

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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1. COUNTRY REVIEW

A. SOUTH ASIA

AFGHANISTAN

(June 7-13)

- **Robert Gates: US will not ask Britain to pledge more troops in Afghanistan; New British PM Cameron visits Kabul, reaffirms British support for Afghanistan; NATO Chief Rasmussen: The alliance should start handing over security responsibility to Afghan forces "as soon as possible", Holbrooke: Afghan Government must outline utilization process of international funds aimed at Taliban's reintegration; At least 39 killed in a suicide attack on a wedding ceremony in Kandahar; Karzai appeals community leaders to support Kandahar operation; Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkey hold trilateral meeting on security in Istanbul**

United States Defence Secretary Robert Gates has said that Obama administration would not ask Britain to pledge more troops in Afghanistan. At the same time, he expressed confidence in new British government led by Prime Minister David Cameron calling it "quite resolute with respect to Afghanistan." Gates made these remarks during his visit to London on June 7 where he met PM Cameron. Earlier, British Defence Secretary Liam Fox had expressed hope of speeding up the troops withdrawal process from Afghanistan.¹ New British Prime Minister David Cameron visited Kabul on June 10 and met President Karzai. Cameron noted that this would be the "vital year" for the campaign against the Taliban. He however, clarified that British troops surge in Afghanistan is "not remotely on the U.K. agenda." Cameron also pointed out, "No one wants British troops to stay in Afghanistan for a day longer than is necessary."²

In a meeting Defence ministers of the 46 ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) contributing nations at NATO headquarters in Brussels, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said the alliance should start handing over security responsibility to Afghan forces "as soon as possible", hopefully by the end of the year. NATO chief said, "Afghanistan belongs to the Afghans. Transition to Afghan lead is not only desirable, it is inevitable."³

¹ "Gates confident on British Afghanistan commitment", *Reuters*, June 7, 2010 at <http://uk.reuters.com/article/idUKTRE6560XD20100607>

² "Britain Reaffirms Support for Afghanistan Effort", *The New York Times*, June 10, 2010 at <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/11/world/europe/11britain.html>

³ "Transition in Afghanistan could start by year's end, NATO chief says", *Xinhua*, June 11, 2010 at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/world/2010-06/11/c_13345988.htm

Meanwhile, Foreign ministers of Turkey, Pakistan and Afghanistan held a close-door trilateral meeting in Istanbul on June 7 and discussed various security and anti-terrorism related issues. After the meeting, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said, "until our brothers in Afghanistan have welfare, stability and peace, these trilateral meetings will continue." However, he declined to give any detail information about discussions.⁴

US special envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke has said that the Afghan government must outline how international funding for so-called Afghanistan Peace and Reconciliation Programme which is meant for reintegration of Taliban militants, will be overseen before its utilization process begins. Holbrooke stated, "The details of how it will be administered and overseen are quite important to the donor governments so there is no question of the diversion of funds".⁵

At least 39 people were killed in a suicide attack on a wedding party, carried out by Taliban in Arghandab district of Kandahar province on June 9.⁶ Taliban stronghold Kandahar is set to be a place for a major operation led by NATO troops soon. Thousands of extra US troops with NATO forces have planned to launch the massive operation aimed at driving out the Taliban militants from Kandahar.⁷ Meanwhile, President Hamid Karzai has appealed to the community leaders in Kandahar to support the NATO operation in order to bolster security in Taliban stronghold and urged people to work with his government to "bring dignity back."⁸

(June 14-20)

- **NATO establishes a new Regional Command Southwest (RC-SW) for its operations in Southern Afghanistan; The restructuring brings majority of British troops in Afghanistan under the US command; LSE Report: Pakistan's ISI funds, trains and support Taliban militants in Afghanistan; US Defence Secretary Gates warns of scaling back of defense operations in Afghanistan if Congress fails to approve billions in additional war funding urgently; President Karzai thanks Japan for**

⁴ "Turkey, Pakistan, Afghanistan discuss security in Istanbul", *People's Daily Online*, June 7, 2010 at <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90777/90851/7016184.html>

