

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

May 30 - June 05, 6(1), 2011

Editor: Sanjeev Kumar Shrivastav

Contributors

Anwesha Roy Chaudhuri

Gulbin Sultana

Pranamita Baruah

Joyce Sabina Lobo

Rajorshi Roy

Babjee Pothuraju

Mahtab Alam Rizvi

Amit Kumar

Shristi Pukhrem

Keerthi Kumar

Afghanistan & Pakistan

Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives

Japan & Koreas

Central Asia

Russia

West Asia & North Africa

Iran, Iraq

Defence Review

Internal Security Review

UN Review

Follow IDSA



Review Adviser: S. Kalyanaraman



Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses

1, Development Enclave, Rao Tula Ram Marg, New Delhi-110010

Telephone: 91-26717983; Fax: 91-11-26154191 Website: www.idsa.in; Email: twir@idsa.in

CONTENTS

In This Issue	Page
I. COUNTRY REVIEWS	
A. South Asia	2-5
B. East Asia	5-6
C. Central Asia & Russia	6-14
D. West Asia	14-18
II. DEFENCE REVIEW	18-19
III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW	20-21
IV. UNITED NATIONS (UN) REVIEW	21-22

I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. South Asia

Afghanistan

- **Reports: Obama administration prepares preliminary withdrawal plan for Afghanistan; Bomb explosion kills four NATO troops in Eastern Afghanistan; NATO helicopter crashes in Eastern Afghanistan, killing two people**

According to reports, the Obama administration appears set to announce initial troop pullout from Afghanistan. Some current and former officials say Obama could easily announce a pullout of at least 10,000 troops over the next year as the administration seeks to capitalize on gains against the Taliban in the south and the Navy SEAL raid last month that killed the al Qaeda leader in Pakistan. Reports noted that a final decision is yet to be made and as far as sources are concerned White House has received no formal recommendation on number of soldiers to be withdrawn from a pool of 100,000 US force in Afghanistan. General David Petraeus, the commander of US and NATO troops in Afghanistan, is expected to present his recommendations in the next week or so to Defense Secretary Robert Gates.¹

In other developments, four NATO troops have been killed by a bomb explosion in Eastern Afghanistan, the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (Isaf) has said. This was the deadliest day for NATO-led troops since 26 May, when a total of nine US troops were killed in three incidents.² While, a NATO helicopter crashed in the eastern province of Khost in Afghanistan on Sunday which killed two people. The cause of the crash is being investigated. Officials have reported no insurgent activities in the area at the time of crash. The coalition declined to release other details about the crash, including the nationalities of those killed.³

Pakistan

- **Pakistan intelligence agency ISI refutes role in journalist's killing; Pakistan to carry out joint intelligent operations with US; Pakistan-India to examine visa procedures**

According to reports, Pakistani Intelligence agency ISI has denied that it was behind journalist Syed Shahzad Saleem's killing. However, speculations are rife that Shahzad Saleem who was investigating connection between intelligence and terrorism, has been ridden off by the agency.

¹ "White House prepares initial Afghan drawdown", *Dawn*, June 4, 2011 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/06/02/white-house-prepares-initial-afghan-drawdown.html>

² "Four Nato troops killed by bomb in eastern Afghanistan, *BBC*, June 4, 2011, at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-13653742>

³ "Nato helicopter crashes in Afghanistan, two killed", *Dawn*, June 5, 2011 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/06/05/nato-helicopter-crashes-in-afghanistan-two-killed.html>

Before Shahzad was killed, he told a human rights activist that he had been threatened by intelligence agents. His body was found on Tuesday showing signs of torture.⁴

While Pakistan's Foreign Ministry has said that it will carry out joint military and intelligence exercises with the United States to fight terrorism in the country. A statement late Thursday from ministry spokeswoman Tehmina Janjua said the teams will share intelligence but that it doesn't necessarily mean US troops would be allowed on Pakistani soil. Reports noted that the team is expected to draw in part on any intelligence emerging from materials gathered from Bin Laden's hideout in the Pakistani city of Abbottabad.⁵

In other developments, in the first meeting of joint working group of India and Pakistan held in Islamabad, both the countries have agreed to streamline visa facilities for swift issuance of visa and also finalise the draft of Bilateral Visa Agreement. The two sides also discussed amendments in the existing visa agreement and agreed to continue the discussions on the new visa agreement in the next meeting of Joint Working Group at New Delhi before the end of August, 2011 for finalisation at the next Home/Interior Secretary level talks in Islamabad.⁶

BANGLADESH

- **Bangladesh seeks support from Singapore for more import of Bangladeshi products; UN assistance to Bangladesh for achieving millennium development goals; ADB provides financial support to Bangladesh for solar system project**

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni has urged Singapore to import more Bangladeshi products to reduce the trade gap between the two countries, during a bilateral meeting with her Singaporean counterpart K Shanmugam in Singapore. She also sought support from Singapore in Bangladesh's bid for becoming a member of the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) and explained the rationale of Bangladesh's aspiration in this regard. Ms. Dipu Moni visited Singapore to attend the 10th IISS Asia Security Summit.⁷

Meanwhile, reports noted that the United Nations is going to provide a grant of \$1.8 billion in next five years to help Bangladesh achieve Millennium Development Goals by focusing on seven development challenges under the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2012-2016. An agreement was signed between the government and a UN country team in this regard at the conference room of the finance ministry at the Secretariat on June 1, 2011. Under the programme 22 Resident and non-Resident UN agencies will provide technical and financial support for the seven areas, each led by one UN agency.⁸

⁴ "ISI denies role in Saleem Shahzad killing, Dawn, June 2, 2011, on <http://www.dawn.com/2011/06/02/isi-denies-role-in-saleem-shahzad-killing.html>

⁵ "Pakistan confirms joint intel operations with US, Dawn, June 3, 2011, on <http://www.dawn.com/2011/06/03/pakistan-confirms-joint-intel-operations-with-us.html>

⁶ 'Pakistan-India Joint Working Group examines visa procedures', Dawn, June 3, 2011, on <http://www.dawn.com/2011/06/03/pakistan-india-joint-working-group-examines-visa-procedures.html>

⁷ "Minister urges Singapore to import more from Bangladesh", *The Daily Star*, June 5, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=188652>

⁸ "\$1.8b UN support to achieve MDGs", *The Daily Star*, June 2, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=188210>

In other developments, Asian Development Bank has agreed to provide financial support to Bangladesh for implementing a solar system project for generation of 500 MW power.⁹

Sri Lanka

- **International Intervention on Sri Lanka was opposed at the 17th UNHRC Session; Sri Lanka to buy plant and machinery equipment for road construction from China at a cost of US \$ 115.8 million; Sri Lanka and the Czech Republic hold second Foreign Office Consultations at the level of Deputy Ministers; EAM G.L. Peiris attended Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore; Manipal University to open a branch campus in Sri Lanka**

Reports noted that at the 17th UNHRC session at the UN Headquarters in New York on May 30, China, Cuba, Pakistan as well as African and Islamic members of the 47-nation Human Rights Council opposed any international intervention on Sri Lanka and put down any attempt to reopen the debate on Sri Lanka's conduct at the end of the war. Sri Lankan Minister Mahinda Samarasinghe led the Sri Lankan delegation at the 17th UNHRC session.¹⁰

In another development, Sri Lankan Government has decided to purchase Plant and Machinery needed for road construction from China at a cost of US \$ 115.8 Million.¹¹ While, Sri Lanka and the Czech Republic on June 2, held the second Foreign Office consultations at the level of Deputy Ministers at the Ministry of External Affairs.¹²

Meanwhile, External Affairs Minister Professor G.L. Peiris went to Singapore to participate in the 10th Asia Security Summit, known as 'The Shangri-La Dialogue' held from June 3-5, at Shangri-La Hotel in Singapore.¹³

In other developments, Manipal University of India had finalized an agreement to set up branch campuses in Sri Lanka, and is awaiting the necessary legislation to be enacted in parliament.¹⁴

⁹ "Solar Project-ADB agrees to fund", *The Daily Star*, June 5, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=188702>.

