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Articles from subscriber only sites are available on request. Révolutionnaire is edited by Ong Weichong, with contributions from Bernard Loo and Joshua Ho. The Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS) is a key research component of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS). It focuses on security research to serve national needs. IDSS' faculty and research staff conduct both academic and policy-oriented research on security-related issues and developments affecting Southeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific. Its research agenda presently comprises the following programmes: Maritime Security, the Revolution in Military Affairs, Multilateralism and Regionalism, Contemporary Islam, Indonesia and China.

CONTEMPORARY CONFLICT

Thailand's South Derides Ceasefire Claim As Hoax

AFP -18 July

Televised claims of a ceasefire by separatist militants were derided Friday as a hoax by residents in Thailand's Muslim-majority south, after a veteran insurgent leader disavowed the move. A group called Ruam Pak Tai Khong Prathet Thai (Thailand's United Southern Underground group) made a videotaped announcement Thursday, broadcast on an army-run television station, declaring an end to the violence.

The declaration was greeted with widespread doubts among the Thai military, other insurgent leaders, and residents of the southern region along the Malaysian border who have suffered through four years of near-daily attacks.

Thailand's army commander General Anupong Paojinda said the military was surprised by the announcement, and Thai media reported Friday that he put little faith in it. Hours after the televised statement, leaflets written in Thai and Arabic began circulating the restive town of Yala, urging militants to continue their armed struggle and to ignore the ceasefire announcement. Residents said they saw no reason to believe the declaration. "I don't give any weight to yesterday's announcement. I closely monitor developments and I don't think it was genuine," said Ahmad Jaewae, 45, an Internet shop owner in Yala town. "The real leader would speak from his heart, not from a script," he told AFP.

Torlab Sama-ali, 60, a rubber tapper in Yala, was also sceptical but said he hoped for official negotiations between the government and militants to stop the violence. "If it's true it would be very welcome, as we are all suffering from the unrest - and as Muslims we do not agree with violence," he said. Paison, 28, who gave only one name, said the professed leaders were former militants who are no longer active. "I am not convinced that a ceasefire would be agreed this easily without any concessions, after all the many Muslims arrested over the years," he said.

The conflict has claimed 3,300 lives in the past four years and authorities have struggled to identify the militants, who rarely claim responsibility for attacks. One veteran militant leader, Kasturi Mahkota, disavowed the statement, saying his group knew nothing about the militants who appeared on television. "Nothing has changed and the dialogue with the Thai authorities is still in the pipeline," Kasturi, foreign affairs chief for the Patani United Liberation Organisation (PULO), told The Nation newspaper. PULO emerged in 1968 and over the next two decades became the biggest insurgent group fighting in the mainly Muslim region along the southern border with Malaysia. The group largely fell apart in the 1990s with most of their leaders living in exile. Past statements by PULO and Kasturi have had little effect on the fighting on the ground.

Analysts from local human rights organisation Working Group on Justice for Peace said the announcement could do more harm than good. "The announcement was just a scene in a play. It not only contributes to the situation of unrest but will worsen the situation," the group said in a statement. In their video, the militants said the ceasefire had taken

effect from July 14. But attacks have continued to rattle the region since then, including bombings at two of the main police stations in the border provinces. The region was an autonomous Malay Muslim sultanate until Thailand annexed it in 1902, provoking decades of tension.

[Saleh declares an end to Sa'ada fighting](#)

Yemen Times – 20 July

President Ali Abdullah Saleh announced on Thursday that fighting with Houthi supporters in Sa'ada, Amran and Sana'a governorates has ended. The announcement came during a brief speech he gave while inaugurating summer camps for youths affiliated with the ruling General People's Congress on the occasion of his 30th anniversary in power. "Dialogue is the civilized means to resolve conflict because dialogue is better than bloodshed," Saleh remarked, further accusing unnamed political forces of politicizing the issues in a sectarian and racial manner.

Saleh didn't reveal how the fifth war with Houthis ended; therefore, neither did any official source dare to clarify the details. Media reports, once released by Houthi field leader Abdulmalik Al-Houthi on a daily basis, have ceased since Thursday. Saleh's comments about the end of the Sa'ada war raised numerous questions among politicians, some of whom are convinced that the government and Houthis have inked a political deal beginning with a truce to end the ongoing fighting and unblock the Sana'a-Sa'ada Highway following Saleh's purported communications with Al-Houthi, according to reports by various media outlets last week.

Political observers maintain that Saleh has undertaken to begin pulling government troops from Sa'ada villages, releasing detained Houthi loyalists and assessing the war's damage to citizens' property in order to approve compensation for them. They add that Saleh will accelerate transferring Salafi military leaders, accused of fueling the fighting in favor of foreign parties, from Sa'ada to Sana'a. The president also promised to stop cracking down on Houthi supporters and pardon them, according to observers.

Numerous politicians related with Abdulmalik Al-Houthi confirm that Houthi followers are serious about ending the war and they trust President's Saleh decision, which they describe as "brave." "We want the fighting to cease and peoples' suffering to end," Houthi loyalists were quoted as saying. Displaying their readiness not to tolerate any violations that those opposed to Saleh's decision may commit, they added, "We back President Saleh, who has decided to oversee how both warring sides are committed to the truce."

Saleh ceased depending on some military commanders who, according to the politicians, were fomenting the fighting and exploiting it for their own interests. Houthis welcome truce, but remain on full alert. While Houthis welcomed the idea of ending the war, they remained on full alert and hesitant about whether to lift their nearly 60-day lockdown of several military brigades that continued until this past Saturday. However, confirmed reports reveal that the besieged brigades serving in the areas of Saqain and Haidan were

released on the same day, adding that the blockade of the 117th Military Division, commanded by Abdulaziz Al-Shahari, ended the following day.

Speaking to Al-Jazeera satellite channel by telephone from his residence in Berlin, Germany, Member of Parliament Yahya Al-Houthi, Abdulmalik's brother, described Saleh's declaration as "good," pointing out that his brother's followers have stopped the war on their side. However, he confirmed that some skirmishes continue and many Houthis still are detained, attributing this to "traitors within the army."

According to Al-Houthi, there is a verbal understanding between President Saleh and his brother Abdulmalik to end the war and pull troops out of Houthi-controlled areas. He indicated that the understanding came after Houthi supporters besieged all of the Yemeni army's strategic positions in Sa'ada. Official media outlets report that there is widespread popular satisfaction with Saleh's declaration that military operations in Sa'ada have ceased.

The war between the Yemeni army and Houthi gunmen, which first broke out in June 2004, has left thousands of troops and civilians dead, injured or maimed and destroyed citizens' homes and farmlands. Additionally, the Yemeni state has lost billions of dollars in the war. According to reports by humanitarian aid agencies, as many as 120,000 people have been directly affected by the war and mass exodus has led to the establishment of six refugee camps in Sa'ada sheltering thousands of displaced residents. A Yemeni non-governmental organization desiring to remain unnamed notes that 20,000 children have lost their fathers, 10,000 have become incapacitated and 6,000 families have lost their breadwinners.

[Troops sent to southern Philippines as attacks rise: military](#)

AFP – 21 July

Hundreds of troops have been sent to the southern Philippines to tackle a rapid rise in communist guerrilla attacks on civilian targets, the military said Tuesday. A battalion of mechanised infantry -- about 500 soldiers with tanks and armoured vehicles -- plus two field artillery batteries of about 200 gunners, deployed in Mindanao island on Sunday, said the region's military spokesman, Major Armand Rico.

The transfer of troops previously assigned in the north was in "response to the clamour of governors and mayors of (the region) to stop the criminal and terroristic acts of the godless communist terrorists," Rico told reporters.

Eastern Mindanao had seen "more than 100" attacks by the New People's Army (NPA) against mining firms, telecommunications towers and banana plantations in the first half of the year. In the past year the 5,000-member Maoist guerrilla force had also attacked a resort island, two prison facilities and municipal police posts in eastern Mindanao as it stepped up its campaign to seize weapons and raise funds through extortion. Last weekend the NPA set fire to a drilling rig at the Tampakan copper mining project of Anglo-Swiss

mining giant Xstrata plc. Rico said the military figures excluded the rebels' unreported extortion efforts.

Four infantry divisions -- nearly half the Philippine Army -- are already deployed in Mindanao, with about half assigned to deal with the NPA threat to the north and east of the country's second largest island. Western Mindanao is also a hotbed of a decades-old Muslim separatist insurgency, though a ceasefire is in effect amid peace talks.

Rico said the reinforcements would allow the military to field more mobile and more powerful units against the NPA in the gold-rich Compostela Valley region and around Davao city, centre of commercial farming. He warned there was a danger of a "possible return of the chaotic situation during the 1980s," when the NPA operated out of the slums of major Mindanao cities and launched assassination campaigns against soldiers and police. The NPA, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, has been waging a 39-year armed campaign across the country.

[We're making headway in Iraq and need to stay there](#)

Independent – 21 July

Good news from Iraq has been in short supply, but the House of Commons Defence Committee recently returned from Basra considerably cheered. The logic now is that the UK should maintain a substantial force in Basra for some time yet.

This may not be what the Prime Minister wants to hear, but as he returns from Iraq, he should come to the same conclusion. We should plan to stay to build a positive military footprint of our own in part of what will become one of the richest and most powerful countries in the Gulf region. A pre-election rush for the exit will underline how the UK lacks political willpower and is deficient in the necessary military capacity to exploit recent success. Having taken a fair proportion of the effort, including battle casualties, why hand all the upside to the Americans?

We had expected to find, as last year, a military force almost wholly preoccupied with its own protection and incapable of contributing much strategically. Throughout the last 18 months, while General Petraeus changed the US doctrine of operations from conventional warfare to counter insurgency, and began to win consent on the streets in Baghdad and Anbar province, UK forces in the south seemed to be in retreat. We had become locked down in our bases, enduring regular rocket attacks, only able to operate in heavily-armoured convoys, subject to mines and roadside bombs.

In the autumn of last year, we effectively handed Basra city to the Iranian-backed Shia militias. The police were corrupt, the local government was seen as complicit, and the prospects for stability were remote. Worst of all, the casualties we suffered seemed pointless.

On 25 March this year, Prime Minister Maliki ordered his southern security chief, General Mohan, to lead an Iraqi army offensive in Basra to clear out the Shia militias:

Operation Charge of the Knights. The local 14th Division under General Mohan faltered at first, the enemy gained confidence, and Mr Maliki ordered in the Iraqi 1st Division from Baghdad as reinforcement.

Whereas British policy initially prevented Military Transition Teams (MiTTs) from deploying on operations with the 14th Division, the US Marines mentoring the 1st Division were embedded with the Iraqi military and appeared on the streets of Basra as participants in the battle, actively advising on planning and tactics as well as providing helicopter lift and air cover. As well as achieving victory, the Iraqi army has made a quantum leap in self-confidence and respect. But there was another equally dramatic development.

The Shia militias' propaganda and religious rallies had been about ridding Iraq of the foreign invader, so there was nervousness that a visible coalition presence would undermine public support for Iraqi forces. However, instead of behaving like Iraqi patriots, Basrawis saw the militias shooting and killing Iraqi soldiers, whom the Americans were seeking to help and protect. This created sufficient confidence for British forces to deploy back on to the streets of Basra for the first time since October last year.

The Americans and the British are now welcomed as the peacemakers we really are, both by the population and the Iraqi army. This builds on a deep historical respect for the British in Basra, which stretches back to our role there from before the First World War. Far from being beleaguered, our 4,000 troops have now deployed 16 MiTTs to mentor and train the Iraqi security forces all over southern Iraq.

A British acting Brigadier, Col Richard Iron, unusually committed to his operational tour for a year, is mentoring Iraqi 10th division HQ, which commands all the Iraqi security forces in Basra province, under General Mohammed. He now has responsibility for the south.

Similarly, the Royal Navy is overseeing the reformation of the entire Iraqi Navy. This is a transformation. The only real frustration is that nobody back home seems to appreciate what is being achieved.

Our armed forces are clearly planning to stay long-term to continue training the Iraqis. Large sums of taxpayers' money are being invested in hardened accommodation. Basra airport itself is being returned to civilian control, but there is no reason why British armed forces should not be stationed there indefinitely, as in Cyprus.

The Prime Minister would prefer to be out of Iraq as soon as possible, so voters will forget it. Sadly, the defence chiefs seem to share his aim. They are in despair about overstretch and the financial crisis which grips the MoD. It will be ironic if we starve success in Iraq only to reinforce what may turn out to be failure elsewhere. And perhaps the defence chiefs should be arguing publicly for more money, instead of appearing to argue for reducing necessary commitments.

['Mission change' for UK in Iraq](#)

BBC – 22 July

Gordon Brown says he expects a "fundamental change of mission" for British forces in Iraq early next year. In his last Commons statement on Iraq before MPs' summer recess, the prime minister said 4,100 UK troops will stay in Iraq "for the next few months". Updating MPs on his visit there, he said as progress was made troop numbers "will continue to reduce". But Conservative leader David Cameron warned him not to announce troop reductions prematurely.

In his statement, Mr Brown also called for the immediate release of British hostages "unjustifiably" held for more than a year in Iraq. He said there had been a "marked improvement" in conditions in Basra, with incidents of indirect fire on British troops down from 200 a month to an average of less than five a month since April. Violent incidents across Iraq were at their lowest since 2004 and the improvements in security were increasingly Iraqi-led.