⁵ "US urges Afghanistan to detail Taliban reintegration plan", *AFP*, June 8, 2010 at <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hQlkbDiNWjdi8SbCVLYRqvuo5TA>

⁶ "Blast Tears Through Afghan Wedding Celebration", *The New York Times*, June 9, 2010 at <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/10/world/asia/10afghan.html>

⁷ "40 killed in bomb attack on Afghanistan wedding party", *The Hindu*, June 10, 2010 at <http://beta.thehindu.com/news/international/article451506.ece>

⁸ "Afghanistan's Karzai seeks support for Kandahar op", *The Associated Press*, June 13, 2010 at <http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5hvWEqwq3CrRvaQCmt21MfoYhjZJQD9GAD7A>

its 6.5 billion \$ assistance to Afghanistan; UN Report: Violence level in Afghanistan sharply increased this year; Reports: Afghanistan has mineral deposits worth one trillion US \$

NATO has announced on June 14 that it had split the most violent Southern Afghanistan region in half in a bid to improve security by focusing on smaller geographical areas. The restructuring process was being planned for many months but the new announcement marked the official start of a new Regional Command Southwest (RC-SW) which reflects the influx of thousands of new US troops into the region. This announcement comes ahead when more than 20,000 international and Afghan troops are set to launch a massive operation to drive out Taliban militant from Kandahar province. NATO said in a statement that new structure will allow NATO commanders to deliver improved security in the region by focusing on smaller geographical areas and ensuring greater partnering with Afghan forces. Previously, all international forces in the southern Afghanistan were under one Regional Command South (RC-S), having the responsible for six provinces. But this new Regional Command Southwest (RC-SW) will be in charge of some 27,000 troops in Helmand and Nimroz provinces. However, RC-S will be responsible for other four provinces. The restructure will also bring the majority of the 9,500 British troops who are based in Helmand, under the command of a US Marine general. British forces have been operating in Helmand province since 2006.⁹

In a report published by the London School of Economics (LSE), suggests that support to the Taliban is the “official policy” of the Pakistan’s Inter- Services Intelligence (ISI). According to the report, the ISI not only funds and trains Taliban fighters in Afghanistan but it also makes official representation on the Quetta Shura, thus providing significant influence over its operations. Based on interviews with Taliban commanders, report points out that “Pakistan continues to give extensive support to the insurgency in terms of funding, munitions and supplies”. The report notes that, “Without a change in Pakistani behaviour, it will be difficult if not impossible for international forces and the Afghan government to make progress against the insurgency.” However, Pakistani officials have dismissed the allegations in the report calling it “absolutely spurious”.¹⁰

Issuing a dire warning to US legislators, Defense Secretary Robert Gates has said that if Congress fails to approve billions in additional war funding by July 4, the

⁹ “NATO reveals new command structure in Southern Afghanistan”, *Reuters*, June 14, 2010 at <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE65D23020100614>

¹⁰ “Pakistan meddling in Afghanistan: report”, *Daily Times*, June 14, 2010 at http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010%5C06%5C14%5Cstory_14-6-2010_pg1_4

US troops in Afghanistan will be left with scaled back defense operations which will put them in further peril. Gates made these remarks while testifying before the Senate Appropriations Committee on June 17. He stated, "I am becoming increasingly concerned about the lack of progress on the supplemental and strongly urge Congress to complete its work on the request as quickly as possible". Earlier, the Senate had approved its version of the \$58.8 billion defense bill, but the House has lagged in approving its measure.¹¹

President Hamid Karzai who was on a four-day visit to Japan, praised Japanese government for its generous contribution to Afghanistan. It should be noted that Japan is second biggest donor country in Afghanistan following the United States. Karzai thanked Japan for the \$6.5 billion assistance and expressed hope that the aid would effectively be utilized for rural rehabilitation, improving health facilities, capacity development and other areas.¹²

According to a UN report, violence in Afghanistan has sharply increased this year as on an average, there is an assassination each day and a suicide bombing every second or third day. The report confirms the NATO statistics which claimed a continuing decrease in civilian deaths caused by the United States military and its allies. At the same time, it blames stepped-up military operations for an overall increase in the violence. There has been an alarming increase in suicide bombings and assassinations of government officials in a three-month period ending June 16, and a near-doubling of roadside bombings for the first four months of 2010 as compared to same period in 2009.¹³

