



RÉVOLUTIONNAIRE 19/2008

The Foremost Inter-Disciplinary Defence E-Bulletin

突破 *Revolucionario* *Revolutionary* *Merevolusikan* *Revolutionär* *Kraantikari*

12 September 2008

Contemporary Conflict

- Pakistani Taliban vow to strike during Ramadan
- Iraq takes over security in Anbar from U.S. troops
- Russia praises EU over sanctions
- Rage in Kashmir meets India's brute force
- Sophistication of deadly Taliban attack concerning: Natynczyk
- US mum on Pakistan raid
- Philippine troops head south amid crisis warning
- Russians 'agree Georgia deadline'
- Bush reshuffles war zone troops
- International concern as Sri Lanka steps up attacks
- US 'must target Pakistan havens'

Terrorism & Counter-Terrorism

- Morocco 'breaks terror network'
- Colombia: Car Bomb in Cali Kills 4
- Bush tells Pakistan's Zardari he has full support on terror

Diplomacy & Defence Strategy

- Lebanon appoints new army chief
- Russia's isolation plays into China's hands
- Report says Taiwan won't deploy longer-range missiles
- Indonesia, Australia to conduct joint patrols in Timor Sea
- China claims transparency in military spending while filing report to UN
- US Slashes Intelligence Unit for NK
- Russia calls U.S. freeze on civilian nuclear deal 'mistake'
- Australian PM flags military build-up as Asian powers rise

Defence Acquisition and Technology

- Report: Taiwan to Mass-Produce Anti-Ship Missiles
- Have a peek at Russia's new submarine monster

- **Russian Navy aircraft test new equipment over the Arctic**
- **Japan Defense Report Warns Of China's Military Expansion In Space**
- **Russia's Navy to Have New Amphibian Aircraft**
- **Russian Army Gets New Drones**
- **Russia to deliver Admiral Gorshkov to India after 2011**
- **Russian Navy to adopt new carrier fighters after 2016**
- **Seoul opens world's second largest aircraft testing center**
- **Thailand Approves \$197 Million Arms Buy**
- **US to sell Harpoon missiles worth \$ 170 million to India**
- **Russia modernizes fleet of A-50M AWACS planes**
- **N Korea 'builds new missile site'**

Non-Traditional Security

- **Pirates Emboldened By Ransom Payments, Says Report**
- **Malaysia Sends Navy to Protect Ships Near Somalia From Pirates**
- **Malaysia Beefs Up Security At Thai Border**
- **Myanmar responded well to cyclone victims: WHO**
- **China, Japan, ROK to share info on nuke safety**
- **China launches natural disaster monitoring satellites**
- **PNG warned of environmental mining disaster**

Military / Peacekeeping / Humanitarian Operations

- **Indian military mounts mammoth flood rescue effort**
- **Chinese Spy Ship Spotted Off Taiwan - Officials**

Nuclear Proliferation

- **China calls for balance of nuclear nonproliferation, energy use**
- **North Korea takes nuclear equipment out of storage**
- **US frustrated over China's refusal to come clean on nuke capability**
- **Australia will not sell uranium to India**
- **Top-level China, India talks amid nuclear deal tension**

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

Pakistani Taliban vow to strike during Ramadan

Reuters – 31 August

Pakistani Taliban will continue attacks during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, rejecting a government announcement it would halt military action in the northwest, a Taliban spokesman said on Sunday. Violence has surged in Pakistan recently with the military battling al Qaeda- and Taliban-linked fighters in three areas in the northwest, and sporadic missile strikes, attributed to the United States, also aimed at militants.

One of those launched from a suspected U.S. drone hit on Sunday, killing five Uzbek militants and wounding seven of their Pakistani allies, intelligence officials and witnesses said. Pakistani militants have responded to the military pressure with suicide and remotely detonated bomb attacks on the security forces and civilian targets.

Deteriorating security has coincided with a faltering economy and political upheaval, as the resignation of unpopular President Pervez Musharraf on Aug. 18 was followed a week later by a split in the ruling coalition. "It's a joke. It isn't a matter of holy or unholy. All months are holy. If they want to end fighting, it should be permanent," Muslim Khan, Taliban spokesman in the Swat Valley, said of the government announcement of the temporary halt in military operations. "We want enforcement of Sharia laws and will continue our struggle. We haven't got instructions from our top leadership to stop fighting. If they do (order a halt) then we certainly will," he said by telephone.

Pakistan's government said on Saturday security forces would suspend operations from Sunday night for Ramadan, which ends at the beginning of October, but would retaliate if attacked. Worries about security and politics have unnerved investors who have sent Pakistani financial markets skidding lower. The main share index has fallen about 36 percent this year.

According to government estimates, up to 300,000 people have fled from fierce clashes between security forces and violent militants in the tribal region of Bajaur on the Afghan border. Many displaced people have moved to temporary shelters set up in various towns outside the region, where despite government and foreign aid agencies' efforts, shortages of food and medical supplies and poor sanitation are common complaints.

The United States and other allies have been concerned the government led by assassinated former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's party might be less committed to the unpopular war against militancy after the resignation of firm ally Musharraf. Washington says al Qaeda and Taliban militants have been given shelter by Pakistani allies in ethnic Pashtun tribal lands on the Afghan border and from there not only carry out attacks on both sides of the border but plot violence in the West.

Missile strikes like the one on Sunday -- which according to intelligence officials struck a house in North Waziristan near the Afghan border, a known sanctuary for Taliban and al

Qaeda militants -- are generally not confirmed or denied by U.S. or allied military officials in Afghanistan. But intelligence sources say they are typically carried out by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. The Sunday incident occurred about 15 km east of Miranshah, the main town of the region. In July a similar strike killed a top al Qaeda official in South Waziristan province. "We have reports of an explosion, but we don't know the nature of the blast," said Pakistani military spokesman Major General Athar Abbas regarding the Sunday strike report.

Pakistan's military has been engaged in heavy fighting recently with militants in the Bajaur area on the Afghan border, across mountains to the west of Swat, and in South Waziristan. In Swat and Bajaur especially, jet fighters and helicopter gunships have been used to strike militant positions. Several hundred people, mostly militants, have been killed in recent clashes, government officials say.

[Iraq takes over security in Anbar from U.S. troops](#)

Los Angeles Times – 02 September

In an event touted by President Bush as a sign of U.S. success in Iraq but tinged with evidence of political friction and security threats bubbling below the surface, U.S. forces on Monday handed control of security in Anbar province to the Iraqis. The U.S. military also said Iraq's government on Oct. 1 plans to assume authority over more than 50,000 mainly Sunni Arab fighters known as the Sons of Iraq and allied with U.S. forces in Baghdad. Taken together, the developments represent a major shift that will test the Shiite Muslim-led government's willingness to support Sunni-led efforts considered key to sustaining relative calm in Iraq and fostering reconciliation.

The Sons of Iraq program was born in Anbar in 2006 when tribal leaders in the Sunni-dominated province turned against the militant group Al Qaeda in Iraq and allied themselves with U.S. forces. They called their movement the Awakening, and their foot soldiers became known as the Sons of Iraq. Now, there are about 99,000 Sons of Iraq nationwide, most of them Sunnis, many of them former insurgents, and each getting \$300 a month from the U.S. military. Prime Minister Nouri Maliki's government has vowed to incorporate them into Iraq's security forces or find them other jobs, but Sons of Iraq leaders say Maliki is stalling and waging a campaign of arrest and intimidation against many of them.

Their distrust was evident at the Anbar ceremony. So was the distrust between Awakening leaders and Sunni lawmakers on the Anbar provincial council, who tribal chiefs say are corrupt and denying leaders of the security program the political clout they deserve. In his speech, the head of the Anbar provincial council, Abdul Salam Ani, accused "tribal and political sides" of trying to stir up trouble. "We will not let them," he said.