¹⁰ "China, Cuba and Pakistan speak for Lanka at UNHRC session", *The Daily Mirror*, May 31, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/front-page-news/45547.html>.

¹¹ "China to undertake mega road construction job", *The Daily Mirror*, June 3, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/news/45872.html>.

¹² "Sri Lanka – Czech Republic Foreign Office Consultations held in Colombo on 2nd June 2011", *Ministry of External Affairs, Sri Lanka*, June 2, 2011 at http://www.mea.gov.lk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2811&Itemid=75.

¹³ "GL Singapore bound for confab", *The Daily Mirror*, June 3, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/news/45848.html>.

¹⁴ Bandara, Kelum, "Five foreign universities to come here", *The Daily Mirror*, May 30, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/front-page-news/45401.html>.

Maldives

- **Maldives to waive import duties on environment friendly products; India provides major assistance for SAARC Coastal Zone Management Centre; Maldives to remove taxes on the imports from Bangladesh and register unauthorised Bangladeshi workers**

According to reports, the Maldivian cabinet has decided to waive import duties on electric and renewable energy powered vehicles to boost the government's initiative to promote the import and use of environmentally friendly products. It has also decided to waive import duties on solar panels and solar panel batteries used in marine vessels.¹⁵

Reports noted that Indian High Commissioner in Maldives Dnyaneshwar Mulay has presented Foreign Minister of the Maldives, Ahmed Nasheem, US\$46,272.65 to establish a SAARC coastal zone management centre.¹⁶

In other developments, Maldives has, reportedly, pledged to lift taxes on the import of products such as pharmaceuticals from Bangladesh as well as to register tens of thousands of unauthorised Bangladeshi workers currently living within its shores.¹⁷

B. East Asia

Japan

- **No-confidence motion against Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan fails; Japan expresses interest in cooperating with Vietnam over nuclear power plant safety**

Reports noted that a no-confidence motion proposed on June 2 against Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan's cabinet failed. The no-confidence motion failed once Kan assured the members of the ruling DPJ, who had earlier threatened to vote in favour of the motion, that he would step down once a certain level progress was made in the rebuilding efforts following the Fukushima crisis. An overwhelming majority of 293 members of the Lower House voted against the motion while 152 voted in its favour. Although Kan succeeded in avoiding a no-confidence motion passed, speculations are already on regarding the appropriate timing of Kan's resignation.¹⁸ After the confidence motion was defeated, Kan has reportedly sated that he would resign once there is

¹⁵ "Government to Waive Import Duty on Environmentally Friendly Vehicles", *President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, May 31, 2011 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=5397>

¹⁶ "India contributes to SAARC coastal zone management centre", *Minivan News*, June 2, 2011 at <http://minivannews.com/category/news-in-brief/page/2>.

¹⁷ "Foreign Minister talks immigrants and tax-free trade in Dhaka", *Minivan News*, May 30, 2011 at <http://minivannews.com/category/news-in-brief/page/2>.

¹⁸ "No-confidence motion fails after Kan's offer to step down", *Asahi Shimbun*, June 3, 2011, at <http://www.asahi.com/english/TKY201106020412.html>

virtually no release of radioactive materials and the damaged reactors are brought into the process of a “cold shutdown”.¹⁹

In another development, Japan has expressed keenness in cooperating with Vietnam in ensuring safety of the latter’s envisioned nuclear power plants. During his recent visit to Japan by Truong Tan Sang, a senior member of the Vietnamese Communist Party who is to become the next President of Vietnam, Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan voiced support for bilateral nuclear cooperation though Japan itself is currently struggling to deal with the aftereffects of the Fukushima nuclear crisis. It is worth noting that according to an accord signed in October 2010 between Japan and Vietnam, Vietnam was to acquire two nuclear plants from Japanese companies.²⁰

North Korea

- **Pyongyang pledges to accept all conditions in case of large scale food assistance by the US**

Reports noted that during US special envoy for North Korean human rights issues, Robert King’s recent visit to North Korea, the latter has assured that in case of large scale food assistance from the US, Pyongyang would not only take measures to prevent misappropriation, but also accept all other conditions attached to the aid. However, South Korea reportedly has asked the US to limit its food aid to the North.²¹

C. Central Asia & Russia

Central Asia

May 23-29, 2011

- **Tajik, Kyrgyz border regions sign cooperation in the economic and commercial spheres; Astana to head OIC at the end of June; Uzbekistan, China vow to strengthen their countries’ law enforcement ties; New restrictions imposed on attending foreign religious schools in Tajikistan; US envoy for Afghanistan, Pakistan in Dushanbe; Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko confirms interest in import-ing Kazakh oil; Astana plans to lease arable land to foreign investors**

Reports noted that representatives from Kyrgyz province of Osh and the Tajik region of Gorno-Badakhshan have agreed to expand their cooperation in the economic and commercial spheres, apart from participating in exchanges in science, technology and culture. Both the border regions

¹⁹ “Prime Minister Kan rules out early exit, cites need to rebuild disaster-hit regions”, *Mainichi Shimbun*, June, 3, 2011, at <http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/news/20110603p2a00m0na007000c.html>

²⁰ “Kan seeks to cooperate with Vietnam over nuclear power plant safety”, *Mainichi Shimbun*, June 3, 2011, at <http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/06/03/20110603p2g00m0dm007000c.html>

²¹ “N. Korea says it will accept terms for US food aid”, *Asahi Shimbun*, June 4, 2010, at <http://www.asahi.com/english/TKY201106030135.html>

will collaborate in developing small- and medium-sized businesses in the region. Otherwise the Kyrgyz-Tajik border is a source of tension as Kyrgyzstan has voiced its concern over the illegal crossover of Islamic militants and arms into its impoverished and volatile southern regions. It created a new border post in Osh and sent more border troops to guard the frontier very recently.²²

Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev on 25 May said that chairing the Organization for the Islamic Conference (OIC) will be another high point for Kazakhstan on the international stage. He was quoted as saying in the Fourth World Kurultai of Kazakhs in Astana, “The presidency in the OIC that unites all Muslims in the world will raise Kazakhstan’s prestige in the Islamic world”²³. In related news, Kazakhstan chaired a high-level OIC meeting in Saudi Arabia in the second half of May. Kazakhstan will assume the presidency of the group at the conclusion of the June 28-30 meeting in Astana, which is currently held by Tajikistan. The Jeddah discussions held under the chairmanship of Kazakh Deputy Foreign Minister Kairat Umarov resulted in a resolution for regional coordination in the battle against drug trafficking from Afghanistan apart from discussions on religious defamation, disarmament, human rights in Muslim nations, conflicts between OIC member states and the fight against terrorism.²⁴

According to reports, Uzbek Interior Minister Bahodir Matlubov who was on a visit to Beijing for talks with Chinese State Councillor and with China’s minister of public security Meng Jianzhu, expressed Uzbekistan’s readiness to boost efforts in coordinating law enforcement operations with the Beijing in practical ways. Among other cooperative activities, China and the Tashkent government jointly arranged security at several large-scale events and have also conducted a number of training sessions for law enforcement personnel. Matlubov and Meng oversaw the signing of a memorandum of cooperation between the Uzbek Interior Ministry’s law enforcement school and the Chinese People’s Public Security University.²⁵

Reports noted that Tajikistan’s parliamentary deputies on Wednesday approved a religious bill that would place further restrictions on Tajiks hoping to study Islam abroad. The draft law, approved by the lower house of parliament, states that nationals will not be allowed to receive religious education outside Tajikistan unless they first pass a local study course and receive authorization by the Committee of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education. The reason given for this decision is that some Tajik citizens are studying abroad in schools that teach a form of Islam that could create conflict in interpreting some canons of the religion.²⁶

²² “Kyrgyz, Tajik border regions sign cooperation accord”, *Central Asia Newswire*, May 23, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Region/Kyrgyz-Tajik-border-regions-sign-cooperation-accord/viewstory.aspx?id=4105>

²³ “Chairing OIC will be high point for Kazakhstan, president says”, *Central Asia Newswire*, May 25, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Region/Chairing-OIC-will-be-high-point-for-Kazakhstan-president-says/viewstory.aspx?id=4118>

²⁴ -ibid-

²⁵ “Uzbekistan, China pledge deeper law enforcement ties”, *Central Asia Newswire*, May 27, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Uzbekistan/Uzbekistan-China-pledge-deeper-law-enforcement-ties/viewstory.aspx?id=4137>

²⁶ “Tajikistan imposes new restrictions on attending foreign religious schools”, *Central Asia Newswire*, May 25, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Tajikistan/Tajikistan-imposes-new-restrictions-on-attending-foreign-religious-schools/viewstory.aspx?id=4121>

Meanwhile, U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Marc Grossman met Tajik President Emomali Rahmon during his visit to the Tajik capital Dushanbe. Tajikistan considers the United States one of its important strategic partners in the international arena and strives to expand a long-term mutually beneficial relationship with it. Tajikistan has actively supported NATO peacekeeping forces in neighbouring Afghanistan and is an important cargo transit route for U.S. operations. Rahmon and Grossman discussed ways to prevent the spread of drug trafficking, terrorism and radicalism out of Afghanistan, also Tajik plans to construct much-needed hydroelectric power stations and transmission lines, regional roads and railways.²⁷

According to reports, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko visited Astana in the last week of May, wherein both the Presidents vowed to boost across-the-board economic relations. During this visit Belarus President professed interest in import-ing Kazakh oil, and hoped that agreements can be reached with Russia on the related transport policies in the united economic space. Belarus and Kazakhstan will supply oil and petroleum products to each other through the accession to the uni-fied economic space. Belarus professed keen interest to promote these products to the European markets, while offering Kazakhstan a whole range of products in the petrochemical industry.²⁸

Reports noted that Kazakhstan is ready to supply hard wheat to Be-larus. Both countries have reached an agreement to expand co-operation in the agro-industrial sector. Kazakhstan is ready to take part in the privatization of Belarusian enterprises in terms of machine-building, the petrochemical industry and agriculture. Agreements have been reached in the negotiations in Astana on the creation of new joint ventures in Ka-zakhstan and Belarus involving Kazakh capital.²⁹ In the meanwhile the Kazakhstan and Belarus aim to jointly produce high-tech military equipment. Kazakh Deputy Defense Minister Talgat Zhanzhumenov said that the two countries are looking into setting up a number of bilateral ventures to make equipment for their air defense forces and other related technologies, wherein several of the new products will go on display at an exhibition in the Kazakh capital Astana in 2012.³⁰ Also Kazakhstan has confirmed its readiness to back Belarus' claim seeking observer status in the Or-ganization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

In other developments in the region, during an online conference Deputy Agricul-ture Minister Saktash Khasenov said that "according to the law, Kazakhstan may lease arable lands to foreigners for 10 years". He added that apart from the Chinese, Russia and Belarus are also keen. The land will be leased through joint venture with the majority stake held by Kaza-khstan's companies or individu-als. This leasing process is done with the aim to ensure sufficient supply of all type of foodstuffs and food security in Kazakhstan.³¹

²⁷ "Tajik president meets with US envoy for Afghanistan, Pakistan", *Central Asia Newswire*, May 23, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Region/Tajik-president-meets-with-US-envoy-for-Afghanistan-Pakistan/viewstory.aspx?id=4102>

²⁸ "Belarus interested in Kazakh oil", *The Times of Central Asia*, Vol. 13 No 21 (670) May 26, 2011 at www.timesca.com

²⁹ -ibid-

³⁰ "Kazakhstan, Belarus to create joint military ventures", *Central Asia Newswire*, May 27, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Kazakhstan/Kazakhstan-Belarus-to-create-joint-military-ventures/viewstory.aspx?id=4139>

³¹ "Arable lands can be leased to foreign investors if it benefits Kazakhstan — ministry", *The Times of Central Asia*, Vol. 13 No 21 (670) May 26, 2011 at www.timesca.com

May 30-June 05, 2011

- **Kazakhstan intends to extend export ban on hydrocarbons; Karzai cuts short his visit to Turkmenistan; Pakistan eyes European markets via Tajikistan; Southern Corridor gas pipeline gets US support; UK satellite firm to link Turkmen gas field with Beijing; World Bank Managing Director visits Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan; Brazil holds talks with Turkmenistan; US bases in Afghanistan to use Uzbek transport route and import food**

According to reports, Kazakh Minister of Oil and Gas Sauat Mynbayev told journalists in Astana that Kazakhstan aims to lengthen its ban on the export of hydrocarbons to preserve supplies for the domestic market. The rising local demand for light hydrocarbons distillates in tandem with a shortfall in refining capacity in the country has been the prime reason. Mynbayev did not provide a new time limit for the export ban on light distillates, kerosene and gas oils, but not domestic heating oil and special gasolines, saying its length would be decided in response to the market situation. The current July 1 expiry date was set in April, the initial deadline date for the ban was instituted in November 2010.³²

Reports noted that Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimukhammedov and his Afghan counterpart Hamid Karzai signed deals on transport and energy, trade, humanitarian and cultural issues during the intended four-day visit of the latter to Turkmenistan. His visit was cut short due to the suicide bombing that killed two of Karzai's senior police generals as well as two German NATO soldiers. The two leaders concluded a memorandum of agreement on building a 95-mile railroad linking their countries and helping to integrate Afghanistan in the regional economy. Berdimukhammedov and Karzai also committed to speed up their gas pipeline project to supply Turkmen gas to Pakistan via Afghanistan.³³