The focus of the 4,100 troops still in southern Iraq was now on completing the task of training and mentoring the 14th Division of the Iraqi Army in Basra. "As we complete these tasks and as progress continues across these different areas, we will continue to reduce the number of British troops in Iraq," he said. "We would expect another fundamental change of mission in the first few months of 2009 as we make the transition to a long-term bilateral relationship with Iraq."

He urged Syria to "clamp down on the movement of foreign fighters" and warned Iran to "stop the provision of arms and training to those who attack a democratically-elected government in Iraq or the coalition forces in Iraq and the Iraqi people".

Mr Cameron praised the "incredible job" carried out in "difficult circumstances" by British troops, but he said he would judge the prime minister by his action, not his words. Clearly, everyone wants to see our forces withdrawn from Iraq as soon as it is practical to do so," he said. "But do you agree with me that looking back over the last year, there are two important lessons to learn? The first is that we shouldn't make premature announcements about troops withdrawals which cannot then be delivered."

Earlier, the Commons defence committee said the security situation in the country had been "transformed". But UK training of Iraqi forces in Basra must be a "medium-to-long-term project", it said. Maintaining a sizeable training commitment was important to ensuring Britain remained an influential player in Iraq, as the country - potentially one of the biggest oil-producers in the Middle East - recovered its power and prosperity.

It said the success of an anti-militia operation, largely carried out by the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) with British and US support, had led to a "seismic shift" in the balance of power in the city. Last year, all training had been carried out at the main UK base at

Basra Airport because it had been too dangerous to operate outside, but now the teams were with their Iraqi "parent" units around the region.

The committee said that it was "vital" to the stability of southern Iraq that their work was able to continue, even as overall British force levels were reduced. The committee said that, while there was now a high degree of security in Basra, some areas of the city were not yet fully under the control of the ISF. "There is no doubt that more remains to be done. The UK government must ensure that it continues to provide support to the ISF to ensure that the progress which has been made is not lost and that Basra does not slip back into instability," the committee warned.

It said Iran - previously accused by Britain of supplying sophisticated explosive devices to the Iraqi militias - could continue to cause trouble in the country. Conservative MP James Arbuthnot, who led a committee visit to Basra this year, said the city had been "completely transformed" in the last 12 months. "Last year when we were there, there seemed to be rocket and mortar attacks coming in every couple of hours or so. This year, we were there for five days - not a single rocket or mortar attack," he told BBC Radio Five Live. "The removal of the militia from their malign influence in Basra in March and April by Prime Minister Maliki had made a complete change to the prospects in Basra and we were very encouraged."

Retired Maj Gen Tim Cross, who was the most senior UK officer involved in post-war planning in Iraq, warned: "Events will drive us, as they always do. "The situation on the ground will drive us, and there will be, I am sure, many ups and downs in the next few months." He told BBC Radio 4's Today programme: "Getting to the point where you can hand over responsibility to the in-place Iraqi forces is key to us being able to move on. "We need to work alongside them, generally speaking, hand over progressively. The intent of handing over Basra airport will be the culmination of that."

[UK soldiers kill Taleban leader](#)

BBC – 22 July

British troops in Afghanistan have delivered a "shattering blow" to the Taleban by killing one of its senior leaders, the Ministry of Defence says. Abdul Rasaq, also known as Mullah Sheikh, died in a missile strike about 10 miles north of Musa Qala in Helmand province just after midnight on Sunday. He is believed to be responsible for leading insurgents around Musa Qala. Mullah Sheikh is the third senior Taleban leader to be killed in just over three weeks, the MoD said.

The most senior Taleban leader in the province, Mullah Rahim, gave himself up in Pakistan just hours before Mullah Sheikh's death. The MoD also said an associate of Rahim, known as Bishmullah, was killed eight days before, and bomb-maker Sadiqullah was killed in a missile strike by an Apache helicopter 24 days earlier.

British forces spokesman Lt Col Robin Matthews said: "The Taleban's senior leadership structure has suffered a shattering blow. "They remain a dangerous enemy, but they

increasingly lack strategic direction and their proposition to the Afghan people is proving ultimately negative and self-defeating." British troops are part of Nato forces currently conducting a campaign targeting the leadership of the Taleban.

Taliban using sophisticated media network

Seattle PI – 24 July

The Taliban have created a sophisticated media network to undermine support for the Afghan government, sending threats by text message and spreading the militia's views through songs available as ring tones, according to a report released Thursday. The International Crisis Group report comes as the Islamist militia that was ousted from power in Afghanistan by the 2001 U.S.-led invasion is making a violent comeback, particularly in the country's south and east.

The Taliban's propaganda exploits civilian killings by foreign forces and corruption in the U.S.-backed government to add to Afghans' disillusionment about their lives, according to the report by the Brussels, Belgium-based group. It said the Afghan government and its foreign allies should respond more quickly to their mistakes and highlight the Taliban's atrocities.

Many of the messages that have been distributed - apparently not always directly produced by the Taliban - come in the form of songs, religious chants and poetry that appeal to Afghan nationalism and Islamic pride. Some of the tunes are available as ring tones for phones, and cassettes include songs such as "Let me go to jihad," the report said. Some people reported that they kept the cassettes as a form of protection in case they were stopped by Taliban. One poem - "Death is a gift," on Al Emarah - included the phrase, "I will not kiss the hand of Laura Bush."

The Taliban movement also has a Web site, Al Emarah, or The Emirate, which has various domain names due to attempts to block it. The Taliban also publish pamphlets and magazines, and their communications come in multiple languages including English. DVDs and audio cassettes also are used.

Because illiteracy is widespread in Afghanistan, and many Afghans have little to no access to the Internet or television, the Taliban also use traditional means of communication to spread their message. They often send shabnamahs - fliers that are often distributed at night in an area. Often the letters threaten people who work with international forces or the government, the report said.

The report also said that Taliban media play up civilian casualties caused by foreign forces but deny involvement in most bombings that kill a large number of ordinary Afghans. Because of the poor security situation, independent journalists often have a difficult time verifying claims of either side.

Obeidullah Jan, a Barekzai tribal leader from Dand district in Kandahar province, said the Taliban had tremendous influence on local media and that journalists in the area often

reported their claims. But even if the Taliban had no media outreach, their impact - from suicide attacks to gunbattles - is hard to miss, he said. "Whether they use the media or not, the people are witnessing their activities," Jan said. The media messages at times underscore the loose, disorganized nature of the militancy.

The report notes that the Taliban as well as the Hezb-i-Islami network of warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar each claimed credit for a suicide attack in Kabul's Wazir Akbar Khan neighborhood in November 2007. Later that year, the Taliban Web site announced the dismissal of a Taliban commander, but the commander's spokesman rejected it, telling reporters it was a "conspiracy by some elements within the Taliban movement," the report said.

[Taliban factions may be using British forces to assassinate rival commanders](#)
Independent – 25 July

The missile strike took place just after midnight, nine miles north of Musa Qala in Helmand. Abdul Rasaq and three of his senior lieutenants had been picked out in the middle of a field. They were already dead as the Nato warplanes that had carried out the precision attack roared away.

Rasaq, also known as Mullah Sheikh, was the third insurgent leader killed in three weeks, while another had surrendered to authorities in Pakistan over the weekend. The past 18 months had also seen the deaths of three other commanders including Mullah Dadullah, who had led insurgent forces in Helmand.

The British and Americans have presented the assassinations as examples of how their policy of "decapitating" the enemy leadership is working. But according to security sources, there is also evidence that factions within the Taliban are using Western forces to eliminate rivals in a new version of the "Great Game" being played out in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The "hits" on the Taliban leadership have almost all been based on initial intelligence supplied from within the insurgency, although details of the movements of some senior insurgents have also been gleaned from intercepted telephone calls. Some of the information has come from the Afghan security service, NDS, and some from Pakistani officials, while the British have held secret talks with elements of the Taliban – despite official denials.

The tempo of targeted attacks on the Taliban leadership has dramatically increased in the past month. Eight days before the killing of Mullah Sheikh, another senior leader, Bishmullah Khan, was shot dead by commandos on the outskirts of Nowzad. Three weeks previously, Mullah Sadiqullah, a prolific bomb-maker, was killed by a Hellfire missile fired from an Apache helicopter gunship.

One senior Taliban figure connected to all three men was Mullah Rahim, described as the insurgent leader in Helmand. He is said to have been a mentor to Mullah Sheikh, picked

Bismullah as his chief lieutenant and had delegated explosives to Mullah Sadiqullah. On Sunday, just hours after Mullah Sheikh had been killed, Mullah Rahim gave himself up to authorities in Pakistan.

One senior Western official, who deals with both Nato and Afghan forces on security matters, said: "Not all of the intelligence we are getting is being given for altruistic reasons. The Taliban movement is pretty amorphous and we are aware that different groupings appear to be passing on information. There appears to be a power struggle going on in the insurgent leadership across the [Pakistan] border and we are also aware that certain official bodies have their own agendas and that is reflected in what they tell us." Another defence source said: "Whatever the ulterior motive... the fact is that we are getting rid of some pretty bad people."

In May last year Mullah Dadullah, the Taliban commander in Afghanistan, was shot dead by a SBS team between Sangin and Nahri Sarraj districts of Helmand. Senior aides of the Kandahar governor Assadullah Khalid, who ordered the body of the one-legged 40-year-old to be displayed, said that information on his movements had come from within the Taliban. One officer with knowledge of the operation said there was suspicion that false information had been given after British troops failed to find Dadullah's body following the firefight. But his remains were discovered along with a group of Taliban survivors who were trying to carry it away.

Five months ago Mullah Dadullah's brother, Mansoor Dadullah, who is said to have held secret talks with the West about the possibility of changing sides, was critically wounded and captured by Pakistani security forces. He had inherited the command of Taliban fighters in Afghanistan from his brother, but he is said to have held subsequent meetings with Western diplomats, acting on behalf of the British, to defect with 2,000 of his men. It was these talks, which the government of Hamid Karzai insisted were unauthorised, that led to the expulsion of Michael Semple, the acting head of the European Union mission to Afghanistan (who has worked as a British diplomat in Pakistan), and Mervyn Patterson, a senior UN official.

Just before the diplomats were thrown out, a Taliban spokesman said that Dadullah had been dismissed from his command for "disobeying orders" and activities "against the Taliban's rules" at the orders of the movement's spiritual leader, Mullah Omar. Elements of the Pakistani security forces are known to have close ties with the Taliban and Western diplomatic sources say that Dadullah may have been eliminated because he had become a liability for the Islamist group and also as a warning to other leaders who may contemplate negotiating with the West. It also showed, said the officials, just how ruthless both sides can be in the new "Great Game".

[Canada to send 200 more soldiers to Afghanistan, Emerson says](#)

Globe and Mail – 26 July

Kandahar needs a significant increase in foreign troops, but Canada will contribute only 200 more soldiers later this year, Foreign Affairs Minister David Emerson says. Mr.

Emerson's whirlwind trip to Afghanistan over the last two days stood out from previous visits by Canadian dignitaries in that he avoided major gaffes; while his predecessors were mocked for flashy photo opportunities or upbeat statements that appeared out of touch with the reality of rising violence in Kandahar, Mr. Emerson took a more sober approach to his first experience in the war zone.

His statement about increasing the number of troops in the Afghan mission to 2,700 from 2,500 was the only new information offered during the visit, but the increase has been widely expected after Canada announced it would be sending helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicles to Afghanistan in the coming months. New equipment usually requires extra personnel.

“We've been talking with our NATO allies, and we do now have commitments to increase our troops, particularly in the Kandahar region,” Mr. Emerson said. “We feel more comfortable now that the troop support is being increased in an appropriate way.” Mr. Emerson's other comments during his 40 hours touring the country were more cautious. He avoided any specific statement about the security situation. After visiting the site of a dam project north of Kandahar city, he shocked nobody with his observation: “I was able to see a river that has a tremendous flow of water.”

U.S. presidential candidates have been talking about major changes in Afghanistan after years of deteriorating security. Asked whether he will change any aspects of Canada's approach, Mr. Emerson gave no suggestions. “I don't see any fundamental changes,” Mr. Emerson said. “I see it as really, fundamentally, an execution initiative that's well in hand.”

The minister said he welcomes promises by Canada's allies to send more troops to Kandahar in the near future. But when an Afghan journalist asked him whether sending more troops might escalate the war, Mr. Emerson answered a different question. “Do we believe troops and guns are the endgame?” he said. “I think the fair answer to that is, ultimately there has to be a more complete reconciliation. But it's going to take some military capacity and military activity to get Afghanistan to the point where a more comprehensive, more permanent solution can take effect.”

During a similar visit earlier this year, Mr. Emerson's predecessor Maxime Bernier was asked how corruption in the Afghan government might be reduced. Mr. Bernier shocked his hosts by suggesting that one solution might be removing Kandahar's governor. This time, Mr. Emerson handled the same question with a less controversial answer. “We had a number of discussions around initiatives that the government of Afghanistan is taking on the corruption issue,” Mr. Emerson said. “I certainly offered on Canada's behalf our strong support to help them deal with the corruption issue across a broad range of regions and areas where work needs to be done as part of our comprehensive solution.”

Rangin Spanta, Afghanistan's foreign minister, added that his government is considering new institutions for fighting corruption, perhaps with separate lawyers, courts, and

investigators. "Maybe something like the FBI," Mr. Spanta said. (Afghanistan's existing anti-corruption minister, Izzatullah Wasifi, is a convicted drug dealer.)