Another speaker was Sheik Ahmed Buzaigh abu Risha, the Anbar Awakening movement leader who accused the Maliki government of targeting Sons of Iraq for prosecution related to crimes committed before the movement began. "They should take into

consideration their heroic stances against Al Qaeda during the period starting from 2006 and not before this," he said. He also took a swipe at the provincial council, saying it beat him to the podium, "but they haven't beaten us in taking action, thank God." That was a reference to Awakening leaders' allegations that the Iraqi Islamic Party politicians who dominate Anbar politics did not fight the insurgency but are hogging the spoils of peace.

The politicians counter that they risked their lives by taking part in 2005 provincial elections boycotted by the tribesmen. "We were the ones who faced all the danger," said Ammar Wajeih of the Iraqi Islamic Party. Abu Risha's brother, Sheik Abdul-Sattar abu Risha, is credited with founding the Awakening movement in 2006. Two years earlier, U.S. forces had launched a major offensive against insurgents in the Anbar city of Fallouja, a battle that galvanized Al Qaeda in Iraq and turned Anbar into the deadliest province for U.S. forces from 2004 through 2006.

By September 2007, things had become so peaceful that Bush met Abdul-Sattar in Anbar. Ten days later, the sheik was assassinated, and his brother replaced him at the helm. The commander of American forces in Anbar, Marine Maj. Gen. John Kelly, alluded to the political problems roiling Anbar and warned that security forces had done all they could for the province. "All we can hope to do is hold what we've achieved against the terrorists," Kelly said of Iraqi and U.S. forces. "There are two things that are desperately needed that security forces cannot provide here: trust and friendship amongst all of you and between the province and the rest of Iraq." "I pray God you can achieve this," Kelly added. "If you will fail . . . then the agony we will have endured together will have been for nothing."

In Washington, Bush in a statement called the transfer of control "a credit to the courage of our troops, the Iraqi security forces and the brave tribes and other civilians from Anbar." Anbar is the 11th of Iraq's 18 provinces to take control of its security from U.S. forces. The roughly 26,000 American troops there will move into "over-watch" positions, not involved in security operations unless requested by Iraqi security forces or if U.S. officials deem it necessary.

Anbar is the first mainly Sunni province to revert to Iraqi control and it shares a border with Saudi Arabia, Syria and Jordan, making it prime territory for infiltration by Sunni Muslim insurgents. It was to have been handed over in June, but political turmoil mixed with security breaches delayed the event. A 5 a.m.-to-5 p.m. vehicular curfew was imposed across Ramadi, the provincial capital, to reinforce security for Monday's ceremony, and the U.S. military did not even announce the event in advance.

Residents said they were optimistic the transfer would lead to the departure of U.S. forces, but some also expressed wariness about the future. "I hope it will be a chance for our security forces to practice their jobs in a professional way . . . so we can start rebuilding our province," Abdullah Fayad said.

In Baghdad, a U.S. military spokesman, Navy Rear Adm. Patrick Driscoll, said the Iraqi government had set Oct. 1 as its target date for assuming command and control of the

Sons of Iraq in Baghdad and its environs. It would be the first time the Iraqi government has taken control of the Sons of Iraq. Based on the numbers in Baghdad and their monthly stipends, it means Maliki's government will have to pay about \$15 million a month to sustain the program there.

[Russia praises EU over sanctions](#)

BBC – 02 September

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has welcomed as "realistic" an EU decision not to impose sanctions on his country over its recent invasion of Georgia. But Mr Medvedev said it was "sad" that the EU, which held a crisis summit, still did not understand what motivated Russia into sending in troops. EU leaders decided to suspend talks on a strategic pact with Russia until its troops were withdrawn from Georgia. Tensions between Russia and the West soared in the wake of the conflict.

In an interview with the Euronews television channel, Mr Medvedev said the outcome of the EU meeting was "double-edged". "Firstly, unfortunately, there is still no understanding of what motivated Russia to make decisions on repelling the Georgian aggression and recognising South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states," he said. But, he added, a "reasonable, realistic point of view prevailed because some of the states were calling for some mythical sanctions".

Moscow says it sent troops into Georgia to halt an attempt by Georgia to restore control over South Ossetia, which broke away in the 1990s. Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, who stepped down as president earlier this year, praised the European Union's "common sense". But he warned that Moscow would respond to the growing presence of Nato warships in the Black Sea, where Russia's navy fleet has a huge presence. He did not give any details.

Following Monday's emergency summit in Brussels, EU Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso said it was clear it could not "continue as if nothing had happened". European leaders had been deeply divided on how to respond to Russia's intervention in Georgia, and aware - as Moscow's main trading partner - of their dependence on Russian gas and oil. The EU agreed to condemn Russia's move to recognise the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. It also announced it was prepared to send hundreds of civilian monitors to Georgia to check if Russia was abiding by the EU-brokered ceasefire agreement.

Under the agreement, Russia must pull back its troops to their positions before the conflict. Georgia's President, Mikhail Saakashvili, pointed to the freezing of the EU-Russia partnership talks as a show of Western solidarity with Georgia. "Russia failed to break the unity at the heart of Europe," he said in an interview with a French television channel.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who helped broker the accord, is due to travel to Moscow and Tbilisi next Monday along with EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana for

talks with the Russian and Georgian governments. UK Foreign Secretary David Miliband, in an article published on Tuesday, said Russia would suffer politically and militarily for its intervention in neighbouring Georgia. "It has made short-term military gains, but over time it will feel economic and political losses. If Russia truly wants respect and influence, it must change course," Mr Miliband wrote in the Irish Examiner. China was urging Russia and Georgia to resolve their conflict through "dialogue and consultation", foreign ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu told journalists in Beijing.

Fighting between Russia and Georgia began on 7 August after the Georgian military tried to retake the breakaway region of South Ossetia by force. Russian forces launched a counter-attack and the conflict ended with the ejection of Georgian troops from both South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

[Rage in Kashmir meets India's brute force](#)

Reuters – 02 September

The world's largest democracy locks up protest leaders without charge, shoots dozens of demonstrators dead, beats and intimidates ordinary citizens and raids homes without warrants. Welcome to Indian Kashmir, where the biggest separatist protests in two decades have clashed with the might of the state.

"They are ruthless, trigger happy," said Ghulam Rasool Bhat, a labourer who says he was beaten by federal police after he tried to buy milk for his two nephews under a curfew in Srinagar, the summer capital of Indian Kashmir. He lay in a bed, both legs bandaged where a soldier, shouting "Get your milk from Pakistan" had smashed a rifle into his shins. His legs felt, he said, as if in a continuous cramp.

Police have shot dead at least 35 Muslim protesters in the Muslim-majority Kashmir Valley after a row over land for a Hindu shrine spiralled into marches and strikes against Indian rule. More than 1,000 people have been wounded in clashes over three weeks, hospital officials and police say, with the Kashmir Valley often under curfew. Hundreds of people have suffered police baton beatings and bullet wounds, doctors say.

The Indian government says its security forces have been fired upon by protesters on several occasions, and said authorities had "acted within the law and with restraint". Witnesses said some protesters had thrown stones at police, but said that most were marching peacefully. India's hardline response to the protests has highlighted what critics say is its lack of strategy to find a solution to a problem that has already sparked two wars between India and Pakistan, who both claim the region in full but rule it in parts.

The crackdown may also be counter-productive. Residents say the deaths and violent crackdown have fuelled anger against India and boosted the separatist cause after years of relative peace. "The government of India does not have a strategy," said Siddharth Varadarajan, diplomatic editor of The Hindu newspaper. "It is relying heavily on coercion, arresting top and middle-level leaders in the hope it will break the back of unprecedented protests." In rare criticism last week, the UN High Commissioner for

Human Rights called on India to avoid using excessive force. It drew a rebuke from India for interfering in its affairs.