In other developments, reports noted that Afghanistan has nearly one trillion dollars in mineral deposits. A study conducted in the United States found that existing reserves of lithium, iron, gold, niobium, cobalt and other minerals could transform Afghanistan into a global mining hub. The spokesperson for Afghanistan's Ministry of Mines and Industries said, "The natural resources of Afghanistan will play a magnificent role in Afghanistan's economic growth."¹⁴

¹¹ "Gates to Congress: Stalling on War Funding Will Hurt U.S. Troops", *Fox News*, June 17, 2010 at <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2010/06/17/gates-increasingly-concerned-lag-approving-additional-war-funding/>

¹² "Japan's aid not based on political interest: Karzai", *Pajhwok Afghan News*, June 19, 2010 at <http://www.pajhwok.com/viewstory.asp?lng=eng&id=96530>

¹³ "Violence Up Sharply in Afghanistan", *The New York Times*, June 19, 2010 at <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/20/world/asia/20afghan.html>

¹⁴ "\$1-trillion mineral wealth in Afghanistan", *The Hindu*, June 15, 2010 at <http://beta.thehindu.com/news/international/article456645.ece>

PAKISTAN (June 7-13)

- **United States to establish an audit office in Islamabad to manage the US aid to Pakistan; US Assistant Secretary of State Robert Blake: India is supportive of financial assistance to “stabilize Pakistan”; Pakistan, Afghanistan and Turkey reach an understanding to eliminate militancy; Clash between Lashkar-e-Islam (LI) and Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) claims 21 lives; US missiles kill 15 militants in North Waziristan**

The United States intends to establish an audit office in Islamabad to manage the spending of US aid to Pakistan, reports noted. The office will supervise the accounting of the overall US assistance to Pakistan under Coalition Support Fund (CSF) and the Pakistan Counter-Insurgency Capability Fund (PCCF). The officials in Islamabad will report to the Inspector General’s office in Washington.¹⁵

In a related development, US Assistant Secretary of State, Robert Blake noted that even though India has voiced concerns on misuse of US military aid to Pakistan, India is supportive of financial assistance to “stabilize Pakistan.” Blake was addressing a State Department blog forum in Washington on June 8. Blake had on an earlier occasion admitted that US is pressing Pakistan to go on with its operations in Swat and South Waziristan.¹⁶

Pakistan, Afghanistan and Turkey reached an understanding to eliminate militancy which they agreed was a “threat to humanity”. The resolve was made at a trilateral meeting in Istanbul on June 7 in which the foreign ministers of the three states participated.¹⁷

In other developments, there was clash between two militant organizations in Landikotal in khyber Agency resulting in the death of 21 people. The incident occurred between Lashkar-e-Islam (LI) and Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Swat chapter.¹⁸ On the other hand, 15 militants were killed in a US missile attacks in North Waziristan on June 11.¹⁹

¹⁵ Anwar Iqbal, “US plans audit office in Islamabad to monitor aid”, *Dawn*, June 13, 2010 at <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/19-us-plans-audit-office-in-islamabad-to-monitor-aid-360-hh-09>

¹⁶ “India backs US aid to Pakistan, says Blake”, *Dawn*, June 9, 2010 at <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/india-backs-us-aid-to-pakistan%2C-says-blake-960>

¹⁷ “Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkey agree to enhance cooperation against terror”, *Daily Times*, June 8, 2010 at http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\06\08\story_8-6-2010_pg1_3

¹⁸ “Ashrafuddin Pirzada, ‘Death toll hits 21 in TTP-LI clash’”, *The News*, June 7, 2010 at http://www.thenews.com.pk/arc_default.asp?arc_date=6/7/2010

¹⁹ “US missiles kill 15 Taliban in N Waziristan”, *Daily Times*, June 12, 2010 at

(June 14-20)