While Mr. Emerson offered few specifics on this visit, he promised a long-delayed set of benchmarks will be published in the next three to five weeks. The benchmarking process will be Canada's first attempt to offer measurable goals to be achieved by 2011, when Canadian's military commitment in Kandahar is scheduled to expire.

Canadian officials have suggested they want to benchmark the progress according to indicators that are showing positive gains, such as the size or capability of the Afghan security forces. Some observers say Kandahar's status should be measured according to the results achieved the Afghan forces, such as reducing the number of Taliban attacks or making Kandahar safe enough for humanitarian work.

Mr. Emerson said the delay in producing the benchmarks was a result of a desire to generate numbers that have credibility. "You don't just want to go out and in a slipshod superficial way say, well, 'Here are a bunch of numbers that seem to be going in the right direction,'" he said. "We want robust numbers, we want numbers that tell us when we're doing things right, we want numbers and benchmarks that will tell us when we're doing things not so well."

[Philippine government, Muslim rebels agree to sign key territorial accord](#)

IHT – 28 July

The Philippine government and Muslim rebels have agreed to sign a crucial accord on an expanded Muslim homeland next month after ironing out the remaining kinks in Malaysian-brokered peace talks, officials said Monday.

Government negotiator Rodolfo Garcia reached the agreement with his Moro Islamic Liberation Front counterpart in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, after working out differences in the process to set up a future Muslim homeland, presidential peace process adviser Hermogenes Esperon said.

The two sides agreed to sign the accord early next month, he said. The agreement on so-called "ancestral domain" identifies territory to fall under the Muslim region, outlines the area's form of government and determines its share of the region's natural resources.

The MILF, estimated to have 11,000 fighters, has been battling for self-rule in the predominantly Roman Catholic nation's volatile south for decades. Earlier this month, both sides agreed to expand an existing Muslim autonomous region in the south to include 712 villages, subject to the agreement of residents of the area in a plebiscite.

They, however, disagreed on the date of the vote, causing the talks to stall over the weekend. The rebel's vice chairman, Ghazali Jaafar, said the government wanted to hold the plebiscite after a final peace pact is signed — a move opposed by the rebels.

"There were some differences, but finally both parties agreed to hold the plebiscite within 12 months" after signing the ancestral domain agreement, Jaafar told The Associated Press. He said he was optimistic the rebels and the government "will surpass other problems that may come our way." After tackling ancestral domain, regarded by both sides as among the most contentious issue, the years-long negotiations are scheduled to advance to other issues, including governance.

The talks have been brokered by Malaysia, which headed an international team of cease-fire monitors credited with considerably easing violent clashes in the south. The Malaysians, however, started withdrawing from the area in May, citing slow progress in the talks. U.S. and Philippine officials hope a peace accord could transform many areas of conflict in the south into bustling economic hubs instead of battlefields that could be a breeding ground of terrorism.

[Pakistani F-16 upgrade will not affect counterinsurgency funding, says US](#)

Jane's Defence Weekly – 29 July

The US State Department has denied that the financing of mid-life upgrades for Pakistan's F-16 fleet will divert funds away from counterinsurgency operations against the Taliban.

Acting Deputy Spokesman Gonzalo Gallegos confirmed in a 24 July briefing that USD226 million-USD227 million of the USD300 million equipment and training budget earmarked for Pakistan in 2008 was destined for the F-16s.

However, he said that this money "was already allocated for other updates on different airframes in Pakistan" and that the work would help Pakistan to "effectively [employ] these aircraft in support of ground operations against terrorist groups".

Explaining what the upgrade would involve, Gallegos said: "What we're looking at is advanced avionics and radar upgrades, and communications and targeting systems that will enable real-time communication with ground forces that will generate ground position data that can be used to direct guided munitions to a target."

The US Congress requires that the USD300 million be spent on counterterrorism and law enforcement, leading to questions about whether Pakistan was actually using its F-16s to launch airstrikes against terrorist targets, rather than simply as a counterweight against India.

[Troops to withdraw from disputed area](#)

Bangkok Post – 29 July

Thailand and Cambodia will soon withdraw their troops from the disputed area near the Preah Vihear temple to end the border row which erupted after the temple was listed as a World Heritage site, Cambodian Foreign Minister Hor Namhong said yesterday. After 12 hours of talks involving the Cambodian foreign minister and his Thai counterpart Tej

Bunnag, the two countries agreed to take steps to ease the tension on the border. The two countries will set up a committee to decide the size of the military deployment in the 4.6 square kilometre area between Kantharalak district in Si Sa Ket province and the Cambodian province of Preah Vihear, a source in the meeting said.

But Mr Hor Namhong expected there would soon be no troops from either sides in the area. "The military withdrawal will take place soon," he said through his interpreter. "The meeting was successful. It was the first meeting and it definitely will not be the last," he added.

Other issues discussed by the two countries included a plan to have the Joint Boundary Commission resume talks on the land border demarcation, a joint attempt to clear landmines in the area near the 900-year-old Preah Vihear temple and a promise not to use force. Other problems not resolved yesterday will be tabled in the next round of talks between the two ministers. The date for the next meeting has not been set.

The Cambodian minister cautioned that the settlement of border issues would take time. A Thai source also ruled out the possibility of resolving the problem overnight. "I don't believe that it will be solved in one meeting. But at least this meeting is a step toward the solution," the source said.

Mr Tej will report on the outcome of the meeting to Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej and his cabinet today. He said the atmosphere at the meeting was good because he knew the Cambodian officials taking part. Mr Tej and Mr Hor Namhong were once the representatives of their countries to the United Nations in Geneva.

[Iraqi forces launch Diyala operation](#)

CNN – 29 July

Iraqi security forces backed by the U.S. military launched an operation Tuesday targeting al Qaeda in Iraq and Shiite militias in the volatile Diyala province, Iraqi commanders said. The operation, called Omens of Prosperity, began in the provincial capital, Baquba, where security forces have imposed a curfew and are encircling the city.

Troops are conducting raids against specific targets in Baquba, commanders said. There have been a number of recent suicide bombings in Diyala, northeast of Baghdad. A female suicide bomber struck an Awakening Council checkpoint last week, killing eight and wounding more than 20. Awakening Councils, whose members are predominantly Sunni, have been recruited by the U.S. military to work against al Qaeda in Iraq and other militias. In mid-July, a twin suicide attack at an army recruitment center in Diyala killed 28 and wounding 64.

Additional Iraqi forces near Baghdad and in the northern provinces are securing the province's border areas, they said. U.S. and Iraqi forces have been conducting raids in Diyala against al Qaeda in Iraq and other Shiite militias, leading U.S. Maj. Gen. Mark Hertling to declare Sunday that the major cities in the province -- Muqdadiya and Baquba

-- were "secure." "But the al Qaeda elements that we've seen have sought refuge in the rural areas all around the major cities," he said.

Those are the areas that we will be conducting operations, not only with Iraqi security forces, but with coalition forces ... as they have continued to try and find safe havens in the deserts and the hills and the palm groves." In addition, Hertling's troops in Diyala have launched operations targeting members of families of suspected female bombers -- an effort to break up rings that recruit the women and girls.

[Indian intelligence gropes in the dark](#)

BBC – 29 July

When Ahmedabad was hit by a series of explosions on Saturday, one newspaper vendor in the city told another - "Kam ho gaya" (the job is done). That exchange sounded like a communication between the bombers, promising an intelligence-led breakthrough. But it proved to be a red herring - the newspaper vendors had only rejoiced because after the blasts they expected the sale of their evening papers to zoom.

Barring this one telephone call, there is nothing else that could provide intelligence with a clue to the explosions in Ahmedabad. Intelligence officials say perhaps this is because the bombers are no more speaking for long periods before and after the explosions. After his arrest last year, Jalaluddin alias Babubhai - the "India operations commander" of the Bangladesh-based militant group Huji - revealed that he had instructed his jihadis (holy warriors) to "minimise telephone or internet communication" during operations. "India's technical intelligence capability has developed with help from the US and local scientific knowhow, so we told our brothers to use personal couriers," a senior Intelligence Bureau (IB) official quoted Jalaluddin as saying.

Since the serial blasts in the southern city of Hyderabad last August, India's intelligence has failed to pick up leads. "That explains the complete dearth of intelligence on the groups responsible for this year's serial explosions in Jaipur, Bangalore and Ahmedabad. Our intelligence has become too dependent on technology," says BB Nandi, one of India's best known spymasters. We are making the same mistakes that Western intelligence agencies made by pinning too much hope on technology. That's important, but there's no substitute for a good agent in the right place," Mr Nandi says.

While Western intelligence agencies like the CIA and MI-6 are trying to augment human intelligence capabilities after a string of failures such as the 9/11 attacks in the US, Indian intelligence is not learning from their mistakes. Intelligence officials say that Pakistan and Bangladesh-based Islamic militant groups have increasingly made their Indian units autonomous - in recruitment, training, funding and operations - so that nothing can be traced back to the patron nations.

"The serial bombings in Jaipur, Bangalore and Ahmedabad prove that Pakistan's ISI has successfully Indianised the jihad by creating Indian equivalents of Lashkar-e-Toiba or Huji," says B Raman, another former spymaster specialising in Islamic militant groups.

"They still provide general direction, so you have a series of explosions in India immediately after the bombing of the Indian embassy in Kabul and the stepped up hostilities in Kashmir," he says. "But the surrogates are largely independent now in choosing targets or gathering explosives."

And why can't India's intelligence agencies penetrate these home-grown Islamic militant groups if they are run and led by Indian Muslims with roots in India? The Intelligence Bureau (IB), which is responsible for domestic and counter-intelligence, is supposed to co-ordinate the fight against militancy through its multi-agency co-ordination. But the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), which is responsible for external intelligence, has a major role in checking the foreign sources of militancy.

"The real bane of Indian intelligence is that it is largely run by police officials, most of whom serve on deputation from states and are floating in and out of the IB and other federal intelligence wings. They lack both the commitment and the expertise," says retired IB official Ashok Debbarma. Strangely, the lower echelons of IB and RAW are direct recruits, trained specifically for intelligence. But they lack the motivation because they can rarely rise to senior positions.

"None of the world's best intelligence agencies are run by policemen. They are all run by career intelligence officers. It is only in India that the Indian Police Service (IPS) monopolises most senior intelligence positions," Mr Debbarma said. He said some police officials have done well in IB and RAW but most have failed in a fast changing world. "The best brains go to foreign service and administrative service and only those at the bottom of the heap are recruited into the police service," Mr Debbarma says.

Interestingly, Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi has demanded the creation of an Indian intelligence service that, he says, should recruit the best available talent and deploy them in positions that fit their special talent. "We should get the best brains for intelligence, but we only get rejects now," Mr Modi said after the Ahmedabad explosions.

Many say Indian intelligence is losing its fight against Islamic militancy because the agencies do not recruit enough Muslims. "There are very few Muslims in Indian intelligence, only a few in the state police special branches and really a handful in the federal agencies. How can we plant agents amongst jihadis unless we have Muslim officers?" asks a former IB official who does not wish to be named.

The IB is also woefully short of officers - against a sanctioned strength of 250 officers, only 100 places have been filled up. "Most IPS officers use the IB as a transit point. They come here only when they don't get a good posting in their state cadre," says retired IB official Subir Dutta.

[More foreign fighters join Taliban in Afghanistan](#)

Reuters – 30 July

More foreign fighters are joining the ranks of Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan as militants increasingly cross the border from Pakistan to attack Afghan and Western troops, the Afghan Defence Ministry said on Wednesday.

Afghanistan has kept up a barrage of criticism against neighbour Pakistan in the last three months, accusing Pakistani agents of being behind a string of high-profile attacks and allowing militants sanctuary along the long and porous border. "The presence of foreign fighters is increasing, and increasingly the operations of the terrorists are led by foreigners," Defence Ministry spokesman General Mohammad Zaher Azimi told a news conference.

Afghan, NATO and U.S.-led coalition forces are struggling to contain a sharp surge in violence as the traditional summer fighting season gets into full swing. Already more U.S. troops were killed in Afghanistan in May and June than in Iraq, where there are some four times more American soldiers. July, usually the peak month for fighting, could well be the worse month yet for violence since U.S.-led and Afghan forces toppled the Taliban in 2001. Security analysts predict the number of violent incidents could top 1,000 for the first time.

As well as more violence, Afghan and foreign troops are reporting a greater sophistication in Taliban tactics such as multiple roadside bombs and complex ambushes, factors indicating more training and possibly the presence of foreigners.

Admiral Mike Mullen, chairman of the U.S. joint chiefs of staff, said this month there were indications that al Qaeda was switching its focus from Iraq back to Afghanistan. Violence has increased by 40 percent in the last two months compared to last year, NATO says, partly due to the improved weather, but also due to ceasefires between troops and militants in Pakistan's border tribal belt. Afghanistan believes foreign funding for the Taliban is channelled through Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI) agency, Azimi said. Money for the insurgency comes through donors in Gulf countries and a tax on Afghanistan's booming drug trade, security analysts say.

Afghan security forces have launched a series of operations along the main highway that loops around the south of Afghanistan, killing around 100 militants in the last two weeks, Azimi said. Meanwhile, Afghan and international troops have killed 20 senior militant leaders, including one from al Qaeda, in the last month and captured another seven, he said. Western troops in Afghanistan have concentrated on targeting the Taliban leadership in an effort to degrade the insurgent fighting ability.