For decades there has been simmering resentment at the hundreds of thousands of Indian troops stationed in Kashmir, making it one of the most militarised regions on earth. Roadblocks, verbal abuse from soldiers and raids on homes have long been a part of daily life. But as protests spiralled in August, the government sent in battalions of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), a federal police force of mainly Hindus who do not speak Kashmiri. Strangers to Kashmir, most residents appear to despise them.

In interviews in Srinagar and nearby villages, tales were similar: CRPF beatings, night raids on homes, verbal abuse and smashed windows. Life has been worse than in previous years. "They are not human," said Raja, a villager from Newtheed less than an hour's drive from the city. She said soldiers smashed up her home, shouting "We'll show you what freedom is". In Srinagar, the CRPF has taken over from the local Kashmiri police to enforce curfews and riot control. Residents complain of abuse at the slightest provocation -- selling bread, buying milk.

One surgeon, who asked to remain anonymous because of fear of retribution from Indian authorities, said he has received around 400 wounded people in three weeks, 150 of them hit by bullets. "These are target killings. It's simple to see," said the doctor, explaining that many of the chest wounds were from weapons such as AK-47s. "Most of these were intended to kill. They were not to disperse a crowd."

Shabir Ahmed Dar, 22, lay in one hospital bed after three operations. He was shot in the abdomen during a protest march to the Pakistani Kashmir border. "There was no warning from the police. They just fired." The police firings drew criticism from Human Rights Watch. To end this cycle of tragedy, the government should order security forces to act with restraint," it said in a statement.

It is not just a hardline response to street protests. Authorities have detained several separatist leaders without charge. Other leaders, many committed to democratic change and who publicly reject militant violence, were in hiding. Asiya Andrabi, chief of Kashmir's women's separatist group Dukhtaran-e-Milat (Daughters of the Muslim Faith) who had led some of the protests, has been detained under the Public Safety Act that allows for a year in jail without trial.

The violence still pales in comparison with previous years when officials say more than 43,000 people have been killed in clashes involving Indian troops and Muslim militants since 1989. Human rights groups put the toll at about 60,000 dead or missing. Some analysts say authorities were in a difficult situation. "This is a place where security officials are getting attacked every second day," said Brahma Chellaney, professor of strategic studies at the New Delhi-based Centre for Policy Research, referring to the years of militant insurgency.

For Shameema, a 35-year-old woman who sells bread, the fear of police was clear. She talked about how police smashed her and her family with batons for selling bread under curfew. Her husband displayed a wound to his head. She fell silent for a moment as a federal policeman official walked up to her shop, ominously tapping his baton. Then, realising he could not speak Kashmiri, she talked again. "I am scared," she said "But we have nowhere to go."

[Sophistication of deadly Taliban attack concerning: Natynczyk](#)

CBC News – 04 September

A Taliban attack that claimed the lives of three young Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan on Wednesday is worrisome because of its sophisticated nature, Canada's top soldier says. Gen. Walter Natynczyk, chief of defence staff, was commenting just hours after Cpl. Andrew Grenon, Cpl. Mike Seggie and Pte. Chad Horn were killed in an insurgent assault on their armoured vehicle while they were on a security patrol in the Zhari district of the southern Kandahar province. All three were members of the 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry based in Shilo, Man., and were set to return to Canada as they neared the end of their six-month tour.

Natynczyk said he wasn't sure of all the details, but said it was different than the usual Taliban strategy of using roadside bombs. "This attack is worrisome in the kind of sophistication of the attack," said Natynczyk. "We've got great soldiers out there who again will react to this, have a look at it, learn from this and apply those lessons." The Taliban have claimed that a remotely controlled land mine was used in the attack, said the CBC's Derek Stoffel on Thursday from Kandahar. "So we are led to believe that there was an ambush after the Canadian soldiers were exiting their ... damaged vehicle and that is perhaps how the three Canadian soldiers were killed," he said.

The attack came in the first week of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, a period that traditionally signalled a reduction in Taliban attacks, Stoffel said. Attacks are not expected to subside during Ramadan this year, Natynczyk told CBC news. Instead, there has been an increase in Taliban activity in the past few months, but it's unclear what seems to have triggered a change in the group's tactics, Natynczyk said.

Five Canadian soldiers lost their lives in August, making it the deadliest month of the year for Canadian forces in Afghanistan. Also last month, 10 French soldiers were killed in a single Taliban ambush outside Kabul, while nine U.S. soldiers lost their lives after an attack in the northeastern Kunar province. The attacks were among the deadliest levelled against international forces engaged in Afghanistan in more than three years. "The security situation during this campaign season and the fighting season is tough and we are seeing sophisticated capabilities in terms of training proficiency of the Taliban, not only in our own region but also in the Regional Command East and in Helmand province as well," he said. "But at the same time we're learning, we're adapting and trying to get ahead of the Taliban."

Five other soldiers were wounded in the latest attack, one of them critically. Another is in serious condition, while two are in good condition with the last soldier returning to duty after being treated, officials said. The soldiers who were killed gave their lives in "defence of a worthy mission," said Defence Minister Peter MacKay on Wednesday. "The Taliban are insidious by their very nature — they kill their own civilians, they use women and children as shields, so intimidation is what they deal in daily," he said. The deaths of the soldiers brings to 96 the number of Canadian soldiers killed since the mission in Afghanistan began in 2002. The conflict in Afghanistan has also claimed the lives of 582 U.S. soldiers, 116 British soldiers and 156 soldiers from 19 other countries.

In another development, the deputy head of mission at the Canadian Embassy in Afghanistan has been promoted to ambassador in Kabul. Ron Hoffman, who joined Foreign Affairs in 1989, is a career diplomat who has held posts in The Hague, Johannesburg, Beijing and London. "He brings tremendous experience to his new post and will ensure that Canada continues to make an important contribution to helping rebuild the lives of millions of men, women and children throughout Afghanistan," Foreign Affairs Minister David Emerson said.

[US mum on Pakistan raid](#)

AFP – 04 September

The White House refused Thursday to comment directly on Pakistani anger at a cross-border raid by Afghanistan-based international forces just days before Pakistan's presidential vote. Spokeswoman Dana Perino said US authorities were "working to increase coordination and cooperation and supporting the Pakistanis, as we work to fight against the Taliban in a coordinated way."

But Perino met questions about US policy in general regarding cross-border raids inside Pakistan or details of the Wednesday strike, which Islamabad has denounced as "shameful" and unjustified, with a stone wall. "In regards to the reports about that incident, we have not commented, and I won't today," she told reporters. "I'm just not going to comment on the incident in any way."

Authorities in Pakistan -- a close US ally in the global war on terrorism -- earlier summoned the US ambassador in protest at the incident in tribal South Waziristan, in which local officials said at least 15 people were killed. Wednesday's raid marked the first time Pakistan has accused international troops based in Afghanistan of a direct attack on its soil since they were deployed in late 2001 to oust the hardline Taliban regime from power in Kabul. Both the US-led coalition and the separate NATO-led security force operating in Afghanistan have said they have no knowledge of any such incident in South Waziristan, a known haven for Taliban and Al-Qaeda militants.

"I will reiterate is that we've been working closely with the new civilian government of Pakistan that is feeling its way and working to establish itself," said Perino. She said the two allies faced "a common enemy" in the Taliban Islamist militia and the Al-Qaeda terrorist network and noted "a very big scare yesterday" with a failed attack on Pakistan

Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani. "We have a lot of cooperation that's ongoing with them and a lot of need to increase communication," said Perino.

Asked for the underlying rationale for not commenting on the reported strike, Perino replied: "All I can tell you is that I am going to decline to comment on reports about that incident." Pakistani Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani warned US President George W. Bush in July against acting "unilaterally" against Islamic militants in Pakistan.