Meanwhile, a high-powered Pakistani trade delegation visited Dushanbe past week, wherein they expressed their need to use Tajikistan as conduit to gain entry to Europe, Russia and other Central Asian countries. Tajik President Emomali Rahmon met the visiting delegation and expressed his support to enhance trade relations between Pakistan and Tajikistan. Bilateral trade only amounts to \$21.5 million, owing to a dearth of banking links and transportation and communications facilities between the two countries.³⁴

In another development, Richard Morningstar, U.S. energy envoy for the Eurasian region, told the Congressional House Foreign Affairs subcommittee "From the standpoint of U.S. policy goals, the best outcome is one that brings the most gas, soonest and most reliably, to those parts of Europe that need it most." As Iran has minimal stakes in this project US boycott of the project

³² "Kazakhstan aims to lengthen export ban on hydrocarbons", *Central Asia Newswire*, June 01, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Kazakhstan/Kazakhstan-aims-to-lengthen-export-ban-on-hydrocarbons/viewstory.aspx?id=4167>

³³ "Ashgabat, Kabul sign railway, electricity deals", *The Times of Central Asia*, Vol. 13 No 22 (671) June 02, 2011 at www.timesca.com

³⁴ "Pakistan plans to enter Europe, near abroad via Tajikistan", *Central Asia Newswire*, June 01, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Tajikistan/Pakistan-plans-to-enter-Europe-near-abroad-via-Tajikistan/viewstory.aspx?id=4166>

seems detriment to European interests. Iran owns 10 percent of Azerbaijan's Shah Deniz gas field operation, which would provide gas for the Southern Corridor. The Southern Corridor will lessen Europe's dependence on Russia for gas supplies which has a monopoly due to the Soviet-era gas pipeline networks.³⁵

According to reports, British satellite telecoms firm Hermes was awarded a communications contract to link the operators of a Chinese-run gas field in Turkmenistan with their Beijing office. The firm will provide two-way satellite services, or VSAT, for Chinese state-owned oil and gas major China National Petroleum Corp (CNPC). Hermes Turkmenistan remains the sole provider of the technology to oil and gas companies in the resource-rich republic since it set up there more than 11 years ago. The company handles maritime VSAT communications for offshore platforms in the Caspian Sea.³⁶

Reports noted that Managing director of the World Bank Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala visited Kazakhstan to review the government's crisis response program and the key World Bank projects in the country. She met with top-level government, business leaders and civil society representatives during her three-day visit. She said that it is necessary for Kazakhstan "to focus on further advancing the country's competitiveness by strengthening institutions, promoting transparent governance, investing in the people, and improving environmental and natural resource management."³⁷ The international lender is currently working on a new Country Partnership Strategy in tandem with the Astana government. In the Kyrgyz capital city Bishkek, Okonjo-Iweala advised government leaders to prioritize peace and stability ahead of economic development and offered to help Kyrgyz authorities to open up and provide greater transparency to its mining sector.

In another development, Brazil sent Special Envoy Paulo Joppert to Turkmenistan this week to strengthen ties between the two countries. Joppert held several talks in the Turkmen capital Ashgabat on behalf of his government and business investors. The two sides agreed that the industries with the greatest potential included petrochemicals, trade, textiles, agriculture, tourism, high technologies and alternative energy sources wherein both countries can cooperate. The visit by Brazil's special envoy is a result of Turkmenistan's recent efforts to deepen ties with Latin American countries.³⁸

In other developments, the United States will purchase food and vegetables from farmers in Uzbekistan, taking advantage of an easier transport route from Uzbekistan than from the UAE,

³⁵ "US supports Southern Corridor gas pipeline to Europe", *Central Asia Newswire*, June 03, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Turkmenistan/US-supports-Southern-Corridor-gas-pipeline-to-Europe/viewstory.aspx?id=4183>

³⁶ "British satellite firm to link Turkmen gas field with Beijing", *Central Asia Newswire*, June 03, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Turkmenistan/British-satellite-firm-to-link-Turkmen-gas-field-with-Beijing/viewstory.aspx?id=4182>

³⁷ "World Bank rep calls for Kazakh transparency, Kyrgyz stability", *Central Asia Newswire*, June 03, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Kazakhstan/World-Bank-rep-calls-for-Kazakh-transparency-Kyrgyz-stability/viewstory.aspx?id=4181>

³⁸ "Brazilian special envoy holds talks in Turkmenistan", *Central Asia Newswire*, June 03, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Turkmenistan/Brazilian-special-envoy-holds-talks-in-Turkmenistan/viewstory.aspx?id=4186>

the president of the American Chamber of Commerce said. Originally, the U.S. planned on flying the foodstuffs from Uzbekistan's Navoi airport, but has now decided to import the food using rail links and a bridge at the Uzbek city of Termez, which borders Afghanistan. The U.S. deputy security advisor to U.S. President Barack Obama met with Uzbek President Islam Karimov in the beginning of June to express his thanks for Uzbekistan's continuing involvement in Afghanistan's socio-economic recovery.³⁹

Russia

- **Russia's Security Council Secretary to visit India to discuss improved cooperation in various fields; India regrets cancellation of naval drill with Russia; Russia-Ukraine reach a breakthrough in their sea border talks; Russia is concerned about 'disproportionate use of force in Libya; Russia's ban of European vegetable imports threatens to derail the EU summit; Proposal of 5 year visas for Russian citizens travelling to EU member states; Russia warns NATO over Libya; In the light of the retirement of US space shuttle Endeavour, Russia has refurbished its own space vehicle Soyuz; Russia may buy An-70 transport planes by 2012-13; Massive explosion at an arms depot in Urals reported**

Reports noted that Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev will arrive in India on June 6, 2011 on a one-day visit. Secretary Patrushev, who will lead a Russian delegation, will discuss military and technical cooperation, as well as interaction in the power industry, space research, and international and regional security issues. His agenda includes meetings with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and national security officials.⁴⁰

Meanwhile, according to reports, the Indian Navy is disappointed with Russia's last-minute cancellation of joint naval drills in the Pacific Ocean in April. The Indian Navy task force consisting of three destroyers - INS Delhi, INS Ranvir, and INS Ranvijay, corvette INS Kirch, and tanker INS Jyoti called at Pacific Fleet's main base in Vladivostok on April 18-23. Russia reported the arrival of Indian warships as a friendly visit, but the Indian side claims the program of the visit originally included joint drills, which were cancelled by the Russians at the last moment. According to the Indian admiral, the Russian authorities explained that the cancellation was made in view of the incidents that had taken place in Japan at the time i.e. the double natural disaster and the following nuclear crisis.⁴¹

In another development, Russia and Ukraine have reached a breakthrough in their talks on maritime border delimitation. A qualitative breakthrough has been achieved on the issue of the Kerch Strait and a fundamental understanding with the Ukrainian leadership on how to resolve this problem has been established. The Ukrainian-Russian border in the Kerch Strait, which links the Sea of Azov to the Black Sea, remains undefined since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Ukraine