TERRORISM & COUNTER-TERRORISM

[Down but not out](#)

Guardian – 21 July

In cyberspace, at least, al-Qaida is triumphant. Its followers are producing more internet messages and videos than ever: clips of American Humvees being blown up; tutorials on how to use to make cleverer bombs; a whole ideological curriculum that amounts to an open university for jihad; and even a long "press conference" with Ayman al-Zawahiri, its co-founder, who replied to countless questions put by internet surfers.

Jihadists' mastery of the internet drives western officials to despair. As Robert Gates, the American defence secretary put it earlier this year: "How has one man in a cave managed to out-communicate the world's greatest communication society?"

Of late, though, al-Qaida's video productions have lost some of their swagger. They have become defensive, seeking to justify the killing of ordinary Muslims and denouncing the treachery of a growing number of enemies.

Al-Qaida has not had a good year. Its bloody campaign in Iraq is fizzling, thanks to a Sunni tribal "awakening", America's "surge" and jihadists' murderous excesses. In Saudi Arabia, al-Qaida's campaign has been largely suppressed by a combination of tough policing and softly-softly deradicalisation and social reintegration.

Al-Qaida has been unable to hit America since the September 11 hijackings, and has not staged a successful attack on western soil since the London bombings three years ago. Ideologically, too, al-Qaida has been under pressure. Take the case of Sayyid Imam al-Sharif, better known as Dr Fadl, one of al-Qaida's founders two decades ago. He had developed much of al-Qaida's ideology, but at the end of last year he came up with a sweeping revision. Jihad had to be

authorised by a qualified imam or sheikh, he said, not the "heroes of the internet". The September 11 attacks, he thought, were a catastrophe: "What good is it if you destroy one of your enemy's buildings and he destroys one of your countries?"

Might America actually be winning its "war on terror"? Don't get too hopeful. It may have stopped losing, but it is not yet winning. As our special report in the Economist concludes, al-Qaida and its followers are down, but not out.

The biggest worry is that Pakistan's tribal areas are becoming more lawless, giving al-Qaida greater freedom to plan new attacks and providing the Taliban a base from which to intensify the insurgency in Afghanistan. The new elected government in Islamabad, wrangling over the fate of President Musharraf, seems unable or unwilling to assert its authority in the frontier areas. After losing some 1,000 soldiers, the army seems in a hurry to conclude a truce with militants.

A new al-Qaida "franchise" has been created in the Maghreb. Its violence may yet jump across the Mediterranean into Europe. To judge by the warnings from Britain's domestic intelligence service, MI5, the threat of homegrown radicalism in parts of Europe is still growing.

Indeed, the biggest threat to America may come from European homegrown militants – often sons of migrants or converts to Islam with little religious learning, who can travel to America more freely. As western prisons fill up with militants, many worry that they will radicalise a new and more dangerous generation of jihadists with an existing propensity to violence and access to weapons.

Al-Qaida is more a loose nebula than an organisation. Its core leadership may consist of just hundreds of jihadist veterans, but they are linked to a constellation of groups with thousands or tens of thousands of fighters. The internet helps to hold together this movement, and to spread its ideology. It allows jihadists to weave together disparate grievances in Muslim countries into the "single

narrative": Muslims everywhere are under attack; America, the west and the Jews (along with Shia and treacherous Muslim rulers) are to blame; jihad is the duty of every Muslim; and Muslims who object are infidels.

Al-Qaida draws on a deep well of anti-Americanism. It only takes a tiny proportion of the world's Muslims to be drawn to jihad to cause serious trouble – particularly given that al-Qaida is so unrestrained in its violence. A world built around sovereign nations is poorly equipped to deal with such a globally networked threat. Mere national policing is not enough to curb a movement operating in lawless areas on the other side of the world, yet invading armies are not welcome. Torture may (or may not) yield useable intelligence, but among countries that uphold due process it hampers efforts to deport, extradite and prosecute terrorists.

International co-operation, particularly in intelligence, is vital. But the best hope of weakening jihadists is that Muslims themselves turn against al-Qaida as they did against its predecessors in Egypt and Algeria in the 1990s. This may be happening in Iraq and elsewhere.

The west will not be able to defeat al-Qaida alone. For now, it needs to prevent a vacuum in Iraq and Afghanistan. But in the longer term it should draw away from direct combat and focus on helping governments in the Muslim world confront the jihadists. After all, al-Qaida attacked the "far enemy", America, because it was defeated by the "near enemy".

[Terrorist threat to airports over lax staff security](#)

Telegraph – 23 July

Airports are at increasing risk from an "internal terror attack" because of lax security arrangements, according to an official report. It is feared that hundreds of foreigners are being allowed to work in high security parts of Britain's airports without passing proper criminal record checks. Despite warnings that terrorists have tried to place sleepers in jobs "airside" in terminals, no attempt has been made to check whether foreign workers have committed any offences abroad.

A Government-commissioned report today urged for foreign criminal record checks to be made compulsory for airport workers to combat the threat to security. But it called only for new staff to be checked and not those already in post. The paper, written by former civil servant Stephen Boys Smith, warned that the greatest threat of terrorism in future may be from "internal attack" and added that the "threat is varied and unpredictable." It said that "long term systemic changes" are needed to combat the threat from within. There are an estimated 200,000 staff in the "airside" parts of airports employed in shops, cafes or as cleaners in the departure lounge. Others may be employed as baggage handlers, security guards or driving buses between aircraft and the terminal.

The vetting process - using a criminal records check (CRC) - assesses workers only for crimes committed in Britain. Foreign workers - arriving from inside or outside the European Union - are not checked in their country of origin. This means that someone with a conviction for firearms or explosives offences committed abroad could, for example, take a job loading bags on to aircraft at Heathrow, Gatwick or any other airport, provided they had committed no crimes here.

The official report, published today, said: "The Department for Transport, in consultation with the industry, should introduce a requirement to obtain foreign CRCs or the nearest equivalent information in cases where CRCs are compulsory to the UK." It added: "In recent years the Government and the transport industry have responded decisively to the terrorist threat, which has been one of external rather than internal attack.

"As these measures become more effective so the future threat may increasingly come from the insider rather than passengers or members of the public. It is right to consider how to be ready for this. "Personnel security ought in future to receive much greater attention than it now does, both on the part of the Department for Transport and in the industry, building on the measures already in place." However he added that the department should take into account "the need for risk assessment" and that "it would not be unreasonable to decide to proceed only with new staff and not those already in posts."

Ministers ordered a review of airport security after Samina Malik - the "lyrical terrorist" - was found to have been working in the airside branch of WH Smith at Heathrow. The 24-year-old had her conviction quashed last month for writing poems about beheadings. Ruth Kelly, the Transport Secretary, said the report acknowledged the effectiveness of the UK transport security regime but pointed out that the more effectively the security regime mitigates external threats the more likely it becomes that terrorists will look for vulnerabilities elsewhere.

[China: Olympic terror plot foiled](#)

CNN – 24 July

Police in China have "cracked" an international terrorist group that was planning to attack Olympic venues in Shanghai, state media reported Thursday. There were few specific details of group or what it was said to be plotting, with the Xinhua news agency quoting Chen Jiulong, the deputy Shanghai's Public Security Bureau, saying it had acted on information.

Chinese authorities have previously announced terror crackdowns in the run-up to the Olympic Summer Games, which kick off on August 8 in host city Beijing and other venues including the eastern financial capital of Shanghai. It said two weeks ago that it disrupted five "terrorist" groups in the predominantly Muslim Xinjiang region in China's far west because it suspected them of plotting to attack the games. The six-month crackdown netted 82 suspected terrorists and marked the end to the first phase of China's Olympic Security Protection, according to Xinhua.

A Human Rights Watch analyst raised concerns that China may be using the Olympics as an excuse to crack down on dissidents. "It's clear that the police are simply adding cases of people who they think are engaging in activities that are critical of Chinese rule," Nicholas Bequelin told CNN. The government has not produced any evidence of terror plots, and nearly all of the arrests are based on the confessions -- sometimes forced -- of those detained, he said. "What the government appears to be doing is to conflate terrorism with criminal acts and other cases of dissent," he said.

[Al-Qaeda chemical expert 'killed'](#)

BBC – 28 July

Reports from Pakistan say a leading al-Qaeda chemical weapons expert, Midhat Mursi al-Sayid Umar, has been killed in a missile strike. Taliban officials in the tribal area of South Waziristan confirmed to the BBC that he was killed in a missile strike that left at least six people dead. The US, which has a reward of \$5m on his head, said it had no information. He was wrongly reported to have been killed in 2006 in a strike aimed at al-Qaeda deputy head Ayman al-Zawahiri.

The pre-dawn strike targeted a house near a mosque in the village of Azam Warsak, 20km (12 miles) west of the main town in South Waziristan, Wana. It was suspected to be a strike by US forces, with residents saying they had heard US drones, but this has not been confirmed. Pakistani military spokesman Maj Gen Athar Abbas told the AFP news agency it was still awaiting "authentic information" from the area. Midhat Mursi al-Sayid Umar, 55, also known as Abu Khabab al-Masri, is an Egyptian national.

The US government's Rewards for Justice website says he is "an explosives expert and poisons trainer working on behalf of al-Qaeda". It says he trained hundreds of militants in chemical and explosives operations at a camp at Derunta in Afghanistan. The BBC's Syed Shoaib Hasan in Islamabad says the militant was considered part of Osama Bin Laden's inner circle and was said to be in charge of efforts to gain access to, or develop, weapons of mass destruction.

Local residents said the house targeted belonged to a local tribesman and suspected militants used to stay there. The US is reported to have carried out a number of drone missile attacks in the tribal regions. Pakistan has complained the attacks could damage bilateral relations.

The latest strike came shortly before Pakistani Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani was due to meet US President George W Bush in Washington. White House spokeswoman Dana Perino said she had no information about the incident. In recent months the US and its allies have pledged hundreds of millions of dollars in military and other forms of assistance to help Pakistan's new government tackle militancy in border tribal areas.

[Dissident Northern Ireland republican threat 'higher than from Islamic extremists'](#)

Telegraph – 28 July

Dissident republicans from Northern Ireland are engaged in suspicious activity more than any other radical group in the UK including Islamic extremists, according to security sources. Some claim that the Northern Irish terror threat is as significant now as it was during the time of the Omagh bombing 10 years ago and that up to 80 hardcore dissidents could be plotting attacks. Among those they may target are Catholic police officers in a bid to deter young Catholics and nationalists from joining the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), and prison officers, the sources say.

Police Service of Northern Ireland Chief Constable Sir Hugh Orde has also confirmed the risk, saying that the threat from republicans opposed to the peace process is the highest than at any time this decade. "It is as high as it has been in my time in the service," he said. "Significant efforts are ongoing to tackle the threat. The aim where possible, is to arrest those involved, charge them and bring them to court and to date over 30 people have been arrested this year."

Dissident republican groups such as the Continuity IRA were formed after mainstream paramilitary organisations such as the IRA declared ceasefires in the mid 1990s. According to security sources, more than 60 per cent of all electronic information intercepted through wire taps and other covert operations related to them, and they have already claimed responsibility for murder bids on five police officers in Northern Ireland since November.

But the sources have also expressed frustration that because the police are stretched, officers with anti-terrorism experience are being transferred away from the areas where they are most needed. One, a Dublin security official, pointed to a landmine attack on two PSNI officers in Rosslea in Co Fermanagh last month as proof that the dissident threat was returning to levels not seen since Omagh.

Jeffrey Donaldson, a Democratic Unionist minister in the Stormont Executive and a former Northern Ireland Policing Board member, said he was aware of the "very high" threat of dissident action and called for police resources to be targeted at the groups.

"It is important that the Chief Constable recognises the seriousness of this threat and the imminent dangers posed to security force and prison service members and that there's an appropriate response to deal with the threat," he said.

"We have been very fortunate that those dissident republicans have not managed to cause death but they have come very close on a number of occasions and I would be very concerned about the level of activity at the minute and the potential for further such attacks. "Everything must be done to ensure the threat is dealt with before a life is lost."

Careful science can help to fight terrorism

Financial Times – 28 July

Science and technology are usually seen as western strengths in fighting terrorism. Counterterrorism depends on science – but, at the same time, science generates terrorist risks and could compound the problems terrorism creates.

For a start, scientists, engineers and doctors have played a considerable role as terrorists since the mid-20th century. The high status of these professions may be partly responsible, as modern terrorists are drawn disproportionately from the better-educated sections of societies. But something about the certainties enshrined in many scientific disciplines may also chime with the inflexible philosophy of some terrorist groups. These are professions with ways of thinking that, for a very small minority of their members, seem to help point them towards terrorism.

In addition, inadequately regulated scientific activity and the unconstrained dissemination of scientific knowledge may enhance the terrorist threat in its most severe forms, such as bioterrorism. Balancing traditional scientific freedom and openness with regulatory regimes that are effective on a global basis will be both increasingly important and extremely difficult.

The third problem is that the unconstrained use of scientific and technological solutions in countering terrorism – for example, exploiting developments in sensors and in biometrics, information-handling and communications – could themselves damage the free society we are seeking to sustain. However, a modern society would be negligent if it did not use all the resources of science and technology to counter terrorism. As well as contributing to more effective surveillance and intelligence-gathering, science can help strengthen infrastructure and mitigate the effects of an attack, particularly if a nuclear or biological weapon were to be used. And we can expect disciplines such as psychology and the social sciences to contribute more to our understanding of what drives terrorism – and therefore how best to prevent it.