[Philippine troops head south amid crisis warning](#)

Channel News Asia – 05 September

The Philippines has sent 1,000 troops to guard food aid in its troubled south, officials said Friday, as the Red Cross warned of a "humanitarian crisis" after a surge in separatist violence and the halting of a peace process. Two infantry battalions were redeployed to Mindanao island in the past few days, said military spokesman Brigadier-General Jorge Segovia.

He said they would help in the relief effort amid reports that armed men have disrupted the supply of emergency food rations to hundreds of thousands of civilians displaced by a flare-up in the conflict. A hardline faction of the separatist group Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) raided Christian villages across the island last month, leaving scores of civilians dead and displacing around 280,000.

This week, President Gloria Arroyo scrapped a government peace panel seeking to end the drawn-out rebellion in a major policy shift. A Manila spokeswoman for the United Nations World Food Programme said one of its food aid convoys was stopped near the town of Mamasapano on Wednesday by armed men who stole 28 bags of rice.

The report came as International Committee of the Red Cross country chief Felipe Donoso voiced fears displacements could rise to crisis levels as food stocks run out. With fighting "appearing to continue and the security situation remaining volatile, it is likely that tens of thousands of families will be displaced over the coming weeks," Donoso warned in an interview posted on the agency's website. "To avoid a humanitarian crisis, the ICRC plans to distribute food rations to 325,000 persons over the next four months," he added.

Segovia said the authorities were checking reports that MILF rebels had been stopping food convoys, while warning that military checkpoints would prevent aid workers from entering areas where their safety could not be ensured.

The MILF meanwhile said it is honouring a three-year-old ceasefire and that it remains committed to pursuing peace negotiations with President Arroyo's government. However, it rejected her demand to disarm before talks can resume. "We continue to uphold the Peace Path as still the best way forward to address the centuries-old Bangsamoro Problem in Mindanao," MILF vice-chairman Ghazali Jaafar said in a statement.

Mindanao, the homeland of a 4.5 million-strong Islamic minority that has seen bouts of separatist rebellion in the past 40 years, has been "relatively peaceful" this week, Segovia said. The lull, which followed the start of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, was disturbed only by the small-scale harassment of military units. The government Friday doubled to 10 million pesos (about 213,000 dollars) the bounty on each of the two MILF rebels accused of leading last month's attacks, Ameril Umbrakato and Abdurahman Macapaar, police said.

MILF deputy chief Jaafar said "abuses" committed by both sides should be investigated by a "non-partisan organisation recognized by the Parties." He also urged the UN to step up aid to the displaced Mindanao residents, whose scale he said has reached "the level of (a) humanitarian crisis." The MILF attacks followed a Supreme Court writ issued last month against a draft peace agreement proposing extended powers to a Muslim self-rule area that would be led by the 12,000-member MILF.

[Russians 'agree Georgia deadline'](#)

BBC – 08 September

Russia has conditionally agreed to remove its forces from Georgian land - excluding Abkhazia and South Ossetia - by the second week of October. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said the pull-out would happen once 200 EU monitors deployed to South Ossetia.

Speaking after meeting French President Nicolas Sarkozy, Mr Medvedev said the withdrawal was dependent on guarantees that Georgia would not use force again. But he made no mention of withdrawing troops from South Ossetia or Abkhazia. And he defended Russia's controversial decision to recognise the independence of both breakaway regions, saying the move was "irrevocable".

Among the measures announced after the Moscow talks, Mr Medvedev said there would be international talks on the conflict, which would take place in Geneva on 15 October. And Russia agreed to remove a key checkpoint from near the port of Poti within a week. Again Mr Medvedev made the agreement conditional on Georgia signing a pledge not to use force against Abkhazia. Afterwards he said the EU delegation had handed him a letter, signed by Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili, pledging not to use force.

The Russian president confirmed that his troops would pull out "from the zones adjacent to South Ossetia and Abkhazia to the line preceding the start of hostilities". "This withdrawal will be implemented within 10 days after the deployment in these zones of international mechanisms, including not less than 200 observers from the European Union, which must take place not later than 1 October 2008," he said.

But he was uncompromising in his tone towards the Georgian government and the US. "[Georgia] is trying to reinforce its military capability and some of our partners, especially the United States, are helping them in that." Mr Medvedev accused the US of rearming Georgia under the guise of delivering humanitarian aid - a charge dismissed by

Washington as "ridiculous." In a mostly symbolic expression of displeasure with Moscow, the US state department said President Bush had pulled a US-Russia civilian nuclear pact from consideration by Congress.

The Russian and French leaders took part in more than three hours of talks, which also involved the EU foreign policy chief, Javier Solana, and the European Commission head, Jose Manuel Barroso. Mr Sarkozy, who was pressing Russia to meet the terms of a ceasefire agreement he helped broker on 12 August, described the meeting as "fruitful". He said the exact details of the Geneva talks were still under discussion, stressing that the issue of refugees returning to their homes would be at the heart of the meeting.

Russia's call for international talks on the status of the two breakaway regions - part of the 12 August ceasefire deal - proved highly controversial. President Saakashvili flatly rejected attempts to throw their status into doubt. Mr Sarkozy has now arrived in Tbilisi, and at a late-night press conference President Saakashvili said that the French-brokered plan was a step forward.

Russian troops entered Georgia on 7 August after responding to Georgian attempts to reassert its control in South Ossetia. The two regions have had de facto independence since a civil war in the early 1990s, and Moscow has strongly backed their breakaway governments.

[Bush reshuffles war zone troops](#)

BBC – 08 September

US President George W Bush has announced that about 8,000 US troops will be withdrawn from Iraq by February - with 4,500 being sent to Afghanistan. He argued that reduced violence levels in Iraq allowed for a "quiet surge" of troops in Afghanistan. There are currently 146,000 US troops in Iraq and 33,000 in Afghanistan.

US presidential candidate Barack Obama said Mr Bush was "tinkering around the edges" and not addressing the urgency of the Afghan crisis. Mr Obama said America's security priority was the militant challenge in Afghanistan and Pakistan on which Mr Bush did not have a comprehensive strategy.

This modest reshuffle is likely to be Mr Bush's last significant policy initiative on the issue which more than any other will shape the way history views his presidency, the BBC's Kevin Connolly reports from Washington. The overall strategic picture is only slightly changed and it will fall to the next president to define the American missions in the two countries, our correspondent says.

Mr Bush announced that a marine battalion of about 1,000 troops, scheduled to leave Iraq's Anbar province in November, would return home as planned without being replaced. An army brigade of between 3,500 and 4,000 troops will leave in February, accompanied by about 3,400 support forces. "The progress in Iraq is still fragile and reversible..." Mr Bush said in his speech at the National Defense University.

The Iraqi government is currently negotiating a security agreement on the future of US forces in Iraq before a UN mandate expires. In signalling increases in the strength of US forces in Afghanistan, Mr Bush said the country faced "some of the most hardened terrorists and extremists in the world". A marine battalion due to go to Iraq in November will be sent to Afghanistan, followed by an army combat brigade in January, Mr Bush said.

Based on typical battalion and brigade strengths, this would total some 4,500 troops. The Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief said last month that violence in Afghanistan had reached its worst level since 2001, when US-led forces overthrew the Taliban, with more than 260 civilians killed in July alone. Afghanistan's government said the bloodshed was connected to peace deals Pakistan's government had sought with Islamist militants in the north-western tribal areas along the border.

Speaking in Dayton, Ohio, Mr Obama accused Mr Bush of "kicking the can down the road to the next president". "His plan comes up short - it is not enough troops and not enough resources, with not enough urgency." His presidential rival, John McCain, told a rally also in Ohio that the US was winning the war in Iraq and that Mr Obama was wrong about the conflict.