³⁹ "US bases in Afghanistan to import food from Uzbekistan", *Central Asia Newswire*, June 01, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Uzbekistan/US-bases-in-Afghanistan-to-import-food-from-Uzbekistan/viewstory.aspx?id=4170>

⁴⁰ "Russian security council head to discuss cooperation with India", *Ria Novosti*, June 6, 2011, <http://en.rian.ru/world/20110606/164461353.html>

⁴¹ "India regret cancellation of naval drills with Russia- Admiral", *Ria Novosti*, June 3, 2011, http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20110603/164415047.html

unilaterally established a maritime border with Russia in the 1990s, saying it was based on the Soviet-era administrative border between the two republics. Russia has repeatedly denied the existence of Soviet administrative borders and called for shared use of the Kerch Strait. In the summer of 2003, a bitter dispute broke out between Russia and Ukraine over the Tuzla Island in the middle of the Kerch Strait, which came to a head when Russia tried to construct a spit connecting the island. Ukraine accused Russia of encroaching on its territory.⁴²

According to reports, Moscow is alarmed over NATO's disproportionate use of force in Libya and the alliance's clear support for one side in the Libyan conflict according to Russian Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Ivanov. Moscow is concerned "over increasingly frequent disproportionate use of military force in the country where the nature and the parameters of interference from outside have been clearly defined by the UN decisions," Ivanov said. The UN Security Council adopted a resolution imposing a no-fly zone over Libya on March 17, paving the way for a military operation against embattled Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi which began two days later. The command of the operation was shifted from a U.S.-led international coalition to NATO in late March. By supporting the UN Security Council resolution on Libya, Russia proceeded from the fact that it was aimed at strengthening peace and preventing the escalation of the conflict and the death of civilians, he said⁴³.

Meanwhile, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Ivanov has warned that NATO's Libya campaign is "one step" away from sending in ground troops to assist antigovernment forces battling Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi. Ivanov, speaking at an Asian forum on June 5, criticized the expansion of military intervention in Libya, saying that while Moscow initially supported the move "of course we didn't mean that [ground intervention] when supporting the resolution." Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov earlier cautioned that Moscow will not support any moves by the international community that would lead to "a further escalation of a civil war by any means, including outside intervention." Prime Minister Vladimir Putin has also been critical of the Western-led campaign, saying it "resembles medieval calls for crusades." Russia abstained from voting on the March UN resolution authorizing force to protect civilians in Libya.⁴⁴

Reports noted that fueled by harsh words from Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, Moscow's decision to ban all European vegetable imports because of a deadly E. coli outbreak is now threatening to derail relations with Brussels just days before a summit with EU leaders. Putin spoke of "poisonous" cucumbers in defending the ban. This may be against "the spirit of the WTO ... but cucumbers that people die from after eating really stink," Putin told a gathering of rail executives in Sochi. Putin was adamant that the ban would not be lifted before the Europeans pinpointed the source of the infection, which has killed at least 18 people and sickened 1,836 since May 2, mainly in

⁴² "Russia, Ukraine reach breakthrough in sea border talks- Lavrov", *Ria Novosti*, June 5, 2011, <http://en.rian.ru/exsoviet/20110605/164452171.html>

⁴³ "Moscow alarmed over NATO's disproportionate use of force in Libya – vice premier", *Ria Novosti*, June 5, 2011, <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20110605/164450244.html>

⁴⁴ "Russia warns over NATO intervention in Libya", *Radio Free Europe*, June 5, 2011, http://www.rferl.org/content/russia_warns_over_nato_intervention_in_libya/24215871.html

northern Germany. However, no one has been reported ill in Russia amid the outbreak, which health experts blame on a new strain of *E. coli*.⁴⁵

According to the spokesman for the EU delegation to Moscow Denis Daniilidis, a new visa agreement between Russia and Europe's Schengen zone could significantly reduce red tape and travel restrictions by next year — but only for professionals, not tourists, a European diplomat said Thursday. The deal could cover lawmakers, businessmen, journalists, members of central and regional governments — along with their families — and representatives of nongovernmental organizations. Reports noted that the agreement, which would be strictly based on reciprocity, granting equal visa opportunities to Russians and citizens of Schengen member states, could be signed by the end of the year. A signing would mark a rare and much-needed success in the long and cumbersome negotiations between Moscow and the 27-member block. It would also follow a similar EU-Russia agreement that came into force in 2007 and limited the times and fees for visa processing. The latest round of talks started after Spain pushed for the abolition of visa requirements in January 2010.⁴⁶

Reports noted that a revamped digital version of the venerable Soyuz spacecraft was winched into place at its launch pad Sunday for its second manned run to the International Space Station. With the U.S. shuttle due to make its farewell voyage in July, the Russian craft takes on renewed importance as the only available lifeline to space. The new model of the Soyuz craft first blasted off in October from the Baikonur Cosmodrome. By modernizing the operating control system, developers of the Soyuz have made the craft lighter and therefore able to carry up more cargo. It will be several years before NASA replaces its shuttle fleet, leaving it wholly reliant on the Russian space program to transport its personnel⁴⁷.

According to reports, Russia may start buying Ukrainian-built An-70 prop-fan military transport aircraft in 2012-2013. A final decision on the purchase of the An-70 will be made by a state commission on the basis of the tests results. The An-70 is a medium-range prop-fan-powered military transport plane developed by Ukraine's Antonov design bureau. The Antonov Company first tested a prototype An-70 in 1994, but a lack of Ukrainian state funds, and political disputes between Moscow and Kiev have prevented large-scale production of the aircraft. The recent thaw in Russian-Ukrainian relations saw Moscow renew long-stalled funding to Ukraine in 2009 for eventual joint production of the plane, although the Ukrainian Defense Ministry said last year it would not finance the project. There are up to 300 transport aircraft in service with the Russian Air Force, including An-12 Cub, Il-76MD and An-124 Condor transport aircraft. The An-70 is intended to replace Russia's ageing An-12 aircraft. Russian Airborne Troops Commander Lt. Gen. Vladimir Shamanov said last year that his service had ordered 40 An-70 planes under the new state arms procurement program for 2011-2020.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ "Ban on vegetable imports threatens to derail EU summit", *The Moscow Times*, June 6, 2011, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/ban-on-vegetable-imports-threatens-to-derail-eu-summit/438223.html>

⁴⁶ "5 year visas planned", *The Moscow Times*, June 3, 2011, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/5-year-visas-planned/438138.html>

⁴⁷ "Revamped Soyuz readied for lunch", *The Moscow Times*, *The Moscow Times*, June 6, 2011, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/revamped-soyuz-readied-for-launch/438207.html>

⁴⁸ "Russia may buy An-70 transport planes by 2012-13", *Ria Novosti*, June 1, 2011, http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20110601/164369413.html

In other developments, a fire, possibly sparked by a discarded cigarette, engulfed an Urals arms depot over the weekend, injuring at least 95 people and prompting 2,000 others to seek psychological help. The military sources noted that no one was killed in the blaze.⁴⁹