- **LSE study establishes deep linkages between ISI and the Taliban; Richard Holbrooke: US aid to Pakistan would increase; Pakistan demands advanced US helicopters to fight militants in the tribal areas; US provides evidence against the Haqqani network to Pakistan, urges strict action against the network; PAF plane sent to bring back Pakistani students from Kyrgyzstan**

The London School of Economics has come out with a report describing the ties between the ISI and the Taliban. The paper talks about the “significant influence” that ISI has over Taliban’s operation and is based largely on the interviews of Taliban commanders conducted by the author, Matt Waldman. The study concludes that the association between the ISI and the Taliban is much deeper than what it is known to be.²⁰

US Special Envoy on Pakistan, Richard Holbrooke noted that US military and non military aid to Pakistan would be increased. Holbrooke was addressing a joint press conference with Shah Memood Qureshi at the Foreign Office during his visit to Islamabad on June 19.²¹

Meanwhile, US urged Pakistan to take action against the Haqqani network by providing evidence that the network was involved in recent attacks in Afghanistan. This was stated by General Petraeus during a Senate hearing in Washington on June 16.²²

A report published in the Washington Times noted that Pakistan has expressed need for special attack helicopters to fight the militants in the region. Notably, Pakistan’s demand has been considered favourably by US officials including Senator John Mc Cain.²³

In other developments, an air force plane carrying relief items was sent to Kyrgyzstan on June 14. The PAF aircraft was slated to bring back Pakistani

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\06\12\story_12-6-2010_pg1_5

²⁰ “ISI accused of funding, training Afghan Taliban”, *Dawn*, June 14, 2010 at

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/isi-accused-of-funding%2C-training-afghan-taliban-460>

²¹ “US to increase Pak civil, military aid: Holbrooke”, *The News*, June 20, 2010 at

http://www.thenews.com.pk/arc_default.asp?arc_date=6/20/2010

²² “US presents Pakistan with evidence on Haqqani network”, *Daily Times*, June 17, 2010 at

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\06\17\story_17-6-2010_pg1_6

²³ “Pakistan asks US to provide advanced attack helicopters”, *Daily Times*, June 17, 2010 at

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\06\17\story_17-6-2010_pg1_7

students from Kyrgyzstan and the body of a deceased student killed in the ongoing violence.²⁴

BHUTAN (June 7-20)

Lhasa strives to build a cross-Himalaya tourist destination; India's army chief visits Bhutan, assures India's continued support to Bhutan's security interests; India to raise 16 more battalions of the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) to guard Indo-Bhutan and Indo-Nepal border; US expresses interest in taking more Bhutanese refugees living in Nepal

In a bid to make Tibet a world class tourist attraction Lhasa, capital city of Tibet Autonomous Region strives to build a cross-Himalaya tourist destination by joining hands with neighboring countries including Nepal, India, Bhutan, etc., This was stated by the Director of Lhasa Municipal Tourism Bureau Jiang Hua. He noted that apart from the improvement of the international air route Lhasa-Katmandu, more flights between Lhasa and India and between Lhasa and Bhutan would be added.²⁵

The Indian army chief of staff, General Vijay Kumar Singh was on a four day visit to Bhutan from June 7-11, 2010. While highlighting the level of excellent bilateral relationship that the two countries share, Singh assured Bhutanese premier of India's continued support to Bhutan's security interests.²⁶ Meanwhile India has decided to raise sixteen more battalions of the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) along the Indo-Bhutan and Indo-Nepal border. According to official sources, the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) cleared the proposal and the battalions would be raised at an estimated cost of Rs 1,800 crore.²⁷

On energy front, Druk Green Power Corporation announced that given the growing domestic energy demands, Bhutan could import electricity from India. Kuensel reported that Bhutan could spend at least Nu 1.3 billion in the next six years importing electricity from India.²⁸

²⁴ "PAF plane sent to bring back Pakistanis stranded in Kyrgyzstan", *The News*, June 15, 2010 at http://www.thenews.com.pk/arc_default.asp?arc_date=6/15/2010

²⁵ "Lhasa joins hands with neighboring countries in tourism," *China Tibet*, June 8, 2010, at <http://chinatibet.people.com.cn/7016071.html>