The challenge will be to engage a broad range of scientists in the fight against terrorism, without causing an unhealthy imbalance in the scientific enterprise. For instance, the billions of dollars spent by the US government on biodefence over the past few years may have distracted researchers from the fight against infectious diseases. The risk of a flu pandemic – or the emergence of a lethal new disease – is far greater than of a large-

scale bioterrorist attack. While there is some scientific crossover between the expertise needed to fight natural and man-made epidemics, it is important to allocate research resources on a balanced view of the risks we face globally.

One lesson to learn from the episode over Iraqi weapons of mass destruction is the importance of ensuring that intelligence analysis and assessment draw on expert scientific advice – and more broadly on the scepticism at the heart of the scientific method. Experts should never again be frozen out of intelligence assessments whose outcome may make the difference between war and peace, as they were in the run-up to the Iraq war.

The west's view of terrorism has been dominated by the attacks of September 11 2001. The Madrid, London and Bali bombings ensured that Islamist terrorism remained the focus of attention in Europe and Australasia, as well as the US. But our thinking about the panoply of terrorist risks should not be narrowly focused on one type of threat. Remember that in the 1990s we worried as much about attacks by alienated individuals and extremist cults, following the Oklahoma bombing and the use of chemical and biological weapons by the Aum Shinrikyo cult in Japan.

If an outrage more terrible than any so far – such as the explosion of a nuclear weapon or release of a genetically engineered pathogen – were to take place, there is no reason to assume that al-Qaeda would be responsible. A small, fanatical western or Russian group is an equally likely culprit. It is worth devoting considerable resources to guard against such a “low-probability high-consequence event” because its impact would be so devastating. But we must keep the risks in proportion. A pandemic of flu or another lethal disease that would kill many millions of people worldwide is much more likely – a “high-probability, high-consequence event”. And, taking a long-term scientific view, climate change is a vastly greater threat to civilisation than terrorism.

[Study questions US strategy against al-Qaida](#)

AP – 29 July

The United States can defeat al-Qaida if it relies less on force and more on policing and intelligence to root out the terror group's leaders, a new study contends. "Keep in mind that terrorist groups are not eradicated overnight," said the study by the federally funded Rand research center, an organization that counsels the Pentagon.

Its report said that the use of military force by the United States or other countries should be reserved for quelling large, well-armed and well-organized insurgencies, and that American officials should stop using the term "war on terror" and replace it with "counterterrorism."

"Terrorists should be perceived and described as criminals, not holy warriors, and our analysis suggests there is no battlefield solution to terrorism," said Seth Jones, the lead author of the study and a Rand political scientist. "The United States has the necessary instruments to defeat al-Qaida, it just needs to shift its strategy," Jones said.

Nearly every ally, including Britain and Australia, has stopped using "war on terror" to describe strategy against the group headed by Osama bin Laden and considered responsible for the Sept. 11, 2001 suicide attacks at the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon.

Based on an analysis of 648 terrorist groups that existed between 1968 and 2006, the report concluded that a transition to the political process is the most common way such groups end. But the process, found in 43 percent cases examined, is unlikely with al-Qaida, which has a broad, sweeping agenda, the report said.

The second most common way that terrorist groups end, seen in about 40 percent of the cases, is through police and intelligence services apprehending or killing key leaders, Jones said. Police are particularly effective because their permanent presence in cities helps them gather information, he said.

By contrast, the report said, military force was effective in only 7 percent of the cases. Jones, in an interview, said, "Even where we found some success against al-Qaida, in Pakistan and Iraq, the military played a background or surrogate role. The bulk of the action was taken by intelligence, police and, in some cases, local forces." "We are not saying the military should not play a role," he said. "But unless you are talking about large insurgencies, military force should not be the tip of the spear."

Among the report's conclusions:

_Religious terrorist groups take longer to eliminate than other groups but none has achieved victory in the 38 years covered by the study.

_Terrorist groups from upper-income countries are more likely to be left-wing or nationalist, and much less likely to be motivated by religion.

_Large groups of more than 10,000 have been victorious more than 25 percent of the time, while victory is rare for groups with 1,000 or fewer members.

The report described al-Qaida as a "strong and competent organization," both before and after 9-11. Its goals, the report said, are uniting Muslims to fight the United States and its allies, overthrowing regimes in the Middle East friendly to the West and establishing a pan-Islamic state, or caliphate.

DIPLOMACY & DEFENCE STRATEGY

[Russia needs bombers in Cuba due to NATO expansion - ex-commander](#)

RIA Novosti – 21 July

The possible deployment of Russian strategic bombers in Cuba may be an effective response to the placement of NATO bases near Russia's borders, a former Air Force commander said on Monday. Russian daily *Izvestia* earlier on Monday cited a senior Russian military source as saying that Russian strategic bombers could be stationed again in Cuba, only 90 miles from the U.S. coast, in response to the U.S. missile shield in Europe.

"If these plans are being considered, it would be a good response to the attempts to place NATO bases near the Russian borders," Gen. of the Army Pyotr Deinekin told *RIA Novosti*. "I do not see anything wrong with it because nobody listens to our objections when they place airbases and electronic monitoring and surveillance stations near our borders," the general said.

However, Deinekin said the possibility of Russian bombers being stationed in Cuba is largely hypothetical, because Russia's Tu-160 Blackjack and Tu-95MS Bear strategic bombers are both capable of reaching the U.S. coast, patrolling the area for about 1.5 hours, and returning to airbases in Russia with mid-air refueling.

Russia resumed strategic bomber patrol flights over the Pacific, Atlantic, and Arctic oceans last August, following an order signed by former president Vladimir Putin. Russian bombers have since carried out over 80 strategic patrol flights and have often been escorted by NATO planes. Deinekin suggested that Cuba could be used as a refueling stopover for Russian aircraft rather than as a permanent base, because the Russian political and military leadership would be unlikely to take such a drastic step under current global political conditions.

In October 1962, the Cuban Missile Crisis brought U.S. and the U.S.S.R. to the brink of nuclear war when Soviet missiles were stationed in Cuba. The crisis was resolved after 12 days when the Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev, backed down and ordered the missiles removed.

Moscow had a military presence on Cuba for almost four decades after that, maintaining an electronic listening post at Lourdes, about 20 km (12.5 miles) from Havana, to monitor U.S. military moves and communications. Russia was paying \$200 million a year to lease the base, which it closed down in January 2002.

[Forces face training cuts as fuel bill rockets](#)

The Times – 21 July

The cost of fuelling Britain's Armed Forces is due to rise by more than £500 million next year as a result of soaring oil prices, forcing military chiefs to consider broad cuts to air force and combat training. Ministry of Defence calculations of projected fuel bills, seen by *The Times*, show a dramatic increase in operating costs, with fuel for aircraft, naval and ground vehicles up by more than 20 per cent on last year. With the Armed Forces'

budget set to rise by just 3 per cent – and the Chancellor, Alistair Darling, warning government departments last week of no additional increases – defence and industry analysts said that major cuts to training programmes such as fighter plane exercises would be inevitable.

The Times understands that Air Chief Marshal Sir Glen Torpy, Chief of the Air Staff, told senior members of the defence industry last week that RAF pilots would do more training in simulators this year because of the budget squeeze. He is understood to want to link simulators in cyberspace so that pilots can take part in “virtual” missions since “real-life” exercises were becoming unsustainable because of the cost of deploying aircraft.

Liam Fox, the Shadow Defence Secretary, called for government assistance to the Armed Forces to cope with the additional unexpected shortfall, which was revealed in a written parliamentary answer to the Conservative frontbencher. He is expected to grill Des Browne, the Defence Secretary, today during parliamentary questions. “It is essential that the Government do not take the easy option of cutting training, because that can only put our forces at risk when they go into combat,” Mr Fox said. “Rising fuel costs will put even greater pressure on the already overstretched MoD budget. This comes at a time when our troops are already short of equipment and this will make a bad situation worse.”

The news comes as Gordon Brown is expected to make a statement to the Commons tomorrow in which he will update MPs on Britain’s military commitment in Iraq, including a possible timeframe for the withdrawal of British troops. According to Ministry of Defence planning assumptions for 2008-09, the fuel bill will rise to £2.9 billion from just under £2.4 billion last year. The MoD said yesterday that it would absorb the higher cost of fuel used in Britain, despite the Treasury already borrowing record amounts to meet its existing Armed Forces spending commitments. Fuel used in Iraq and Afghanistan would be paid for by the Treasury.

An MoD official said that the department was unable to say at what price the fuel assumptions had been made. Given that oil has nearly doubled in the past 12 months to more than \$130 a barrel, the assumptions could already significantly underestimate the true cost of fuel use this year. He said that, beyond overseas operational fuel costs, the remaining costs were managed within the £34 billion defence programme and “do not affect the MoD’s ability to deliver military capability, home or abroad”. He added that the MoD was committed to making savings worth £2.7 billion between 2008-09 and 2010-11.

Experts said that it would be impossible to meet the rising costs of fuel without drastic cuts to the training budget. Some equipment may even be mothballed until the price of oil falls. “I cannot see how the MoD can do anything other than cut training,” Patrick Mercer, the Conservative MP for Newark and the party’s former spokesman on homeland security, said, adding that the figure of £500 million was likely to be higher now given the rise in oil prices. Mr Mercer said measures typically taken in the past included “track mileage limitations” that cut back on the number of training miles for the more gas-

hungry vehicles such as tanks. Similar caps are placed on helicopters and fighter jet training, he said.

Howard Wheeldon, senior strategist with BGC Partners and a respected defence analyst, said: “To absorb that sort of cost will have to involve substantial slimming down of the more expensive types of training, such as major flight, ground and naval exercises.” The MoD is particularly vulnerable to the rising price of oil as its equipment generally uses huge quantities of fuel. Tanks, armoured trucks and transport planes are all much heavier than vehicles used in civilian life and therefore burn more fuel. Fighter jets are lighter than commercial aircraft but travel three or four times faster and therefore use substantially more fuel.

[UK armed forces miss defence targets](#)

Financial Times – 22 July

The ability of Britain’s military to respond to challenges beyond Iraq and Afghanistan has deteriorated over the past year, rendering the armed forces unable to meet the government’s strategic objectives, the Ministry of Defence admitted on Monday. Almost 60 per cent of the military reports serious or critical obstacles to reasonably rapid deployment on any new missions, the MoD’s annual report says. The admission shows the extent to which current operations in the two countries are compromising the ability of the armed forces to deal with other contingencies.

The government deems Afghanistan and Iraq to be its “overriding defence priority”. But the military has neither the resources nor the structure to sustain these operations indefinitely and fighting them has come at the expense of the military’s readiness to do other things, including training for large-scale war fighting, the report says. It concludes that “the overall readiness of the force structure continued to deteriorate throughout the year”, meaning it was impossible to meet defence targets set as part of the 2004 three-year government spending review.

In April, 51 per cent of the military reported “serious weaknesses” that would make their deployment difficult but not impossible in a reasonable time-scale – up from 39 per cent a year earlier. This compares with 19 per cent at the end of 2005. A further 7 per cent reported critical weaknesses, saying deployment would be almost impossible, up from 2 per cent a year earlier.

The pressure has been particularly great on land forces and on areas such as surveillance and reconnaissance, helicopters, strategic air transport, medical support and logistics. “The force structure in these areas is now fully stretched,” the report says. Military commitments have not been at routine levels since 2001, but the report says that when they do return “a period of substantially reduced activity and adequate resources will be required to recuperate and regenerate” the forces.

The ministry drew attention to the report’s conclusion that the military continued to meet its targets on operations. It also said the number of troops deployed on operations

dropped over the year to April from 26 per cent of the total to 19 per cent a year earlier, as a result of withdrawing troops from Bosnia and Northern Ireland. However, the deployment of an infantry battalion to Kosovo in May further hurt army readiness.

Meanwhile, in a report released on Tuesday, MPs warn the government not to withdraw from Iraq prematurely. They point to a “stark and profound” improvement in security recently in the south of the country but said the UK government must ensure that it continued to provide support and training for Iraqi security forces. This will “inevitably be a medium-to long-term project,” the Commons defence committee says. An Iraqi-led troop operation called the Charge of the Knights had been responsible for the security improvements.

[Taiwan demilitarizes picturesque offshore islet](#)

AP – 24 July

Concrete pilings designed to prevent an invasion no longer dot this tiny Taiwanese islet's shoreline. A formidable marine garrison also has vanished, replaced by laid-back coast guardsmen and marine biologists.

Don't be mistaken, though — the government is not suddenly renouncing its long-standing claim to Dongsha, a picturesque islet in the South China Sea. China, from which Taiwan split in a civil war in 1949, claims it, too. A well maintained monument set amid Dongsha's low cut tropical shrubbery spells out the claim in neat Chinese characters, and a small tree planted by former President Chen Shui-bian calls attention to it.

But an ambitious government plan to reduce the strength of Taiwan's armed forces from the 450,000 it numbered in the late 1990s to as few as 200,000 by 2012 is taking its toll on military staffing throughout the island of 23 million people, including on far-flung offshore territories like Dongsha. Only this week a Taiwanese newspaper reported the army was placing dummies at guard posts on major military bases because there are not enough real guards to go around. The present Taiwanese military force level stands at about 270,000.

The government's downsizing program reflects an emphasis on high-tech weaponry and the prohibitive cost of maintaining large numbers of soldiers, sailors and airmen, military expert Alexander Huang of Taipei's Tamkang University said. But he cautioned that the downsizing program should in no way be confused with a lack of military preparedness. “They're two entirely separate stories,” he said. Downsizing is a “rational policy,” said defense expert Andrew Yang of Taipei's Council of Advanced Political Studies. It's reducing expenditure on personnel and freeing up funds to upgrade high-tech systems and increase the level of professionalism across the board,” he said.