D. West Asia

Iran

- **Supreme Leader Khamenei: United States brought to its knees; Iran's Supreme Leader; Iran's Parliament put Ahmadinejad in trouble**

In a harsh comment, Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has said that the United States has been brought to its knees by the Islamic Revolution of Iran and highlighted the US policies on the Middle East have failed. He stated, "the great Satan, since the early days of the revolution, has mobilized its military, financial, propaganda, and political empire to defeat the Islamic Revolution and the Iranian nation, but the political realities in Iran and the region show that the US has been brought to its knees by the Islamic Revolution." He also said that political analysts have admitted that the US policies on the Middle East have failed, adding that 30 years ago the US only lost one of its corrupt allies, namely the Iranian dictator Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's regime, but today the US is witnessing the collapse of its other subservient allies.⁵⁰

Reports noted that the Iranian parliament's decision to refer President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to the judiciary for taking over the oil ministry portfolio is the latest sign of damaging rifts within the ruling establishment. Tensions among Iran's hardline leadership could endanger Ahmadinejad's chances of serving out his term until 2013. Parliament, often at odds with Ahmadinejad on policy issues, approved a finding by its energy committee that the president's move to act as oil minister himself after dismissing Massoud Mirkazemi from the post last month was an "obvious violation of law." By law, if parliament refers the president or one of his cabinet ministers to the judiciary three times for violating the law, the assembly has the right to impeach Ahmadinejad. However, any impeachment would require an improbable green light from Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has the final say in all important affairs of state.⁵¹

Iraq

- Twenty Four people killed in a bomb attack in Central Iraq

In a violent incident, 24 people were killed in a mosque in central Iraq in a bomb attack. The

⁴⁹ "77,500 tons of shells blow up in fire at Urals arms depot", *The Moscow Times*, June 6, 2011, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/77500-tons-of-shells-blow-up-in-fire-at-urals-arms-depot/438222.html>

⁵⁰ "Islamic Revolution has brought U.S. to its knees: Leader," *Tehran Times*, June 1, 2011, at http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=241785

⁵¹ "Pressure mounts on Iran's hardline president," *Khaleej Times*, June 1, 2011, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2011/June/middleeast_June34.xml§ion=middleeast

attacks came a day after a spate of coordinated bombings in west Iraq killed 10 people. The recent violence was the worst in Tikrit since a March 29 Al Qaeda raid on the city's provincial council offices, which led to a bloody hours-long gun battle with security forces that left 58 people dead. The two days of violence raise questions over the ability of Iraqi forces to secure the country, with 45,000 American troops due to withdraw at the end of the year under the terms of a bilateral security pact. Violence in Iraq is down from its peak in 2006 and 2007, but attacks remain common. A total of 177 people died in May as a result of violence, according to official figures.⁵²

Syria

- **Russia reiterates its stand on Syrian internal affairs; Syria issues presidential decision for forming a committee to set up bases for national dialogue; UN special advisers express alarm at Syrian violence; Syria and Iraq discuss regional situation, ways of improving bilateral relations**

In a joint press conference with his Bulgarian counterpart Nikolay Mladenov in Moscow, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov renewed Russia's firm rejection of any foreign interference in Syria's internal affairs. Lavrov said that Syria was a crucial country in the Middle East, indicating that any attempt to destabilize it could yield disastrous consequences. Further, he added that any such attempts should be discarded.⁵³ In a separate statement to Russian press in Brussels, Russia's Permanent Representative to the European Union, Vladimir Chizhov, announced that that Russia would not support any international resolution on the use of force against Syria.⁵⁴

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad issued a presidential decision for forming an ad hoc committee to set up bases for a national dialogue, specify its work mechanism and its timetable. The Committee comprises of Farouk al-Shara, Safwan Qudsi, Haitham Sataihi, Yaser Houriea, Hanin Nimr, Abdullah al-Khani, Waild Ekhlesi, Muneir al-Himsh and Ibrahim Daraji. President also discussed with them the importance of the national dialogue to overcome the current situation.⁵⁵

In a joint statement, the UN special adviser on the prevention of genocide, Francis Deng, and special adviser on the responsibility to protect, Edward Luck, expressed alarm at Syrian authorities' violence against civilians in their crackdown on pro-democracy protesters. They said they were "gravely concerned at the increasing loss of life in Syria due to continued violent suppression of anti-government protests". Deng and Luck also said that Syrian forces appear to have been targeting residential neighbourhoods in their operations and called for "an independent, thorough and objective investigation" into all alleged violations of international human rights law.⁵⁶

⁵² "Bombers kill 24 at Iraq mosque, hospital," *Khaleej Times*, June 4, 2011, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2011/June/middleeast_June111.xml§ion=middleeast

⁵³ "Russia Renews Rejection of Foreign Interference in Syrian Internal Affairs", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, June 2, 2011, at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/337/2011/06/02/350418.htm>

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ "President al-Assad Issues Presidential Decision on Forming a Committee to Set up Bases for National Dialogue", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, June 2, 2011, at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/337/2011/06/02/350244.htm>

⁵⁶ "UN advisers alarmed at 'systematic' Syria violence", *The Jordan Times*, June 3, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/?news=38134>

In other developments, in the framework of standing cooperation between the leaderships of Syria and Iraq, Foreign and Expatriates Minister of Syria Walid al-Moallem discussed with Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki about the situation in the region and means of developing bilateral relations in various fields. The talks highlighted the necessity of increasing the volume of trade between the two countries by giving Syrian exports needed facilitations and holding a Syrian-Iraqi businessmen conference in Baghdad in June as well as discussing cooperation in the field of energy and oil. The two sides also signed a memorandum of understanding on establishing a network of oil and gas pipelines to transfer Iraqi crude oil and gas across Syria.⁵⁷

Libya

- **NATO extends mission in Libya by 90 Days; South Africa discusses peace deal with al Gaddafi; International Commission of Inquiry submits its findings, accuses Libyan Government forces of war crimes**

In a significant development, NATO's member states unanimously agreed to extend NATO's mission in Libya by a further 90 days. NATO's Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen announced at the end of the meeting in Brussels that they were determined to continue the operation to "protect the people of Libya". It was also reported that, besides NATO members, the talks also included ambassadors from the five non-NATO countries that are currently participating in the Libya campaign, namely; Jordan, Qatar, Sweden, the United Arab Emirates and Morocco.⁵⁸

Meanwhile, South African President Jacob Zuma, in his capacity as a representative of the African Union, held discussions with the Libyan leader Muammar al Gaddafi in Tripoli regarding a peace deal. However, at the end of the six-hour talks with Libyan leader, President Zuma made a little headway towards brokering a Libya peace deal with the Libyan officials saying that there were no signs of the breakthrough. Even Jacob Zuma did not say whether Gaddafi was ready to step down, a key demand of the rebels. Nevertheless, he said that the meeting was productive as Gaddafi was ready for a truce and wanted a ceasefire including an end to NATO bombing.⁵⁹