²⁶ "Indian CoAS calls on PM," *Kuensel*, June 11, 2010, at <http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=15724>

²⁷ "16 new SSB battalions for Nepal, Bhutan borders," *Zee News*, June 17, 2010, at <http://www.zeenews.com/news634793.html>

²⁸ "From exporter to importer," *Kuensel*, June 10, 2010, at <http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=15735>

Reports noted that the United States expressed interest in taking more Bhutanese refugees living in eastern Nepal for resettlement in the United States. Meanwhile in a recent meeting with U.S. Deputy Under-Secretary for Population, Refugees and Migration Kelly Clements, Nepali Deputy Prime Minister, Sujata Koirala insisted on the repatriation of refugees to Bhutan as permanent solution to this problem.²⁹

B. EAST ASIA

JAPAN (June 7-13)

- **Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama resigns; Japanese Cabinet: US Marine Corps stationed in Okinawa Prefecture are important deterrent force for Japan; Naoto Kan takes over as new Prime Minister of Japan; Kan expresses wish to rebuild ties with Washington; Kan rejects opposition demand for snap general elections; Kan assures US president Obama 'to make strenuous efforts' on Okinawa issue**

In a very significant development, Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama has resigned on June 2 with the hope to improve his party's chances in an election next month. This happened after his popularity plunged due to his broken campaign promise to move a U.S. Marine base. The primary factor behind this was his bad handling of the relocation of the Marine Air Station Futenma on the southern island of Okinawa reinforced his public image as an indecisive leader.³⁰

Meanwhile, reports suggest that the government has admitted that U.S. Marine Corps stationed in Okinawa Prefecture are an important deterrent force for Japan. This determination came during a Cabinet meeting, when the government adopted a written answer to a questionnaire submitted by Kantoku Teruya, a Social Democratic Party (SDP) member elected from an Okinawa constituency, to former Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama.³¹

²⁹ “ U.S. willing to resettle more Bhutanese refugees living in Nepal,” *People Daily*, June 11, 2010, at <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90777/90852/7022252.html>

³⁰ “Prime Minister Hatoyama steps down” *Associated Press*, June 2, 2010 at <http://newsonjapan.com/html/newsdesk/article/81882.php>

³¹ “Gov't admits US Marines in Okinawa an important deterrent force for Japan” *Mainichi News*, June 10, 2010 at [http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/news/20100610p2a00m0na011000c.html?inb=rs&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed:+mdn/all+\(Mainichi+Daily+News+-+All+Stories\)&utm_content=Google+Reader](http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/news/20100610p2a00m0na011000c.html?inb=rs&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed:+mdn/all+(Mainichi+Daily+News+-+All+Stories)&utm_content=Google+Reader)

After Hatoyama's resignation, Naoto Kan who is also president of the ruling Democratic Party of Japan, has taken over as new Prime Minister of Japan. Kan will be the Japan's fifth premier in four years. Prime Minister Kan has unveiled his cabinet and vowed to create a "vigorous country", restore its public finances and mend the strained relations with the United States.³² Meanwhile Kan dismissed a call from the opposition camp to dissolve the House of Representatives for a snap general election. In his first press conference as prime minister, Kan said that his government will "be tested in the (upcoming) House of Councillors election,".³³

According to lawmakers of the ruling Democratic Party of Japan, Prime Minister Kan and US President Barack Obama agreed to make efforts to fulfill a Japan-US accord on the relocation of a U.S. military base within Okinawa Prefecture. Kan reportedly said to Obama during his telephonic conversation with him, "I want to make strenuous efforts" on the base issue. While, Obama told Kan that he wants to strengthen the bilateral partnership in the global arena for peace and stability.³⁴

(June 14-20)

- **Ruling Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) outlines its determination to rebuild the nation's finances; Kan survives no confidence motion in Parliament; Kan announces his decision not to visit Yasukuni Shrine during his tenure; Prime ministerial hotline activated between Japan and China**

