long friendship between India-Malaysia, three Indian naval ships- INS Ranjit, INS Rana and INS Jyoti, are scheduled to arrive at Port Klang of Malaysia from June 20 till June 23. The ships will sail to Malaysia as part of their deployment in the east. Rear Admiral P. Murugesan, Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet, will command the visit.³⁰

C. WEST ASIA

IRAN

- **UN report indicates Islamic Republic fails to fulfill demand on nuclear issue; Supreme Leader took soft approach and pardons opposition prisoners**

Indicating at a UN agency report, the United States said that the report showed "Iran's continued failure to comply with its international obligations and its sustained lack of cooperation" with the UN on its nuclear program. Reacting to the portions of the restricted UN report, US National Security Council spokesman Michael Hammer said that the Iran had produced at least 5.7 kilos (12.5 pounds) of higher-enriched uranium. Iran, which has so far been enriching uranium to levels of no more than 5.0 percent in Natanz, began enriching to close to 20-percent purification in February, apparently to make fuel for the research reactor in Tehran.³¹

²⁷ "Malaysia condemns attack, urges Security council to convene meeting", *Bernama.com*, May 31, 2010, at <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsindex.php?id=502498>

²⁸ "Malaysia expressed disappointment towards UNSC", *Bernama.com*, June 1, 2010, at <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsindex.php?id=502815>

²⁹ "Pakistan, Malaysia vow to boost defence ties", *Bernama.com*, May 31, 2010, at <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsindex.php?id=502349>

³⁰ "Three Indian Naval ships on goodwill visit to Malaysia June 20-23", *Bernama.com*, June 2, at <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsindex.php?id=502935>

³¹ "UN report shows Iran fails to comply on N-program," *Khaleej Times*, June 1, 2010, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2010/June/middleeast_June21.xml§ion=middleeast

As a sign of goodwill before the anniversary of the June 12 election, Iranian supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khomeini has pardoned 81 jailed opposition supporters who were found guilty of playing a role in the unrest which was triggered by June 2010 disputed presidential election. However, the opposition has said that it will try to mount the first street protests in months. Last year, over the weeks, activists had protested against Iran's clerical establishment and had faced a heavy crackdown.³²

IRAQ

- **Al Qaeda lost connection in Iraq: General Ray Odierno**

A senior American commander Gen. Ray Odierno has said that Iraqi and American forces have killed or captured 34 of the top 42 leaders of Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia, and has cut off the terrorist organization from its foreign sponsors. He pointed out that the terrorist group in Iraq had "lost connection" to Al Qaeda's central leadership in Pakistan. He stated "I think they're struggling now, and it's going to be difficult for them to continue to recruit other top leaders." Although he maintained that "there will still be bad days in Iraq," and "there are still violent elements that operate inside Iraq."³³

³² "Iran's supreme leader pardons opposition prisoners," *Khaleej Times*, June 3, 2010, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2010/June/middleeast_June125.xml§ion=middleeast

³³ "Al Qaeda Leaders in Iraq Neutralized, U.S. Says," *New York Times*, June 4, 2010, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/05/world/middleeast/05military.html?ref=todayspaper>