In other developments, reports noted that International Commission of Inquiry, a panel ordered by the United Nations Human Rights Council to investigate into the human rights abuses in Libya, submitted its findings to the 47-member body in Geneva. In the report, the commission has accused the Gaddafi forces of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity during their crackdown on opposition forces. The team, led by Cherif Bassiouni, an Egyptian jurist and war crimes expert, called on the Government to immediately stop acts of violence and to conduct "exhaustive, impartial and transparent" investigations into all alleged violations.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ "Al-Moallem Discusses with Iraqi Premier Regional Situation... al-Maliki: We Support Syria to Emerge out from Crisis through Reforms", *Syrian Arab News Agency*, June 1, 2011 at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/22/2011/06/01/350021.htm>

⁵⁸ "NATO Extends Mission in Libya by 90 Days", *The Tripoli Post*, June 1, 2011, at <http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=6099>

⁵⁹ "Zuma Talks with Libyan Leader Inconclusive; But Muammar Al Qathafi Says Ready for a Truce", *The Tripoli Post*, May 31, 2011, at <http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=6089>

⁶⁰ "UN Human Rights Panel Accuses Libyan Government Forces of War Crimes", *The Tripoli Post*, June 2, 2011, at <http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=6103>

Egypt

- **Gallup poll finds majority of Egyptians oppose theocracy**

According to the Gallup poll, which was conducted after the fall of President Hosni Mubarak and whose findings were released recently, noted that a small minority of Egyptians support the powerful Muslim Brotherhood at this point, and less than one per cent favour an Iran-style Islamic theocracy. The poll found that while 69 per cent of Egyptians want religious leaders to have an advisory role in new legislation, most do not want a government based on religion. Further, only 15 per cent said that they support the Muslim Brotherhood, while more than 60 per cent showed no political preference. The paper viewed that these results appeared to counter a widely held view that the Muslim Brotherhood will be the main winner in September's parliamentary elections.⁶¹

Israel

- **Israeli troops kill 20 in Syrian border protests**

Reports noted that Israeli troops opened fire on protesters from Syria who stormed a ceasefire line in the occupied Golan Heights, and killed nearly 20 demonstrators and few more were wounded. Further, Israel accused Syria that it was orchestrating the violence to shift attention away from the crackdown on opposition protests back home. Similar protests were held in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, and various events were held in commemoration of the occasion in Jordan.⁶²

Palestine

- **Palestine shuts Rafah border crossing with Egypt**

Palestinian officials have suspended operations on their side of the Rafah border crossing with Egypt, in protest against Egyptian lack of cooperation at the terminal. According to Palestinian officials, they had halted operations on their side of the border crossing, after disagreements about capacity and coordination. Earlier, the Palestinians complained that Egypt halted operations at the border crossing without warning, stranding travellers on the Gaza side of the terminal, unable to cross into Sinai. Later, it was Palestinian officials who closed the crossing, with terminal head Ayub Abu Shaar saying it would remain shut until officials on both sides come to an agreement on its operation.⁶³

Jordan

- **Saudi Arabia grants Jordan JD283 million; Syria releases fifteen Jordanian prisoners from its jails**

According to reports, Jordan's Finance Minister Mohammad Abu Hammour announced that Jordan

⁶¹ "Poll finds majority of Egyptians oppose theocracy", *The Jordan Times*, June 6, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=38189>

⁶² "Israeli troops kill 20 in Syrian border protests", *The Jordan Times*, June 6, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=38205>

⁶³ "Spat with Egypt shuts Rafah border crossing", *The Jordan Times*, June 6, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=38188>

received a JD283 million (\$400 million) grant from Saudi Arabia which would allow Jordan in implementing several capital projects and would also help overcome fiscal challenges. He also appreciated that the efforts of King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia were a major element in making Arab and foreign countries understand the financial conditions in Jordan.⁶⁴

In another developemnt, according to Abdul Karim Shraideh, head of the Arab Organisation for Human Rights (AOHR), Syrian authorities released 15 Jordanian prisoners out of the 250 Jordanians serving prison terms in Syria. These prisoners were released under the general amnesty issued by Syrian President Bashar Assad. Pointing out that many Jordanian prisoners have been behind bars for over 20 years and that some of them never stood for trial, Shraideh added that three women are still behind bars. Further, he opined that the amnesty decision by Assad should include all Jordanian prisoners there, and stressed that the organisation would continue its efforts to ensure their freedom.⁶⁵

II. DEFENCE REVIEW

National

- **Defense minister asks DRDO to prioritize the development of 5,000-km range ballistic missile; India beefs up security preparation on the China front**

Defense Minister A K Antony asked the DRDO to prioritize the development of 5,000-km range ballistic missile while building a credible missile defense system for the country. He also congratulated the Defense Research Development Organization (DRDO) for developing recently the interceptor missile allowing India to join an elite club of nations possessing such advance technology. “DRDO must demonstrate the capability to develop missiles of the range of 5000 km at the earliest. This is a challenge for the DRDO and I hope they will successfully meet this challenge at the earliest,” the defense minister said in New Delhi⁶⁶.

Meanwhile, according to reports, India is now deploying spy drones or UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles) and light observation helicopters along the borders with China to keep a hawk-eye on the stepped-up activities of People’s Liberation Army and to strategically counter China’s massive build-up of military infrastructure all along the 4,057-km Line of Actual Control (LAC) over the last two decades. The construction of over 5,500 “permanent defences and bunkers” along the borders is now being speeded up to ensure their completion within four to five years, under the Rs 9,243 crore military infrastructure development project approved by the Cabinet Committee on Security for the Eastern Army Command. Sukhoi-30MKI fighters are already being based in

⁶⁴ “Saudi Arabia grants Jordan JD283 million”, *The Jordan Times*, June 3, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/?news=38129>

⁶⁵ “15 Jordanians released from Syrian jails”, *The Jordan Times*, June 6, 2011, at <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=38203>

⁶⁶ “A K Antony asks DRDO to build credible missile defence system”, *The Economic Times*, Jun 3, 2011, at <http://www.bharat-rakshak.com/NEWS/newsrfr.php?newsid=14834>

IAF airbases like Tezpur and Chabua. Army Aviation bases in Assam are also now being upgraded, with seven helicopters and four Israeli Searcher-II UAVs already been deployed there. IAF is now also upgrading eastern sector ALGs (advanced landing grounds) like Pasighat, Mechuka, Walong, Tuting, Ziro and Vijaynagar as well as several helipads in Arunachal after reactivating western sector ALGs like Daulat Beg Oldi, Fukche and Nyama in eastern Ladakh. Similarly, Army and IAF want faster inductions of the indigenous Akash surface-to-air missile (SAM) systems to counter the threat posed by enemy fighters, drones and helicopters on both western and eastern fronts.⁶⁷

International

● Pakistan increases defense expenditure despite financial crunch; Military relations between US and China improving

According to reports, Pakistan has hiked its defence budget by nearly 12 per cent to Rs 495 billion (about USD 5.75 billion) for fiscal 2011-12, despite the severe financial crunch facing the country. Official budget documents presented in Parliament on Friday said defence spending will increase to Rs 495 billion for 2011-12, compared with Rs 442 billion in the fiscal year ending June 30. An allocation of Rs 22,000 million was made for the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission under the Public Sector Development Programme, budget documents said. The Pakistan government has traditionally made defence allocations with the objective of maintaining conventional parity with India.⁶⁸