In recent developments Ruling Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) led by Prime Minister Kan has outlined its determination to rebuild the nation's finances and slash its deficit in its new manifesto ahead of upper house elections next month. Kan changed course from his predecessor Yukio Hatoyama, who had primarily focused on foreign policy shifts and higher social welfare spending. Kan called for a full debate on tax reform, including whether to hike sales tax.³⁵ On the other hand he has survived a no-confidence motion after bitter exchanges in parliament kicked off campaigning for an upper house election next month. The conservative opposition Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) moved the motion after the ruling Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) changed leaders last week, arguing

³² "Japan PM unveils new cabinet" *Associate Foreign Press*, June 8, 2010 at <http://newsonjapan.com/html/newsdesk/article/82004.php>

³³ "LEAD: Kan rejects opposition call for dissolution of lower house+" *Associated Press*, June 8, 2010 at http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9G72U880&show_article=1

³⁴ "LEAD: Kan, Obama agree to make efforts to fulfill Japan-U.S. base accord+" *Associated Press*, June 5, 2010 at http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9G57M5G0&show_article=1

³⁵ "Japan's ruling party unveils manifesto" *Associate Foreign Press*, June 17, 2010 at http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jHVGKF_ofzQOO1_a0Cu_A8kDxUyQ

the new prime minister had no popular mandate.³⁶ The Prime Minister has also declared that he will make no controversial visit to the war-linked Yasukuni Shrine during his tenure.³⁷

Meanwhile Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao and PM Kan held a telephone conversation. This marked the official activation of the China-Japan prime ministerial hotline. Jiabao congratulated Kan on becoming Japan's Premier. Jiabao also conveyed Chinese President's greetings to him.³⁸

SOUTHEAST ASIA (June 7-13)

- **Malaysia to launch a signature campaign to condemn recent Israeli attack on the Gaza-bound flotilla; Malaysian Prime Minister will seek agreement from like minded countries to hold a special session of the UN to condemn Israeli attack; Malaysia and Czech Republic plans to boost bilateral ties; Malaysia urges ASEAN members states to deliberate upon enhancing cooperation with both the US and Russia; Thai reconciliation plan launched on June 10; Thai PM Abhisit Vejjajiva emphasises on people's active participation to make the reconciliation successful; India hopes for a broad-based political reform in Myanmar.**

Malaysia will soon launch a signature campaign in support of a motion to condemn recent Israeli attack on a humanitarian aid ship bound for Gaza. Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak has reportedly asked Malaysian representative to the UN Datuk Hamidton Ali to inform UN secretary General Ban Ki- Moon about his country's intention to bring a resolution on that matter.³⁹ Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak will also seek agreement from like minded countries, particularly from the OIC (Organisation of the Islamic Conference) and NAM (Non-Aligned Movement) to hold a special session of the UN in September to condemn Israeli atrocities.⁴⁰

³⁶ "Japan's new PM survives no-confidence motion" *Associate Foreign Press*, June 16, 2010 at http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20100616/wl_asia_afp/japanpolitics_20100616064521

³⁷ "LEAD: Kan says he will not visit Yasukuni Shrine during tenure+" *Associated Press*, June 15, 2010 at http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9GBK0C80&show_article=1

³⁸ "China, Japan launch prime ministerial hotline" *Xinhua*, June 13, 2010 at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-06/13/c_13349120.htm

³⁹ "Signature campaign in support of motion condemning Israel", *Bernama.com*, June 13, 2010 at <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsindex.php?id=505633>

⁴⁰ "Malaysia to rally countries for UN Special session to condemn Israeli Atrocities-Najib", *Bernama.com*, June 12, 2010, at <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsindex.php?id=505526>

During Czech Republic's First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Helena Bambasova's recent visit to Malaysia, both countries decided to strengthen their bilateral ties, particularly in sectors like higher education, tourism, trade, investment and defence. In 2009, the bilateral trade reportedly amounted to RM806.6 million.⁴¹