The European Union's former envoy to Afghanistan, Francesc Vendrell, has accused the Bush administration of "misleading itself" in its approach to the country. Mr Vendrell told the BBC's HARDtalk programme that the West's strategy in Afghanistan was "incoherent".

[International concern as Sri Lanka steps up attacks](#)

Channel News Asia – 10 September

UN chief Ban Ki-moon expressed international concern for tens of thousands civilians trapped in Sri Lanka's north on Wednesday as government forces prepared for a major showdown with Tamil separatists.

Aerial strikes shook Tiger positions a day after the guerrillas staged an air and ground assault that left 25 people dead at a military complex just outside the rebels' mini state, officials said. Fighter planes pounded what the Sri Lankan military called the Tiger intelligence command and control centre, deep inside the rebel-held Kilinochchi region, the defence ministry said in a statement.

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said he was alarmed at escalating strife in Sri Lanka's rebel-held Wanni region and said both sides were obliged to ensure the safety of civilians. "The secretary general expresses his deep concern over the increased hostilities in northern Sri Lanka, and the grave humanitarian consequences for civilians," his press office said in a statement released in New York.

The statement came as Colombo told all local and international relief workers, including UN and Red Cross staff, to vacate the region within a week, saying the order was for

their own safety. The London-based rights group Amnesty International said the government lacked the capacity to provide basic essentials and safety for those who have had to flee deeper into rebel-held territory. "Without independent monitors in the region, there will be a complete void of information," said Sam Zarifi, Amnesty International's Asia Pacific Director.

The defence ministry said its planes had hit key Tiger targets. "Taking on offensive raids into the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) backyard, Sri Lanka air force fighter jets made precision air sorties at the LTTE's main intelligence command and control centre in Kilinochchi on Wednesday," the ministry said in a statement. It said 23 Tiger rebels and two soldiers were killed in fresh ground attacks on Tuesday in addition to the fighting that took place at the main military complex of Vavuniya, 260 kilometres north of Colombo. The latest fighting raised the number of rebels killed since January to 6,466, according to government figures. The military says 631 soldiers have died over the same period in a conflict that has claimed tens of thousands of lives since 1972.

Sri Lankan planes carried out at least four other bombing sorties after the Tiger rebels on Tuesday staged their pre-dawn attack on the Vavuniya complex. The government said it had for the first time shot down a Tamil Tiger aircraft following the Vavuniya strike, a claim denied by the rebels. The Tigers said their mission to destroy air defence radar of the security forces was a success, while the defence ministry described the rebel offensive as a failure.

The ministry said the Tigers fired about 70 rounds of artillery into the base while a group of suicide bombers tried to infiltrate it. "The terrorists' barrages of 130mm artillery could not prevent the army counter offensive and the whole mission became a flash in a pan as troops hunted down all the 'Black Tigers' (suicide bombers)," the ministry said.

The Tigers are fighting to carve out a homeland for minority Tamils in the majority Sinhalese island's north and east.

[US 'must target Pakistan havens'](#)

BBC – 11 September

The chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff has called for a new strategy in Afghanistan to deny militants bases across the border in Pakistan. Speaking on the eve of the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, Admiral Mike Mullen called for a military strategy that covered both sides of the border. The US must work closely with Pakistan to "eliminate [the enemy's] safe havens", he told Congress. But Pakistan insists it will not allow foreign forces onto its territory.

"There is no question of any agreement or understanding with the coalition forces whereby they are allowed to conduct operations on our side of the border," Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff, Gen Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, said. However, the New York Times newspaper reported on Wednesday that President George Bush had approved orders in

July to allow US Special Operations forces to carry out ground assaults inside Pakistan without Pakistani approval.

"The situation in the tribal areas is not tolerable," an unnamed senior US official told the newspaper. "We have to be more assertive. Orders have been given." A surge of US attacks in Pakistan's border region over the past week has prompted outrage from the government and army. Now stating it as a strategy will only add to the pressure on Pakistan's new President, Asif Ali Zardari, as he grapples with the militants, the BBC's James Coomarasamy reports from Washington.

Adm Mullen was speaking a day after President Bush announced that about 4,500 extra US troops would be sent to Afghanistan by February 2009, boosting the 33,000 currently in the country. Adm Mullen told the House Armed Services Committee he was not convinced the US was winning in Afghanistan and that a new strategy was needed that addressed the issue of militants in Pakistan.

"In my view, these two nations are inextricably linked in a common insurgency that crosses the border between them," he said. "We can hunt down and kill extremists as they cross over the border from Pakistan... but until we work more closely with the Pakistani government to eliminate the safe havens from which they operate, the enemy will only keep coming." Adm Mullen conceded the challenge was great, pointing to Afghanistan's drugs and economic problems, and the "significant political uncertainty" in Pakistan.

The White House said on Wednesday that the failure to capture al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden showed the limitations of US military and intelligence operations. On the eve of the seventh anniversary of 9/11, White House spokeswoman Dana Perino said President Bush would have liked to see the al-Qaeda leader brought to justice, but that the US authorities did not have "super-powers".

In another development, Canada confirmed its troops would leave Afghanistan by 2011. Prime Minister Stephen Harper said on Wednesday that his nation - which suffered significant losses in Afghanistan in recent years - had no appetite for keeping its troops on in Afghanistan past a 2011 deadline imposed in March by parliament.

TERRORISM & COUNTER-TERRORISM

[Morocco 'breaks terror network'](#)

BBC – 29 August

The Moroccan authorities say they have broken up a militant cell operating in several towns in the kingdom. The group allegedly had links with al-Qaeda and police described the 15 people arrested as "dangerous". They had electronic and chemical materials used to make explosives, reports the state press agency, MAP.

It is the fourth such network Morocco says it has broken up this year. An al-Qaeda-inspired group has said it was behind recent attacks in Algeria. "The members of this

structure, known as "Fath al-Andalous" [Conquest of Andalusia], planned to carry out attacks in Morocco and had formed operational links with foreign extremists who have pledged allegiance to the al-Qaeda organisation," MAP says.

The BBC's James Copnall in Morocco says this is almost certainly a reference to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (QIM), an organisation largely based in neighbouring Algeria which has ties with Osama bin Laden's movement. QIM says it has carried out attacks in several other North African countries, as well as the Algeria bombings which left 70 dead. However, some analysts believe there is little real regional co-ordination between extremist groups.

Our correspondent says Morocco has been accused of over-dramatising the threat it faces from extremists, to benefit from support from the US and Europe. Nevertheless, he notes that there have been attacks in Morocco: the most dramatic example occurred five years ago, when suicide bombers killed 45 people in Casablanca.

[Colombia: Car Bomb in Cali Kills 4](#)

New York Times – 01 September

A car bomb exploded early Monday near the Palace of Justice in Cali, Colombia's third largest city, killing 4 people and wounding as many as 20, above. Security forces said they suspected the bomb had been planted by guerrillas from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC. The bombing suggested an increase in violence following the killing or capture of several top FARC commanders in recent months. Last month, another bomb killed seven people in a town in northwestern Colombia.

[Bush tells Pakistan's Zardari he has full support on terror](#)

AFP – 10 September

President George W. Bush said Tuesday he has pledged "full support" to Pakistan's new President Asif Ali Zardari in the fight against extremists while insisting Pakistan had responsibilities in the fight too. Bush said that in a telephone call to Zardari Tuesday morning, "I pledged the full support of America's government as Pakistan takes the fight to the terrorists and extremists in the border regions."

"Defeating these terrorist and extremists is in Pakistan's interest -- they pose a mortal threat to Pakistan's future as a free and democratic nation," Bush told an audience at the National Defense University in Washington. However, he added, "Defeating these terrorist and extremists is also Pakistan's responsibility -- because every nation has an obligation to govern its own territory and make certain that it does not become a safe haven for terror."