In an important development, The US and Chinese defence chiefs noted that military relations between the two countries had made some progress and were moving in a “positive” direction. At a meeting in Singapore, US Defence Secretary Robert Gates stated, “As I leave office at the end of this month, I do so believing our military relationship is on a more positive trajectory,” who is wrapping up his tenure at the Pentagon. Sitting across a table from the Pentagon chief, Gates’ Chinese counterpart, Defence Minister Liang Guanglie said there had been “some progress” in recent months and praised efforts by both countries to lay the groundwork for better security ties. The conciliatory tone follows tentative signs that tensions were easing, with a top Chinese general touring US bases last month and Gates paying a visit to Beijing in January. However, US arms sales to Taiwan have been a major irritant, and China has suspended ties whenever Washington announces new weapons deals. Despite the positive comments at Friday’s talks, the issue could once again scupper attempts to forge a dialogue as US senators are pushing to sell F-16 fighter jets to Taiwan.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ “India beefs up China front with UAVs, copters to monitor PLA”, *Bharat Rakshak*, Jun 6, 2011, at <http://www.bharat-rakshak.com/NEWS/newsr.php?newsid=14840>

⁶⁸ “Pak hikes defence allocation to Rs 495 billion”, *Brahmand*, Jun 04, 2011, at <http://www.brahmand.com/news/Pak-hikes-defence-allocation-to-Rs-495-billion/7226/1/13.html>

⁶⁹ “US, China say military ties on positive path”, Jun 04, 2011, at <http://www.brahmand.com/news/US-China-say-military-ties-on-positive-path/7222/1/10.html>

III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

Jammu & Kashmir

- **Three militants killed in a gun battle in Sopore; Complete shutdown in Sopore following the incident**

Reports noted that three militants were killed in an encounter in North Kashmir town of Sopore. Militants opened fire leading to more retaliation initiating a gun battle. The militants were suspected to be members of Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT).⁷⁰ However, against the killing of these three militants, a complete shutdown was observed in North Kashmir's Sopore area. Two among the three slain militants hailed from Sopore.⁷¹

North East India

- **Cops killed in ambush in Meghalaya; ULFA asks oil company to quit state of Assam; UNLF ultras arrested; NSCN (IM) blames NSCN (K) for torching villages; ULFA militants injured from Digboi**

According to reports, in a militant ambush in western Meghalaya, three police personnel were killed and two were critically injured. Heavily armed militants attacked a highway patrol police team at Thapa Dharenchi area. In this attack, Police are suspecting the involvement of the Garo National Liberation Army (GNLA) and National Democratic Front of Bodoland.⁷² While, the proscribed ULFA, Paresh Barua faction, served a 'quit notice' to a private oil and gas company in Assam alleging that they were exploiting the State's natural resources against the local people's interest.⁷³ Meanwhile, four UNLF militants were arrested by the city police. Police also recovered cell phones and incriminating documents from their possession.⁷⁴

Reports noted that the NSCN (I-M) has accused the rival NSCN Khaplang faction of burning down two villages in Eastern Nagaland (under Myanmar) on March 15 and April 1, 2011 respectively. The information wing of the NSCN (I-M), in a press statement, alleged that on March 15, the Khaplang faction along with cadres of the Manipur People's army (MPA) numbering around

⁷⁰ "3 Militants killed in Sopore encounter", *Greater Kashmir*, June 2, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/ShowStoryLatest.asp?NewsID=2352>

⁷¹ "Sopore observes shutdown", *Greater Kashmir*, June 4, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Jun/5/sopore-observes-shutdown-28.asp>

⁷² "3 cops killed in militant ambush in Meghalaya", *The Assam Tribune*, June 4, 2011 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jun0411/at016>

⁷³ "ULFA asks oil company to quit State", *The Assam Tribune*, June 3, 2011 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jun0411/state07>

⁷⁴ "4 UNLF ultras arrested", *The Assam Tribune*, June 2, 2011 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jun0311/city06>

100 went to Hazik village in Pangmi Region and torched 103 houses and 27 granaries, for providing shelter to NSCN (I-M) cadres.⁷⁵

In other developments, two Myanmar-trained ULFA rebels sustained serious injuries in an encounter with a joint team of the police and Army at Tamulibari Gaon, nine km from Digboi town.⁷⁶

IV. UNITED NATIONS (UN) REVIEW

- **UN Security Council condemns Sudan government's control over Abyei; India weighs options on raising Syria issue in UNSC; Indian appointed as head to UN Chief's Change Management Team (CMT); Divergent views on UNSC expansion between India and Germany**

The Security Council strongly condemned the Sudanese government's control over Abyei demanded that the Sudanese government withdraw immediately from the area. The Council called for an immediate halt to the looting, burning and resettlement and stressed that those responsible for violations of international law be held accountable. The Council also called on all parties to respect humanitarian principles and allow humanitarian access to individuals affected by the conflict.⁷⁷

Reports noted that as the West tries to report Syria to the UN Security Council and U.S.-piloted proposal to refer Syria to the UNSC may come up before the board of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in the coming week, India is weighing its options. According to India's Special Envoy to the PM for West Asia, Chinmaya Gharekhan, India, in principle would not support raising the matter at the UN but at the same time, he noted that Syria should abide by its obligations by cooperating with the IAEA.⁷⁸

In other developments, the UN chief Ban Ki-moon appointed an Indian, Atul Khare as head of his Change Management Team (CMT) tasked with suggesting reforms to make UN functions more efficient. The agenda includes, 'formulation of a comprehensive plan to streamline processes, increase accountability and improve the efficiency of the organization in the delivery of its mandates'.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ "NSCN (IM) accuses NSCN (K) of torching 2 villages", *The Sentinel*, June 3, 2011 at <http://www.sentinelassam.com/northeast/story.php?sec=2&subsec=9&id=76979&dtP=2011-06-04&ppr=1#76979>

⁷⁶ "Two ULFA rebels injured", *The Sentinel*, June 2, 2011 at <http://www.sentinelassam.com/mainnews/story.php?sec=1&subsec=0&id=76765&dtP=2011-06-03&ppr=1#76765>

⁷⁷ "Sudanese military forces must withdraw from Abyei, Security Council says", *UN News Centre*, June 03, 2011 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=38611&Cr=abyei&Cr1=>

⁷⁸ "India weighs options as West tries to corner Syria", *The Hindu*, June 05, 2011 at <http://www.hindu.com/2011/06/05/stories/2011060555261600.htm>

⁷⁹ "Indian to lead UN's Change Management Team", *The Times of India*, June, 02, 2011 at http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-06-01/us-canada-news/29607731_1_timor-leste-and-head-chief-ban-ki-moon-atul-khare

Meanwhile, during German Chancellor Angela Merkel's visit to India, divergent views were evident between the two countries on the expansion of the UN Security Council. While Germany is likely to opt for an interim solution, i.e., becoming a member of the UNSC without the right to veto, India, on the other hand expects membership with full rights.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ "India, Germany differ on UNSC expansion", *The Hindu*, June 01, 2011 at <http://www.hindu.com/2011/06/01/stories/2011060163731700.htm>