In his keynote address at the 24th Asia-Pacific held at Kuala Lumpur on June 8, Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak emphasised that ASEAN should re-examine its conduct of affairs in order to deal with rising global strategic challenges more effectively. He also urged the ASEAN member states to deliberate on the possibilities of enhancing participation of both the US and Russia in the Asia Pacific regional architecture. Both the United States and Russia have signed the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, and are dialogue partners of the ASEAN, having strong cooperative relations with both the organization as well as its member states.⁴²

While emphasising on the necessity of people's active participation in the recently launched reconciliation plan, Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva has said that the Thai people should seriously look for effective and transparent political mechanism in order to reform the country. Abhisit has also promised to push for the completion of a Thai reform plan by the end of this year.⁴³ It is worth noting that the reconciliation plan was launched on the morning of June 10 with the holding of a religious ceremony involving five religions.⁴⁴

While breaking its long silence over the escalating anti-junta protest in Myanmar, India has recently expressed hope that the political reform within the neighbouring country would be more broad-based and all sections of the people would be included in the reconciliation process.⁴⁵

(June 14-20)

- **India Navy vessels reach Malaysia on a four-day good will visit; Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak expresses hope of national**

⁴¹ "Czech, Malaysia agree to strengthen bilateral relations", *Bernama.com*, June 11, 2010, at <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsindex.php?id=505413>

⁴² "PM calls on Asean to boost ties with Russia and the US", *Bernama.com*, June 8, 2010, at <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsindex.php?id=504257>

⁴³ "PM calls for people's participation", *Bangkok Post*, June 10, 2010, at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/180833/pm-calls-for-people-participation>

⁴⁴ "PM: Reconciliation begins today", *Bangkok Post*, June 10, 2010, at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/180792/pm-reconciliation-begins-today>

⁴⁵ "National Reconciliation in Myanmar should be expedited: India", *Indo-Burma News*, June 7, 2010, at <http://www.indoburmanews.net/archives-1/2010/june/national-reconciliation-in-myanmar-should-be-expedited-india>

reconciliation in Myanmar; Kyrgyzstan seeks humanitarian aid from Malaysia to deal with ongoing unrest in the country; Thai government to conduct opinion polls on reconciliation plan from June 18.

To commemorate the maritime cooperation between India and Malaysia, the Indian navy's guided missile destroyers INS Rana, and INS Ranjit, along with fleet tanker INS Jyoti reached Malaysian Westport on June 20 on a four-day goodwill visit. According to the Indian Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet Rear Admiral P.Murugesan, this visit is an indicative of the long standing partnership between India and Malaysia.⁴⁶

Recently on the occasion of Myanmar's opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi's 65th birthday on June 20, Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak expressed hope that national reconciliation would be possible in Myanmar. He further stated that the ruling junta was aware of the necessary measures needed to achieve that goal. While commenting on the role the ASEAN's possible role on the reconciliation process, Najib stated that the organization hoped that the seven step 'road map to democracy' would be instrumental in building a peaceful, modern and new democracy in Myanmar.⁴⁷

The interim government in Kyrgyzstan has sought humanitarian aid from Malaysia for some two million affected people in order to deal with ongoing unrest there. Kyrgyzstan has requested Malaysia to provide the aid particularly in the form of food, flour, medicine, medical equipment, and tools for security agencies to enforce law and order.⁴⁸

Thai government has decided to conduct an opinion poll on the proposed reconciliation plan from June 18. This poll is to survey 100,000 people nationwide. Surveyed people will be basically asked about their aspirations for their country as well as the government after the recent political crisis. Results of the two-week long poll are expected to enable the government to convince the Thai people of the merits of the reconciliation plan.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ "Indian Navy Vessels dock in Malaysia for Good will visit", *Bernama.com*, June 20, 2010, at <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsindex.php?id=507322>

⁴⁷ "Malaysia wants to see National reconciliation in Myanmar-Najib", *Bernama.com*, June 19, 2010, at <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsindex.php?id=507196>

⁴⁸ "Kyrgyzstan seeks humanitarian assistance from Malaysia", *Bernama.com*, June 14, 2010, at <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsindex.php?id=505855>

⁴⁹ "Govt to conduct poll on reconciliation", *Bangkok Post*, June 15, 2010, at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/181333/govt-to-conduct-poll-on-reconciliation>