On Dongsha, the largest element in the three-islet Pratas group, some 200 coast guardsmen provide the manpower to back up the government's claim to control. Though military in appearance, they are unarmed and spend little or no time contemplating a

possible Chinese invasion. China continues to view Taiwan as part of its territory and has threatened to attack if it makes its de facto independence permanent.

Huang said the 1999 decision to send in the coast guard to replace Dongsha's hardcore marine fighters was intended to signal Beijing that Taiwan was interested in an overall lowering of tensions. The pro-independence policies championed by Chen during his presidency may have undermined that effort, but even if they did, Dongsha was not adversely affected, said Deputy Minister Yih Rong-tzung of the Government Information Office. "Over the last 10 years there's been no change at all in the status of this place," he said.

With the May inauguration of anti-independence President Ma Ying-jeou, hopes are high that Dongsha's postcard-pretty scenery will remain untrammelled for many years to come. Ma is committed to signing an historic peace treaty with Beijing by the end of his term in 2012, or 2016 if he is re-elected. He has already opened the doors to direct weekend flights across the 100-mile-wide Taiwan Strait, and a substantial expansion in the number of Chinese tourists visiting Taiwan.

[Russian Navy prioritizes construction of nuclear submarines](#)

RIA Novosti – 25 July

The construction of new-generation nuclear-powered ballistic missile and attack submarines is a top priority for the Russian Navy's development, the Navy commander said on Friday. According to a new doctrine for the development of the armed forces, Russia will completely modernize the naval component of its nuclear triad by 2016. "At present, we are providing sufficient financing for the creation of a fleet of a new-generation nuclear-powered strategic submarines," Adm. Vladimir Vysotsky said. Fourth-generation Borey-class nuclear-powered submarines armed with Bulava missiles would form the core of Russia's fleet of modern strategic submarines.

The first submarine in the series, Yury Dolgoruky , was built at the Sevmash plant in the northern Arkhangelsk Region and will soon join the Russian Navy. It will be equipped with 16 Bulava (SS-NX-30) ballistic missiles, which can carry up to ten nuclear warheads, and have a range of 8,000 kilometers (about 5,000 miles). Two other Borey-class nuclear submarines, the Alexander Nevsky and the Vladimir Monomakh, are currently under construction at the Sevmash plant.

In 2009, the Russian Navy will receive the first nuclear-powered attack submarine of the Project 885 Yasen (Graney) class, named Severodvinsk, Vysotsky said. Severodvinsk is the first Russian submarine of the true multipurpose type, combining the ability to launch a variety of long-range nuclear missiles (up to 3,100 miles) and effectively engage hostile submarines and surface warships.

In addition to nuclear submarines, Russia is building several new-generation Project 677 (the Lada-class) diesel-electric submarines. The submarine, whose export version is

known as the Amur 1650, features a new anti-sonar coating for the hull, an extended cruising range, and advanced anti-ship and anti-submarine weaponry.

The first submarine, named the St. Petersburg, is undergoing sea trials and may enter service with the Russian Navy this year. A second Lada-class submarine, the Kronshtadt, which is the first in the production series, is also being built at St. Petersburg's Admiralty Shipyards and will be commissioned in 2009. A third submarine, whose keel was laid in November 2006, is named after a city associated with Russian naval glory - Sevastopol, and is expected to be launched in 2010.

[Russia wants Black Sea Fleet in Ukraine after 2017 - Navy chief](#)

RIA Novosti – 25 July

Russia would like to keep the Black Sea Fleet base in Ukraine's port of Sevastopol after 2017, the Russian Navy commander said Friday. Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko said Thursday that preparations for the withdrawal by 2017 of Russia's Black Sea Fleet from Ukrainian territory should begin without delay.

"Russia has never made a secret of its desire to retain its presence in Sevastopol after 2017," Adm. Vladimir Vysotsky said. "After all, it is a natural basing area that has evolved historically." He added that he "takes it for granted" that an agreement with Ukraine would be eventually achieved.

Vysotsky said the Russian naval presence in Ukraine was beneficial for the local population: In addition to rent, \$4 million in special subsidies to the cities of Sevastopol, Feodosia and Gvardeisky from the Russian federal budget, and indirect contributions to local budgets, the fleet provides about 25,000 jobs.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Volodymyr Ohryzko said Tuesday that a bill on preparing for the Russian Black Sea Fleet's withdrawal from Ukraine's Crimea by 2017 was ready and would soon be submitted to the Ukrainian parliament. Frequent disputes have flared up between Russia and Ukraine over the lease of naval facilities on the Crimean peninsula. Russia's Black Sea Fleet uses the Sevastopol base under an agreement signed in 1997. Yushchenko recently announced that Ukraine would not extend the lease beyond May 28, 2017.

In early June, Russia's lower house of parliament adopted a resolution saying the Russian-Ukrainian cooperation treaty could be denounced if Ukraine joins NATO. Ukraine's pro-Western leadership has been pursuing NATO membership since Yushchenko's 2004 election. Ukraine failed to secure an agreement on a NATO Membership Action Plan, a key step toward joining the alliance, at the organization's summit in April, but was told the decision would be reviewed in December.

Russia to have 5-6 aircraft carriers in Northern, Pacific Fleets

RIA Novosti – 27 July

Russia will create 5-6 aircraft carrier groups in the Northern and Pacific Fleets, the Navy commander said on Sunday. Admiral Vladimir Vysotsky said the Navy command had decided to build sea-borne aircraft carrier systems for these fleets instead of simply aircraft carriers.

"Everything must work in a system, including aircraft carriers. We have called them sea-borne aircraft carrier systems, which will be based in the Northern and Pacific Fleets. The construction of such systems will begin after 2012," Vysotsky said before reviewing a military parade on the occasion of Navy Day in Russia.

Vysotsky said new sea-borne aircraft carrier systems will operate in close contact with Russia's orbital group of military satellites, and also with the Air Force and air defense. At present, Russia has only one operational aircraft carrier, the Nikolai Kuznetsov, which was commissioned in the early 1990s and has recently re-entered service after a prolonged overhaul.

The ship, also known as Project 1143.5 heavy aircraft carrier, is currently deployed with Russia's Northern Fleet and has recently participated in a two-month tour to the Mediterranean as part of Russia's plans to resume its continual presence in different regions of the world's seas.

DEFENCE ACQUISITION AND TECHNOLOGY

First LCS Gun System Demonstration Held at NSWC Dahlgren

Defense-Aerospace – 18 July

The Navy rolled out the first Surface Warfare Mission Package (SUW MP) for the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) in a ceremony July 11 at Naval Surface Warfare Center Dahlgren, Va. One of three interchangeable modules, the SUW MP is designed to provide warfighting capability in the SUW mission area against small boats. The modules include anti-submarine warfare, surface warfare and mine warfare.

"The capability the Surface Warfare Mission Package brings to LCS is truly unprecedented. Never before has the Navy built a ship, complemented with three modular mission packages, that is as versatile and responsive to emerging warfighting requirements. The lessons learned for LCS mission modules need to be captured and utilized from here forward for every surface combatant and amphibious ships we design for the U.S. Navy," said Vice Adm. Paul Sullivan, commander, Naval Sea Systems Command.

SUW MP will integrate with LCS to provide a flexible capability to rapidly detect, track and prosecute small-boat threats, giving the on-scene commander the capability to protect local assets and move a force quickly through a strategic waterway. Rollout included the

first modularized gun system capabilities demonstration of the Mk 46 30 millimeter gun. With its standardized networking interfaces, the Mk 46 30 millimeter gun saves the Navy more than \$4 million per platform in re-engineering costs.

The Mk 46 30 millimeter gun system is a two-axis stabilized chain gun that can fire up to 200 rounds per minute. This system uses a forward-looking infrared sensor, a low light television camera and laser rangefinder with a closed-loop tracking system to optimize accuracy against small, high-speed surface targets. The gun can be mounted forward and aft of an LCS' island to support different mission requirements and can be operated locally at the gun's weapon mount or fired remotely by a gunner in the ship's combat information center.

"The SUW MP demonstrates the Navy's commitment to design ships and systems that are more modular, affordable and adaptive to a future Navy with ship classes that deliver effective capability to fight in blue, green and brown water environments," said Capt. Mike Good, program manager LCS Mission Modules. SUW MP is on schedule and budget for delivery to the U.S. Navy. The next phase commences with software integration from the gun to the Mission Package Computing Environment and includes land based end-to-end testing of the gun at NSWC Dahlgren.

LCS is a fast, agile, focused-mission platform designed for operation in near-shore environments yet capable of open-ocean operation. It is designed to defeat asymmetric "anti-access" threats such as mines, quiet diesel submarines and fast surface craft. The first LCS, Freedom, is scheduled for commissioning in 2008.

[Taipei ends pursuit of \\$5bn US jets deal](#)

Financial Times – July 19

Taiwan has abandoned a bid to buy 66 F-16 fighter jets from the US in an attempt to rescue a larger arms package before President George W. Bush leaves the White House, according to national security officials in Taipei.

The decision came as Admiral Timothy Keating, commander of the US Pacific command, confirmed this week for the first time that Washington had frozen arms sales to Taiwan - a drastic departure from the line the US has followed in the past seven years. Adm Keating said tensions had eased in the Taiwan Strait, and the administration had concluded "that there is no pressing, compelling need for, at this moment, arms sales to Taiwan of the systems that we're talking about".

However, Taipei officials said they believed that the US had temporarily put off arms sales in order to secure Beijing's co-operation in tackling trouble in Iran and North Korea. They claimed there was disagreement among Mr Bush's national security staff and within the US State Department.

Taiwanese officials said they were in 11th-hour consultations with US counterparts to end Washington's freeze. "We hope that once the Olympics are over and things are less

politically sensitive for Beijing, things can start moving again. Otherwise it will be too late to get these sales back on track under the current administration," said a senior Taiwan security official. The official said Taipei was no longer pursuing a previous request to acquire the F-16s, worth \$5bn (€3.2bn, £2.5bn), as there now seemed no chance of success. "We are concentrating on the more basic, less controversial stuff right now," he said.

Three months after taking office in 2001, Mr Bush gave approval in principle for a \$11bn package of diesel-electric submarines, anti-submarine aircraft, and Patriot surface-to-air missiles. But Taiwan's legislature repeatedly failed to approve the necessary funds, despite lobbying from US officials who said the military balance in the Taiwan Strait was tilting in Beijing's favour.

The nationalist Kuomintang party, which had blocked approval, won Taiwan's presidency and strengthened its control of the legislature this year and resumed a quasi-diplomatic dialogue with Beijing that had long been suspended. Taipei is concerned that Washington may have created a precedent that could prove difficult to reverse, since the communist-ruled mainland has long demanded the US phase out its arms sales to the island.

Beijing officials said this week that the sale freeze had been adopted "in deference to China's demand", pointing to a 1982 joint communiqué under which the US pledged to reduce weapons sales to Taiwan gradually.

The Taipei security official said: "We are reminding the US of its obligations under the Taiwan Relations Act." That US law requires Washington to help Taiwan secure sufficient capabilities to defend itself against Beijing, which claims sovereignty over the self-ruled island.

[LM 2F rocket ready for China's 3rd manned spacecraft](#)

Xinhua – 19 July

The Long March 2F rocket designed to carry China's third manned spacecraft into space will be sent to Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest Gansu province in a few days, officials with the China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology (CALT) said Saturday.

The rocket was coated in red, a colour to show that it was ready to fulfill its mission, said Jing Muchun, chief designer of the spacecraft, adding that further testing will be conducted to ensure 100 percent safety after the rocket arrives at Jiuquan.

About 10 days ago, Shenzhou VII, China's third manned spacecraft, arrived at Jiuquan. It is expected to be launched in October. CALT head Li Hong, together with 200 launch team members, promised they would try every means to ensure the success and safety of the launch.

In 2003, China became the third country to send an astronaut into space in its own

spacecraft. The United States and the former Soviet Union (now Russia) are the others to have done so.

[Boeing Wins Qatar Order For C-17 Airlifters](#)

AFP – 21 July

Boeing signed a contract with Qatar on July 21 for C-17 military airlifters, the U.S. aerospace giant said, without revealing how many of the long-range troop and cargo aircraft were ordered. The government of Qatar's purchase of the C-17 Globemaster III airlifter will provide "new strategic-airlift mobility capabilities" for the Qatar Armed Forces (QAF), Boeing said. The company did not give the value of the order but said it would begin deliveries from its Long Beach, California-based C-17 factory in summer 2009.

Qatar will sign a foreign military sales agreement for contractor logistics support with the U.S. Air Force, it said. "Boeing is pleased that Qatar joins its international partners - the U.S. Air Force, the UK Royal Air Force, Canadian Forces and the Royal Australian Air Force - in selecting the C-17, the world's leading airlifter, to modernize its defense forces' airlift fleet," said Jean Chamberlin, vice president and general manager of Boeing's Global Mobility Systems.

Boeing has sold 175 C-17s to the U.S. Air Force and is on contract to deliver 190. The company said there are 189 C-17s in service worldwide: 175 in the U.S., six in Britain, four in Canada and four in Australia.

The C-17, capable of intercontinental flight and landing on short, poorly equipped runways, is used for both military and humanitarian missions. The transport aircraft can be refueled in flight.