Zardari took office as Pakistan's new president Tuesday, and immediately pledged to work with Afghanistan to fight terrorism which has claimed thousands of lives in both countries. The controversial 53-year-old widower of assassinated opposition leader

Benazir Bhutto, Zardari succeeded Pervez Musharraf, the former army general and close US ally who resigned on August 18 under threat of impeachment.

Zardari is also close to the United States, but takes office as Washington has sent stronger signals that it is unsatisfied with Islamabad's efforts against Taliban and Al-Qaeda forces rebuilding their operations in the autonomous tribal zones on Afghanistan's borders. Bush cited Pakistan alongside Iraq and Afghanistan as key fronts in the US "war on terror."

"Each of these three places I've discussed today, Iraq, Afghanistan, and parts of Pakistan, pose unique challenges for our country. Yet they're all theaters in the same overall struggle," he said. But he stressed that the United States and its NATO allies fighting together in Afghanistan would continue to support Pakistan.

DIPLOMACY & DEFENCE STRATEGY

[Lebanon appoints new army chief](#)

Al Jazeera – 30 August

The Lebanese government has appointed Brigadier-General Jean Kahwaji to be chief of the Lebanese military, replacing Michel Sleiman, who in May became the country's president.

The decision on Friday was taken during a government session at the presidential palace. Tareq Mitri, the Lebanese information minister, speaking at the end of the cabinet meeting, said: "The Council of Ministers decided to appoint General Jean Kahwaji to the post of chief of the Lebanese army."

Kahwaji, married with three children and a Maronite Christian, has headed the army's 12th Infantry Brigade since 2002. He has undergone specialised military training abroad, including in the United States, Germany and Italy.

Differences between the US-backed parliamentary majority and an alliance of opposition groups led by Hezbollah, a Shia organisation, had delayed the appointment of a new army commander. General Shawki al-Masri, the army's chief of staff, has been acting as head of the army since Sleiman was elected president on May 25.

Observers say the 60,000-strong army has become more of a peacekeeping unit than an offensive force. Strengthening the army has been part of US policy towards Lebanon. Since 2006, Washington says it has committed more than \$410 million in security assistance to the army, including training, vehicles and ammunition.

[Russia's isolation plays into China's hands](#)

IHT – 30 August

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has cast vague Central Asian support for Russia's actions in South Ossetia as a diplomatic victory. But a summit in the region held signs that China, already a powerful regional player, will benefit from concerns about an aggressive Russia. As Moscow's combative rhetoric leaves it increasingly isolated, China may have tipped the balance of influence in Russia's backyard.

Russian peacekeepers ended Georgia's "barbaric aggression" according to "international legal standards," Medvedev told a news conference Friday after a summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The group comprises China, Russia and four ex-Soviet republics in Central Asia, whose energy riches are coveted by Russia, China and the West.

The summit members issued a statement Thursday vaguely praising what it called Russia's efforts to ensure peace after its war with Georgia this month. But they did not condemn Georgia — as Russia had hoped — and none of them backed Russia's decision to recognize breakaway South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Russian media reported before the summit that Russia's efforts to insert wording condemning Georgia were thwarted by China. The Chinese government is usually wary of supporting separatists in other countries, mindful of its own problems with Tibet and nationalists in the western territory of Xinjiang. It has also resisted being drawn into alliances that could damage its diplomatic standing. "China has always stood in the middle and it has no intention of keeping with the same company as Russia," said Alexei Malashenko, an analyst at the Carnegie Moscow Center. China's approach to courting its Central Asian partners has been low-key but assiduous and based on concrete proposals.

While Russia and the West attempt to persuade gas-rich states in the region of the appeal of their competing pipeline proposals, China has already begun construction of a transit route that is expected to carry up to 40 billion cubic meters of natural gas per year from Turkmenistan by 2009. Several crumbling highways in impoverished Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have been resurrected as a result of Chinese investment and technology. In stark contrast, Russian efforts to revive the vital Rogun hydropower plant project in electricity-starved Tajikistan have foundered in recent years.

Russia did secure some qualified support for its policy in the Caucasus. "We all believe that Russia's actions were aimed at protecting the long-suffering residents of the South Ossetian capital," Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev said. Speaking to reporters in Dushanbe, Iranian leader Mahmoud Ahmadinejad offered a veiled defense of Russia's role in Georgia. "These problems are in part caused by the interference of powers outside the region," he said. "The situation has also been caused by the mistaken behavior of some high-placed Georgian officials."

Nonetheless, most Shanghai Cooperation Organization members will remain circumspect about offering anything that could encourage secessionist impulses in their own countries. "Kyrgyzstan has territorial issues in the south with ethnic Uzbeks and Kazakhstan are concerned with the ethnic Russian dominated north," said independent

political analyst Parviz Mullodzhanov. "While we in Tajikistan have our own Gorno-Badakshan autonomous region."

The four Central Asian members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization — Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan — are reluctant to endanger their relations with Europe and the United States. Kazakhstan enjoys significant Western investment in its rich hydrocarbon sector, and impoverished Kyrgyzstan received U.S. aid and rent for hosting a U.S. air base that supports military operations in Afghanistan.

[Report says Taiwan won't deploy longer-range missiles](#)

Channel News Asia – 01 September

Taiwan's China-friendly government has decided not to deploy missiles capable of hitting Shanghai, in yet another sign of warming ties between the rivals, a report said Monday. Taipei has begun deploying its Hsiung-feng 2E cruise missiles, which have a range of 600 kilometres (360 miles), the Taipei-based China Times said.

"The military had planned to further the range to 1,000 kilometres, so that they could be used to hit Shanghai" in case of war with China, the paper said, citing an unnamed military source. But as relations improve with Beijing, the island's defence ministry "has decided to drop the idea... to place its priority on the improvement of quality for the existing cruise missiles," the paper said.

China and Taiwan have been governed separately since the end of a civil war in 1949, but Beijing still sees the island as part of its territory awaiting reunification, by force if necessary. China has repeatedly threatened to invade Taiwan should the island declare formal independence. But tensions across the Taiwan Strait have eased since Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou was elected in March on a platform to boost the economy and improve ties with China. He took office in May.

Local newspapers reported at the weekend that the defence ministry plans to scale back its military spending in 2009 to 315.2 billion Taiwan dollars (10 billion US dollars), a decline of 10.4 billion Taiwan dollars from this year. The draft budget, which still requires parliamentary approval, has drawn criticism from opposition lawmakers who say such a move would signal that Taipei lacks the determination to defend itself.

[Indonesia, Australia to conduct joint patrols in Timor Sea](#)

Antara – 02 September

Indonesia and Australia will this month conduct joint or coordinated patrols in the Timor Sea in an effort to clamp down on illegal fishing in the waters, an Indonesian official here said.

For the purpose, three Australian patrol boats and a reconnaissance plane with some 53 officials from related institutions would leave Darwin for Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara, on September 7 or 8, Indonesian consul general in Darwin Harbangun Napitupulu told

Antara by phone here Tuesday." A similar Indonesia-Australia cooperative exercise held in the Arafura Sea ran well," Napitupulu said, adding that from October 29-November 1, 2007, Indonesia and Australia held joint patrols in the Arafura Sea.

On the Australian side, the patrols were joined by the customs and excise patrol boat, Arnhem Bay, and, on the Indonesian side, by two Fisheries Ministry patrol boats, Macan 003 and Macan 004. Napitupulu said the joint patrols this year would be supported by an Australian customs and excise reconnaissance plane which would provide surveillance data on the waters on a daily basis.

[China claims transparency in military spending while filing report to UN](#)

Times of India – 04 September

China is seriously implementing its commitments on the issue of transparency on military spending. It has provided detailed information about its defense expenditure in a report submitted under the UN Military Budget Transparency Mechanism recently, a foreign ministry official said on Thursday. "Besides providing basic data, the report also explains the main uses of the funds," the spokesperson Jiang Yu told reporters on Thursday. The report, which contains more information, has been structured on the basis of rules and guidelines of the UN. It contains more information than the previous submission made by China, she said.