[DDG 1000 Program Will End At Two Ships](#)

Defense News – 22 July

The once-vaunted Zumwalt-class DDG 1000 advanced destroyer program - projected in the late 1990s to produce 32 new ships and subsequently downscaled to a seven-ship class - will instead turn out only two ships, according to highly-placed sources in the Pentagon and on Capitol Hill.

Instead of more 1000s, the Navy will continue to build more Arleigh Burke-class DDG 51 destroyers, construction of which had been slated to end in 2012. Top U.S. Navy and Pentagon brass met July 22 to make the decision, which means the service will ask Congress to drop the request for the third ship in the 2009 defense budget and forego plans to ask for the remaining four ships.

Each of the two ships now under contract will be built, according to the new decision. That means the General Dynamics Bath Iron Works shipyard in Bath, Maine will build the Zumwalt, DDG 1000, and Northrop Grumman's Ingalls yard in Pascagoula, Miss.,

will construct the yet-to-be-named DDG 1001. According to sources, the Navy also considered canceling the second DDG 1000 and building just one, but potentially high cancellation costs led to the decision to keep the ship.

The reprogramming decision was made at a conference July 22 hosted by Deputy Defense Secretary Gordon England and attended by Navy Secretary Donald Winter, Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Gary Roughead and Pentagon acquisition chief John Young. Officials were busy throughout the day and into the evening making personal phone calls to senators, congressmen and government and industry officials notifying them of the decision. Initial reaction on Capitol Hill seemed to be largely positive.

The move appears to be based on fears that potential cost overruns on the Zumwalts - estimated to cost about \$3.3 billion for each of the two lead ships - could threaten other Navy shipbuilding programs. The service declined comment on the July 22 decision, but in a statement released July 17, Navy spokesman Lt. Clay Doss provided some insight. "We need traction and stability in our combatant lines to reach 313 ships, and we should not raid the combatant line to fund other shipbuilding priorities," Doss said. "Even if we did not receive funding for the DDG 1000 class beyond the first two ships, the technology embedded in DDG 1000 will advance the Navy's future surface combatants."

If the fears that rising costs could torpedo other new ships are indeed behind the decision, it is a tacit recognition that repeated warnings by budget experts from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), Congressional Research Service (CRS) and the Government Accountability Office that the ships face huge potential cost overruns - up to \$5 billion each and more - were correct.

Ron O'Rourke of CRS testified March 14 before the House Seapower subcommittee that cost overruns on the first two ships could drive their combined cost to \$10.2 billion - an increase of \$3.9 billion. Using CBO's figures, O'Rourke pointed out that the remaining five ships, projected by the Navy to cost about \$12.8 billion, would likely jump about \$8 billion. "The combined cost growth for all seven ships would be roughly \$11.8 billion in then-year dollars, which is a figure roughly comparable to the total amount of funding in Shipbuilding and Conversion, Navy (SCN) appropriation account in certain recent years," O'Rourke testified at the hearing.

Publicly the Navy has long resisted the notion of building more DDG 51s, noting no more of the ships were needed - the class had been planned to end with the 62nd ship - and significant improvements to the design were hard to come by. But in March acting Navy acquisition chief John Thackrah told an audience that the service was looking at working in to the design a new SPY-3 radar to replace the current SPY-1 Aegis arrays, and the Navy also has studied fitting the 155mm Advanced Gun System into the DDG 51 hull. Both systems are part of the DDG 1000 design.

While it is not clear how many more 51s will be built, all sides seem in agreement that the majority of the hulls will go to Bath, which builds only destroyers. Northrop's Ingalls yard, in addition to destroyer construction, remains busy building three classes of

amphibious ships and the Coast Guard's new National Security Cutter, and is still working to rebuild its infrastructure following damage from 2005's Hurricane Katrina. "Bath will have to get the majority of these DDG 51s," said one source familiar with the situation. "They won't be able to go 50-50 with Pascagoula. Ingalls doesn't have the work force right now and Bath needs them."

Depending on the price of the new 51s, anywhere from 8 to 11 ships could be provided over the six-year future years defense plan. "They may continue to build these for the foreseeable future," the source said. "Nothing wrong with the hull, that is a good ship."

[HDW Wins \\$4 Billion Sub Contract From Turkey](#)

Defense News – 22 July

German shipyard HDW-MFI has won an approximately \$4 billion contract from the Turkish government to build and supply six submarines. The decision was announced July 22 by Turkish Defense Minister Vecdi Gonul after a meeting of Turkey's Defense Industry Executive Committee, which oversees ultimate procurement decisions. The committee is chaired by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan; its other members are Army Gen. Yasar Buyukanit, chief of the General Staff, and the chief procurement official, Murad Bayar.

HDW-MFI was competing with France's Armaris and Spain's Navantia. The three contenders had submitted their bids to the Undersecretariat for Defense Industries, Turkey's procurement office, last November. Lockheed Martin would work with Navantia as systems integrator.

Procurement sources familiar with the program said the first submarine is expected to enter service in 2014, one year later than originally planned. Turkey had scrapped earlier plans for a considerable upgrade of its older Ay-class submarines and instead opted to jointly build with a foreign manufacturer six air-independent propulsion submarines.

"Turkey's present submarine fleet is of German design and manufacture, and the Turks obviously wanted to continue that tradition," one industry source commented after the decision.

[China's weapons technology industry base set up in Xi'an](#)

People's Daily – 23 July

China North Industries Group Corporation and Xi'an City People's Government signed a cooperative agreement on July 18 to build a weapons technology industrial base in Xi'an.

The base is located in Jin Wei Industrial Park in the Xi'an Economic and Technological Development Zone. It aims to develop a people-oriented high-tech military and civilian industries that have independent intellectual property rights and innovation capabilities. China North Industries Group Corporation will coordinate with strong domestic and foreign companies to make this base a cooperative platform for large enterprises at home

and abroad. The Xi'an government and the Economic and Technological Development Zone will provide policy support and auxiliary services. Seven projects in the first batch, with a total investment of 4 billion yuan, are located there. In five years, the output value of enterprises in the zone will reach 30 billion yuan and taxes will amount to 1 billion yuan.

US seeks boost to Pakistan F-16s

BBC – 24 July

The US has confirmed it hopes to use \$230m of its \$300m military funding to Pakistan in 2008 on upgrading the country's ageing F-16 fighter jets. A report in the New York Times said some US Congressmen were dismayed, saying the jets did not help counter-terrorism operations. White House spokeswoman Dana Perino confirmed the upgrade but insisted the jets were for counter-terrorism use.

The move is sure to anger Pakistan's key rival India, analysts say. The New York Times reported that the timing of the move had caught legislators off guard. Some believed it might be linked to the visit to Washington next week of new Pakistani Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani, the Times said.

Speaking later on Thursday, Ms Perino said: "The F-16s that they [Pakistan] have are used in counter-terrorism operations. We made them available to the Pakistanis and they need to be maintained." She said Pakistan was under financial pressure because of rising food and other prices. In 2007, US lawmakers specified that military funding to Pakistan should be for counter-terrorism or law enforcement. The planes have been used by Pakistan in counter-terror operations, but only rarely. The New York Times quoted state department officials as saying the upgrades would enhance the jets' capacity to hit insurgents accurately.

Pakistan currently operates a fleet of at least 30 F-16s, purchased from the US in the mid-1980s. Nearly half of these are believed to have been grounded in recent years because of a lack of spare parts and the need for upgrades. In 2005, the US agreed to sell its ally 25 of the latest versions of the fighter jet.

Washington also agreed to upgrade the older F-16s, although these would have to be paid for directly by Islamabad. But the BBC's Syed Shoaib Hasan, in Islamabad, says the new plan set out by the Bush administration would now include this upgrade within its anti-terrorism aid package.

Pakistan has used the fighter jets in operations against pro-Taliban insurgents on its Afghan border. In addition to ground attack capabilities the jets have a role in establishing air superiority, and would be Pakistan's main weapon in any possible war with arch-rival India, our correspondent says.

[Barak: U.S. to provide Israel with defense systems against Iran strike](#)

Haaretz – 29 July

The United States will soon link Israel up to two advanced missile detection systems as a precaution against any future attack by a nuclear-armed Iran, Defense Minister Ehud Barak said on Tuesday. The allies are also in advanced talks on upgrading Israel's Arrow II ballistic shield, though they disagree over whether it should incorporate an American interceptor missile, Barak said after meeting U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates. Washington has been leading efforts to curb Iran's atomic ambitions through sanctions, mindful of Israel's threats to resort to military strikes if it deems diplomacy a dead end.

Barak told reporters that the Israeli and U.S. governments "see eye to eye on the need to keep all options on the table ... though we may not agree on each and every detail." "It's important the Americans understand our position, and I think that they understand it a lot better after this visit," said Barak, who was one of the more vocal Israeli critics of a U.S. intelligence report last year that concluded Iran had shelved a military nuclear program in 2003.

Barak declined to give details on whether Israel, which is believed to have the Middle East's only nuclear arsenal, would be prepared to take on Iran alone. Iran denies seeking atomic weapons and has vowed to retaliate for any attack. The dispute has fed speculation in the global financial markets about a possible confrontation between Iran and Israel or the United States. That helped push oil prices to record highs earlier this month.

Signaling willingness to focus on defensive measures, Barak said he had secured the Pentagon's agreement to post a powerful radar, known as the forward-based X-band, in Israel "before the new (U.S.) administration arrives" in January. Built by Raytheon Co, the system has been described by U.S. officials as capable of tracking an object the size of a baseball from about 2,900 miles (4,700 km) away. It would let the Arrow engage an Iranian Shehab-3 ballistic missile about halfway through what would be its 11-minute flight to Israel. The X-Band radar system is the same as the one the United States plans to base in the Czech Republic as part of a missile defense system to protect allies in Europe. The United States also discussed possibly providing Israel with access to missile launch data.

A senior U.S. defense official confirmed the United States was looking to deploy the X-band system to Israel. "We're stationing our system there so it may benefit them," said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity when discussing high-level talks. Pentagon press secretary Geoff Morrell said: "Like the Israelis, we see the Iranians racing to build a ballistic missile capability and so we are working to help the Israelis fortify their defenses as quickly as possible."

Barak said the United States will also increase Israel's access to its Defense Support

Program (DSP) satellites, which spot missile launches. Israeli officials say past access to the DSP has been on a per-request, rather than constant, basis. "In a few months, Israel will be stronger and more prepared in the realm of protection against long-distance threats," he said.

Israel announced last year that Arrow, a project funded largely by the United States, would be upgraded. The envisaged Arrow-III would be capable of shooting down missiles at greater atmospheric heights - a safeguard against nuclear fallout.

Israeli and U.S. officials this month voiced differing assessments on when Iran might acquire advanced S-300 anti-aircraft systems from Russia. The S-300s would complicate any preemptive air strikes on Iran's nuclear sites.

Gates said in a July 9 briefing that the systems would not be in Iranian hands "any time soon" while Israeli defense officials, speaking to Reuters on condition of anonymity, predicted first delivery of the systems as early as September. Pentagon press secretary Morrell said Gates was referring to a complete, deployable system reaching Iran - which does not preclude the possibility of ancillary equipment arriving sooner. Morrell said last week the Pentagon did not expect Iran to have the system this year. Iran announced in December that it would buy an unspecified number of S-300s. Russia denied that there was any such deal.

Gates said Tuesday that the Bush administration was prepared to consider upgrading Israel's missile defense capabilities. Gates told Barak that the U.S. would explore a number of options including ballistic missile early warning launch data, a forward based X-Band radar system, other missile defense assets, and counter measures to short-range rocket and mortar attacks.

Barak is considering purchasing or borrowing several Phalanx automated cannons from the United States. The cannons intercept incoming mortar shells and short-range rockets, and would be used to defend Sderot and other Negev towns from rocket fire from the Gaza Strip. The defense minister was expected to ask Gates and Admiral Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to appraise the Phalanx's performance.

That assessment will be used to help the government decide whether to bring the anti-missile system to Israel. The new development came after a series of articles in *Haaretz*, in which Dr. Natan Farber - an expert in ballistic missiles from the Technion - expressed his support for the project. However, several Defense Ministry officials said the Phalanx system is not effective enough, and argue that Israel should focus on developing the Iron Dome defense system, which will not be ready before 2011.

[South Korea To Help Turkey Develop New Tank](#)

Defense News – 30 July

South Korea said it has signed a \$400 million contract to help Turkey develop a new tank, in what will be the first time Seoul has exported tanks or related technology.

Under the deal signed in Ankara on July 29, South Korea will help Turkey develop its new main battle tank by 2015, the Defense Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA) said in a press statement.

"The Turkish government has recognized our rich experience and advanced technology in developing battle tanks," DAPA said. "It also demonstrates the superiority of our defense technology."

The deal includes technology transfer worth \$330 million and the production of four prototypes worth \$70 million, Hyundai Rotem said. When development is completed, Turkey reportedly plans to produce some 200 of the tanks.

"This project is a new landmark in the two countries' cooperation in defense technology," Defense Minister Lee Sang-Hee was quoted as saying by Yonhap news agency. Turkey is one of the largest customers of South Korean defense products.

State-funded Korea Aerospace Industries (KAI) last year signed a \$500 million contract to deliver 55 KT-1 trainers to Turkey's air force by 2013. Yonhap said Turkey also wants to buy some \$100 million worth of weapons, including 155mm self-propelled artillery, from South Korea this year.

NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY

[Thailand and Laos step up joint anti-drugs measures](#)

Pattaya Mail - 18 July

Soubanh Srithirath from Laos and Sompong Amornvivat from Thailand agree to increase anti-drugs cooperation between the two countries. July 10 saw the 11th Bilateral Meeting for Cooperation on the Suppression of Narcotics between Thailand and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, held at the Dusit Thani Hotel Pattaya and hosted by the Office of Protection and Suppression of Narcotics at the Ministry of Justice. Thailand's Minister of Justice Sompong Amornvivat and Soubanh Srithirath, Minister in the President's Office of the Lao People's Democratic Republic jointly chaired the meeting.

The talks were divided into two levels, one session for senior officials and the other for the ministers, and the overall program was designed to create an operational plan for the following year to reinforce the Border Liaison Office for Suppression of Narcotics. The meeting agreed to expand cooperation to prevent the smuggling of drugs by or via Cambodia, and the ministers agreed there should be an operational meeting between Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia for greater cooperation in the suppression of narcotics in the region.

Thailand and Laos agreed that there should be joint patrols along the banks of the Mekong, not only to stop the smuggling of drugs but also to collect information that would lead to the breaking up of dealer networks. Sompong said that the Thai government had supported a budget of 24.5 million baht to construct an addict treatment and rehabilitation center in Jampasak District in 2004, and that the center was handed

over to the Lao government after completion on December 16, 2005. The Public Health Ministry of Thailand is responsible for technical support, and the operation of the center. The Thai government has now presented a further amount of 994,580 baht for materials and equipment at the center.

[New E Africa food crisis warning](#)

BBC – 23 July

Rising food prices are putting millions of people in East Africa at risk of severe hunger and destitution, the UK-based charity Oxfam has warned. Droughts, war and poverty have put an estimated nine to 13 million people in the region in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, it says. The situation has been made worse by rising food prices, with wheat and rice particularly expensive.

A BBC correspondent says some people have started to eat animal feed. Many people in the remote north-eastern Afar region raise animals for a living but many camels have died and the goats are starting to succumb to hunger too. This means it will be difficult for the people to rebuild their herds - and their lives.

The last rain fell in the area 11 months ago and this is the second serious drought in the region in three years. The BBC's Karen Allen says the cruel combination of rising food prices and animals that are dying and falling sick could push people over the edge. The only shop in one area she visited does have maize for sale but few local people can afford to buy it.

People in Afar, Ethiopia, say they are struggling to survive. Shop-keeper Mohammed says people would need three goats to buy a single sack of grain - which would last an average family a week or two. One mother whose family has been eating animal feed asked: "How long before our children start to fall sick? We have been living like this for a month"

Oxfam is calling on donors to increase aid levels to the region. "The cost of food has escalated by up to 500% in some places, leaving people who have suffered drought after drought in utter destitution," says Oxfam's Rob McNeil, who has just returned from the Somali and Afar regions of Ethiopia. "Some of the roads we travelled on were littered with dead livestock. There is little or no pasture or water for the animals that people rely upon. People are increasingly becoming desperate."

The call follows another warning on Tuesday from the UN World Food Programme, saying that more than 14 million people in the Horn of Africa needed food aid because of drought and rising food and fuel prices. In Somalia, the cost of imported rice increased by up to 350% between the beginning of 2007 and May 2008.

In areas of Ethiopia, the price of wheat has more than doubled over a six-month period, and food prices are expected to remain high until the next harvest in October.

In the areas of East Africa heavily dependent on food imports, such as Somalia, global food price rises are making food more expensive.

In Somalia, 2.6 million (35% of the population) require emergency assistance, Oxfam says. This could increase to half the population of the country (3.5 million) by the end of 2008. Between 18% and 24% of children are acutely malnourished. In Ethiopia, the government estimates 4.6 million people are now in need of emergency food assistance. This has more than doubled from 2.2 million in need of help at the beginning of this year. Some 75,000 children are suffering from severe acute malnutrition in drought-stricken areas, the government says. In Turkana, northern Kenya, an Oxfam survey showed 25% of children are suffering from acute malnutrition, the highest in the country. High malnutrition rates have been reported in several parts of Ethiopia and could increase without an immediate increase in humanitarian assistance.

MILITARY / PEACEKEEPING / HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS

[Asia-Pacific plans regional exercises for disasters](#)

Straits Times – 24 July

ASIA'S top security forum on Thursday agreed to start regional disaster relief exercises initiated by the United States and the Philippines, which it hopes will prepare the region better after it suffered two major disasters this year. The 27-member Asean Regional Forum (ARF), which includes Asean and major global players such as the US, China and Russia, even considered having designated forces on standby to respond rapidly to future disasters.

But Singapore Foreign Minister George Yeo said it should be up to the country in need to decide if it wants to seek such help in the event of a disaster. Aid should not be forced on any country, he said, reflecting the reservations of some countries of having foreign military presence on their soil.

The ministers spent a great deal of time talking about disaster management in a region that has seen international aid efforts mounted after a major cyclone in Myanmar and a devastating earthquake in China in recent months, and where worries persist about a potential bird flu pandemic. 'They recognised that military assets and personnel, in full support and not in place of civilian responses, have played an increasingly important role in regional disaster responses', said a final draft document, scheduled for release later on Thursday.

A US-Philippine exercise this year could be a model, said Mr Yeo, who chaired this week's Asean meetings. 'It makes a lot of sense to conduct such exercises. You don't want to be working together for the first time when there's a disaster', he said. 'If you have practised before, if you know the radio frequencies, you share common language, common procedures, then you can act so much more effectively in a disaster situation'.

The discussions marked the end of a series of ministerial meetings that started on Monday, when Asean ministers from the 10-member grouping met to discuss regional issues and how to integrate further. The ARF on Thursday also discussed one issue that threatened to dominate this year's meet - the tense standoff between Thai and Cambodia troops at a disputed border - as well as the progress of six-party talks on North Korea, which was held on the sidelines of the Asean ministerial meeting on Wednesday.

The highlight on Thursday was the North Korea's signing Asean's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, in what is seen as a further sign that Pyongyang is coming in from the diplomatic cold. US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice also broached the possibility of institutionalising the six-party talks process when she met dialogue partners at the meeting.

[Darfur force 'failing civilians'](#)

BBC – 28 July

African aid agencies say the African-UN peacekeeping mission in Sudan's Darfur region is failing to provide adequate protection for civilians. A report published by a group of mainly African relief and advocacy groups, the Darfur Consortium, said the force was too small and inadequately funded. It said six months after the mission began, only about a third of the 26,000 personnel promised had been deployed.

The five-year-old Darfur conflict has left some 300,000 people dead. The African Union-United Nations Mission in Darfur (Unamid) was set up after the United Nations Security Council promised protection to some four million people caught up in the war between the Sudanese government and rebels. But Khartoum insisted that Africans should make up the bulk of the soldiers.

The BBC's Mark Doyle says most of the troops came from an earlier underfunded solely African force and the hope was that UN involvement would improve logistics. The Darfur consortium says Unamid is "in danger of becoming the world's latest broken promise". It says the mission is still critically short of basic equipment such as helicopters and armoured vehicles. Some of the soldiers from the former African force were so badly supplied that they were reduced to putting blue plastic bags over their helmets to indicate that they now worked for the UN, the report says.

The report adds that the soldiers who had deployed could do much better by, for example, mounting regular foot patrols in camps or consistently protecting women who collect firewood. The report cites several instances when Unamid soldiers observed violence against civilians without acting against it, and said commanders were inconsistent in interpreting the mission's mandate.

The report also accuses the Sudanese government of blocking key deployments, and says rich countries have not given the peacekeepers enough equipment. Khartoum says the scale of the violence and suffering has been exaggerated by the west for political reasons.

It denies charges that it organised the Arab Janjaweed militias, accused of widespread atrocities against Darfur's black African population.

NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

[Ferry shipments of 'terror-threat' plutonium end](#)

Independent – 27 July

Top-secret shipments of weapons-ready plutonium through British waters have been stopped, after their exposure by *The Independent* on Sunday. The Department for Transport (DfT) said last week that it had taken "regulatory action" to prohibit the shipments from Sellafield to Normandy on an unarmed old roll-on, roll-off ferry, with few safety or security features. The prohibition, the first of its kind, was imposed after complaints by the French nuclear safety authorities.

The shipments – denounced by nuclear weapons experts as "madness" and "totally irresponsible" – were carrying hundreds of kilograms of plutonium-dioxide powder, described as the ideal material for terrorists seeking to create a nuclear explosion or make a dirty bomb. Only 10kg of the plutonium, experts claim, would be needed to make a terrorist atomic weapon.

John Large, an independent nuclear expert, called it "the most dangerous and worst possible material you could ship". The first shipment – in the converted ferry *Atlantic Osprey* – was about to leave Cumbria for a French nuclear complex at Cap la Hague in March, when the plan was exposed in *The IoS*.

Peter Ainsworth, the Conservative environment spokesman, and Steve Webb, his Lib-Dem counterpart, condemned the shipment as a threat to national security and it was delayed for two months, finally taking place secretly on 21 May. But last Tuesday, in a parliamentary answer slipped out just before the Commons broke up for the summer, the junior Transport minister Jim Fitzpatrick told the Liberal Democrat MP, Norman Baker: "As a result of discussion between this department and L'Autorité de Sûreté Nucléaire regarding the shipment of plutonium by Sellafield Ltd in May, and our subsequent investigations, we took regulatory action to prevent further shipments of plutonium from Sellafield in the same manner."

Late last week, the DfT refused to explain why it had acted, apart from saying that "the company failed to abide by the terms of its certificate of approval". Sellafield Ltd has said it is appealing against the decision. It said: "We take this matter very seriously", adding: "We are unable to comment any further."

Mr Baker, the Lib-Dem transport spokesman, said: "The Government was very lax in allowing this material to be shipped on such an unsuitable vessel. Sadly, the evidence is it will do nothing to challenge the nuclear industry unless forced to do so by public pressure, in this case following the exposure of the shipments in *The IoS*."

The plans resulted from one of Britain's least known industrial scandals: the failure of a controversial £473m plant at Sellafield which was, designed to make new fuel out of plutonium and uranium recovered from reprocessing at the nuclear complex.

In March, Energy minister Malcolm Wicks had to admit that the plant, designed to produce 120 tons of the fuel a year, had worked so badly that it had managed only 5.3 in five years of operation. Which meant Sellafield had to turn to its chief rival, in France, to complete its orders.

North Korean Nuclear Weapons Can Be Converted into Tactical Weapons

Yonhap – 29 July

North Korea has been constantly strengthening its nuclear capacity. Hwang Joo Ho, a professor of the Department of Nuclear Engineering at Kyunghee University, and Moon Joo Hyun, a professor at Dongguk University, stated their position in a paper, the enlargement of North Korean nuclear capacity and measures for the summer issue of The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis published by the Korea Institute for Defense Analyses.

The paper predicts that With submission of the North Korean nuclear declaration, some expected the nuclear issue would step forward into the verification phase and further into the denuclearization phase. However, according to North Korean behavior up to now, the possibility of spontaneous nuclear abandonment is low and even now North Korea may develop nuclear weapons so as to enlarge its nuclear capacity.

The paper explains that In the initial phase step of nuclear weapons development when the amount of nuclear weapons is defined, the usefulness of nuclear weapons is also limited for strategic purpose. As the number of nuclear weapons increases, some of the weapons can be converted into tactical weapons. These tactical nuclear weapons, which are generally used for a local war, are small scale weapons of just a few kilotons equipped on ground-to air missiles, air-to-air missiles, and in nuclear ground mines.

It stated that North Korea can convert its nuclear weapons into tactical nuclear weapons if North Korea has more than 10 nuclear weapons. It means that if a war occurs, North Korea can lead the war in their favor with the use of tactical nuclear weapons and, at the same time, can put a restraint on other countries' military intervention with the rest of the strategic nuclear weapons.

North Korea has already obtained nuclear [plutonium] weapons that can be loaded on a missile and has continuously been strengthening its nuclear capacity. As time goes by, the North Korean nuclear threat would be enhanced by obtaining tactical nuclear weapons due to miniaturization of nuclear weapons; increasing the held number of nuclear weapons; and enhancing the explosive power of the nuclear weapons.

The paper predicts that those who claim that North Korea will abandon its nuclear capability through negotiations believe that the North surely will do as long as two

conditions are sufficient. The first condition is the U.S. and the international community should approve of Kim Jong Il's dictatorship, and the second is that they support North Korea economically so as to allow it to survive in the current system.

However, this way has a low possibility of being realized because without nuclear weapons North Korea would have to set to human rights improvements, economic reforms and opening, but that is poison for the Kim Jong Il regime. That is to say that North Korea cannot completely abandon nuclear weapons. The international community should urge North Korea to abandon its nuclear capacity by imposing a heavy burden and pain on North Korea because North Korea will not abandon it spontaneously.

The paper points out that The South Korean government has focused on achieving the aim that North Korea could undertake, in the most favorable sense for denuclearization, and suggesting rewards for it. This plan can be achieved if North Korea actually has the intent to abandon the nuclear weapons and also to implement the promise with South Korea. However, the behavior of North Korea so far has been the opposite of that proposition.

The paper claims that Now, the Southern administration has to make the North realize that its behavior and attitude, like how it behaved during the previous two administrations will not be accepted anymore and the stick will not be simply uncomfortable, but terribly painful. Kim Jong Il should acknowledge that holding nuclear weapons is not a benefit for him, but damaging or threatening to the system's life. To do this, international community and South Korea should use the North's Achilles heel, such as food and energy, human rights issues, illegal activities and the proliferation of WMD, as much as possible, emphasized the paper.