China signed the UN Military Budget Transparency Mechanism last year and has since been making active efforts to be transparent on its defense expenditure. The country has also taken steps to expand its defense relationships across the world and held joint military exercises with other countries, she said. The country has held military exercises with Russia, Japan, India and some of the central Asian nations. India and China are expected to hold some more military exercises after the first joint operation in Kunming early this year.

Jiang did not provide more details about the report saying journalists could approach the UN for additional information. More than 110 countries have joined the UN Military Budget Transparency Mechanism, which came into being in 1980 with the goal of ensuring standardized reporting of military expenditure.

Jane's Information Group came up with a report on Wednesday saying China is the fourth biggest military spender while India is in the 10th position in this context. Jane's Industry Quarterly said China spent \$58 billion in 2008 while India's spending was nearly half of it. The top three spenders are the United States, Britain with and France.

The People's Liberation Army is at present engaged in a series of military exercises that test the readiness of the armed personnel to react to new situations. Photographs of a month-long military exercise launched by the Zhurihe Joint Tactical Training Base under the Beijing Military Area Command on August 26 have been published in Thursday's edition of the People's Daily, the mouthpiece of the Communist Party of China. Among the photographs was one showing a train carrying a large number of armoured cars and

troops of a mechanized infantry brigade of the Jinan Military Area Command, who are involved in the exercise codenamed "Sharpening-2008".

US Slashes Intelligence Unit for NK

The Korea Times – 05 September

The Pacific Command in Hawaii has reduced its officials whose task is gathering intelligence on North Korea by 60 percent since the signing of an agreement last year on the transfer of wartime operational control of Korean troops from the U.S. military to Korean commanders in 2012, officials from the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) in Seoul confirmed Friday. Critics say the move signals a weakening U.S. commitment to the security of South Korea after Seoul takes over the authority to command and control its troops during wartime.

On Thursday, Rep. Kim Dong-seong of the governing Grand National Party revealed in a National Assembly session that the Pacific Command, in charge of U.S. troops operations in case of an emergency on the peninsula, has reduced the numbers of personnel on North Korea by 120 to 80. The 120 personnel were transferred to a department on intelligence gathering on China, he said, citing a verbal report by JCS officials. The JCS has called for the need to strengthen the country's independent intelligence-gathering capability to fill the gap, said Kim.

“The Pacific Command has not officially notified South Korea of the decrease in the numbers of its intelligence officials on North Korea, but we guess the command decided to put more energy on gathering China-related intelligence given the rapid buildup of China's military,” an official of the Ministry of National Defense (MND) said, asking not to be named. “When the transition of wartime operational control occurs, South Korea will beef up the intelligence-gathering capabilities of the intelligence offices of the MND and JCS,” he said. The South Korean and U.S. militaries will also create an intelligence office to help facilitate intelligence and information sharing, he added.

The decades-long U.S.-led combined-forces mechanism on the peninsula is to undergo major changes under a landmark pact on command rearrangement plans reached early last year. The two militaries are on track to put a South Korean-led “joint defense system” in place. Under the accord, South Korean commanders will execute independent operational control of their troops during wartime, beginning April 17, 2012, with the U.S. military shifting to a supporting role under the agreement. The Combined Forces Command (CFC) is to be deactivated.

South Korea handed over peacetime and wartime operational control to the U.S.-led UNC at the outbreak of the 1950-53 Korean War. The command authority was transferred to the CFC in 1978. Seoul took over peacetime control in 1994. Beginning this year, South Korean and U.S. forces are scheduled to conduct two sets of joint drills each year until 2011. The exercises will focus on transforming the U.S.-led combined forces structure to a South Korean-led separate command system.

[Russia calls U.S. freeze on civilian nuclear deal 'mistake'](#)

Ria Novosti – 09 September

The Russian Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday that a decision by the U.S. to freeze a civilian nuclear agreement with Russia was a politically motivated mistake. U.S. President George Bush withdrew the deal from U.S. Congress amid international condemnation of Russia's actions in the recent Georgian crisis.

"We view the steps made by the U.S. administration as a straightforward breach of its commitments, which harms our partnership relations and closes the route to mutually beneficial cooperation on many issues in the sphere of civilian nuclear power," the statement said. It said Washington's attempts to impose its actions on other countries in their relations with Russia were "unacceptable," adding that the withdrawal "will be interpreted as 'punishment' or 'control' with regard to Russia."

The news was announced on Monday by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice who said in a statement, "We make this decision with regret. Unfortunately, given the current environment, the time is not right for this agreement." And U.S. State Department spokesman, Sean McCormack said that the U.S. had "deep concerns about Russian behavior."

The withdrawal comes as Russia announced it would be taking part in upcoming Venezuelan-Russian naval exercises in the Caribbean in late November. The agreement would have opened up possibilities for widespread commercial nuclear trade, technology exchange, and joint nuclear research between Washington and Moscow. It would also have cleared the way for Russia to make headway with importing and storing spent nuclear fuel from U.S.-supplied reactors - a highly profitable business.

Bush's letter to Congress said that the deal could not go through at present in light of Russia's actions which were "incompatible with peaceful relations with its sovereign and democratic neighbor Georgia." The move comes shortly after the U.S. announced a \$1 billion aid package for Georgia, and on the same day that French President Nicolas Sarkozy held talks in Moscow with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev on Georgia. After the talks it was announced that Moscow had promised to pull all troops out of Georgia, but not South Ossetia or Abkhazia, within one month.

The current crisis began when Georgian forces launched a military offensive on the South Ossetian capital, Tskhinvali, on August 8. Most of the residents of the republic are Russian passport holders, and Russia subsequently launched an operation to "force Georgia to accept peace."

Two weeks after the conclusion of the operation, Russia recognized South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states, despite warnings by Western leaders not to do so. So far, only Nicaragua has followed suit, although Belarus seems likely to do so later this month. Both South Ossetia and Abkhazia broke away from Georgia in the early 1990s. Thousands were killed in the ensuing conflicts.

[Australian PM flags military build-up as Asian powers rise](#)

Channel News Asia – 10 September

Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd flagged an increase in defence spending Wednesday as he warned the country's military must start preparing for an arms build-up in Asia and the Pacific. Rudd, a Mandarin-speaking former diplomat elected as leader last November, said Australia was "in a region where there is an explosion in defence expenditure."

"There is an arms build-up across the Asia-Pacific region and Australia therefore must look at the long-term future at the same time as advancing our diplomacy," he told reporters in the northern city of Townsville. "Therefore Australia must be prepared through its diplomacy, its foreign policy and its defence policy."

Rudd said a major priority would be to ensure the nation's naval capabilities as rising powers such as China and India grew more prosperous and influential. "We are looking at a time in the Asia-Pacific region and world history where, for the first time in several hundred years, we are going to have powers other than Anglo-Saxon powers who will be the dominant players in the world." "For the government, a major priority is to ensure we have enough naval capabilities in the future, enough naval assets, enough naval performance, and therefore enough funding put aside to invest in that, long term," he added.

In a speech to veterans late Tuesday, Rudd said increased militarization was occurring in the rapidly changing Asia Pacific - a region he said was "still characterised by a number of unresolved flash points arising from unsettled territorial disputes" and would become more contested. "As nations grow and become more affluent, they also update their military forces," he said. "We see a substantial arms build-up over time." He said that unless Australia began to respond to this, "we run the risk of competition and tension overriding cooperation".

In May, the government said Australia's defence budget would increase by 3.0 per cent to around US\$18.2 billion and committed itself to extending real growth in defence spending by 3.0 per cent a year until 2018.

DEFENCE ACQUISITION AND TECHNOLOGY

[Report: Taiwan to Mass-Produce Anti-Ship Missiles](#)

Defense News – 29 August

Taiwan plans to mass-produce ship-to-ship missiles to boost its naval defences against China, the United Evening News reported Aug. 29. The defence ministry has set aside more than 2.26 billion Taiwan dollars (\$71.75 million) to manufacture the locally-

designed Supersonic Hsiung-feng 3, the United Evening News said. The defence ministry declined to comment on the report.

Analysts say the Hsiung-feng 3 can be fitted with a variety of guidance systems and can function as a ship-to-ship, land-attack or anti-radar missile. With a range of at least 80 miles, the missile has been designed to counter China's Russia-made equivalent, analysts say. Taiwan showcased the Hsiung-feng 3 in a rare military parade last year seen as a reminder to China that the island has the weapons to defend itself.

Beijing has repeatedly warned of an invasion should Taiwan declare formal independence. Tensions across the Strait have eased since Taiwan's China-friendly President Ma Ying-jeou took office in May, but he has promised to increase the island's military spending to "display our determination to defend ourself."

[Have a peek at Russia's new submarine monster](#)

Barents Observer – 01 September

The submarine "Dmitrii Donskoy" is 172 meter long, has a 49,800 ton deadweight and can carry Russia's state of the art strategic weaponry, the "Bulava" missile. After more than ten years of upgrades, the vessel was last week successfully tested in the White Sea. The Russian Navy now also confirms that the "Bulava" missile (SS-NX-30), an adjusted model of the Topol-M missile, will undergo final testing in September-October this year, Rossiiskaya Gazeta reports in its weekly edition. The "Dmitrii Donskoy" (TK-208) is the only of Russia's six Typhoon subs, which has been modernized to handle the latest of Russia's missile, the "Bulava".

As BarentsObserver reported last week, the vessel has been undergoing upgrades at the Sevmash plant in Severodvinsk for the last ten years. -Tests have been on a high level and with positive results, the vessel's captain, Arkadii Romanov, says in a letter to Nikolay Kalistratov, head of the Sevmash yard. -The vessel is now ready for tests of the missile complex, he adds, Sevmash.ru reports.

The vessel – the biggest sub in the world – is unique with sheer size and its double hulls. It has a deadweight of 49,800 tons, a length of 172 meters and a width of 23,3 meters. The "Dmitrii Donskoy" was first put on the water in 1981. It is one of six Russian Typhoon subs, of which only three today remain in service.

The rebuilt vessel can have 20 Bulava missiles on board. That is more than the newest model of the Russian subs. The country's first fourth generation sub, the "Yuri Dolgorukii" (Project 955 "Borey"), can take only 12 of the missiles.

[Russian Navy aircraft test new equipment over the Arctic](#)

Ria Novosti – 04 September

Tu-142MK aircraft from Russia's Northern Fleet conducted on September 2-3 reconnaissance flights over the Barents and Laptev seas and successfully tested new

electronic on-board equipment, the fleet's press service said Thursday. Tu-142 Bear-F is the maritime reconnaissance/strike version of the Tu-95 Bear strategic bomber, designed mainly for anti-submarine warfare.

"The tests of new on-board electronic equipment and weapons-control systems showed their high effectiveness," the press service said in a statement. The flights have been conducted strictly in accordance with international agreements and the norms of international law, the statement said.

Russia has recently stepped up regular patrols over the Arctic and said it may soon shift the focus of its military strategy toward the northern latitudes in order to protect its national interests in the Arctic, especially on its continental shelf, which may contain large deposits of oil and natural gas.

[Japan Defense Report Warns Of China's Military Expansion In Space](#)

Japan Today – 05 September

In an annual defense review released Friday, Japan remains vigilant of China's growing military power, including its development of an anti-satellite laser beam, but takes a less apprehensive view than last year about Beijing's stand against Taiwan.

The Defense of Japan 2008 also expresses caution about Russia's military activities around Japan and refers to the possibility of North Korea developing downsized nuclear warheads in a short span of time.

In the wake of a spate of scandals and incidents involving the Defense Ministry and the Self-Defense Forces since last year, the 425-page report devotes 22 pages describing measures to reform the organizations. On China, the report repeats a call for more transparency on the country's military spending. China's published defense expenditures marked a double-digit year-to-year growth for 20 years in a row, with the fiscal 2008 budget totaling around 409.9 billion yuan (about \$60 billion). The growth during this period translates into "a pace that nearly doubles every five years," the report said.

It argues that the top priority in China's military modernization is to acquire the capability to deter Taiwan, which it regards as a renegade province, from seeking independence, and also to deter "foreign military forces" from providing support to Taiwan. The report, however, watered down the rhetoric on these reiterated points, compared with the 2007 report.

The 2008 review offers for the first time detailed references to China's growing military capabilities in space, such as the reported development of a laser beam aimed at disabling satellites. It also mentions China's purported drill to cope with cyber attacks.

The report says there are signs of active movements by Russian naval ships and airplanes near Japan. It mentions an incident in February when a Russian bomber briefly intruded into Japanese airspace off the southern part of the Izu Island chain in the Pacific for the

first time in 33 years. Japan also needs a permanent law authorizing the overseas dispatch of the SDF whenever the government recognizes that it is necessary, the report says.

[Russia's Navy to Have New Amphibian Aircraft](#)

Ria Novosti – 05 September

The RF Navy will have the first amphibian A-42 in 2010, RIA Novosti reported September 5 with reference to the statement of Naval Aviation Deputy Commander Major General Nikolay Kuklev.

The plans are that the Navy will have four A-43s by 2013 and buy them in the antisubmarine variant afterwards. Upgraded Il-38s and amphibian Be-12 will oppose submarines till 2015, Kuklev said. Only the RF Black Sea Fleet has B-12s. They are nine in number, including eight antisubmarine ones. After the upgrade, B-12 will enjoy the up-to-date target search and track system.

Designed by Taganrog Beriev Aviation Research and Technical Center based on the A-40 jets, new A-42 has improved tactical and technical characteristics, including in part of the flying range and duration. The A-40 has never become the series plane due to financial problems of late 1990s.

A-42 is a multipurpose jet that could be used for patrolling maritime and inshore zones, surveillance of subsurface, surface and shore targets and for search and rescue operations. It is equipped with the Sea Snake target search and track system, ARIA-B navigation devices and airborne communication system. Its maximum speed reaches 770 kilometers/hour; the flight range is 11,500 kilometers.

[Russian Army Gets New Drones](#)

Kommersant – 05 September

The Vega Radio Engineering Corp. has begun delivery of Tipchak unpiloted recognizance complexes to the Russian armed forces, Vega general director Vladimir Verba told Interfax. The first complex will be on duty this year and may be used in “hot spots.”

The Tipchak complex was developed by the Luch Design Bureau in Rybinsk. It is intended for recognizance at any time of day with the goal of the discovery, recognition determination of the coordinates of a target in real time within a range of 40 km. from its launch point.

Every complex consists of six drones, a transport and launch vehicle, antenna, guidance apparatus and maintenance equipment. The drone is launched by a pneumatic catapult and lands with the use of a parachute. The 50-kg. unit has a piston that is able to propel it at speeds up to 55 km. per hour. It is capable of flights lasting up to two hours. It carries a high-resolution camera that working in normal and infrared light.

[Russia to deliver Admiral Gorshkov to India after 2011](#)

Ria Novosti – 05 September

Russia will deliver the modernized Admiral Gorshkov aircraft carrier to India after 2011, Russia's state-run arms exporter said on Friday. "We are planning to deliver the aircraft carrier to India after 2011, but an addendum to the original contract must be signed," Mikhail Zavaliy, a Rosoboronexport official told reporters at an air show in the Krasnodar Region.

The original \$750-million contract to deliver the Admiral Gorshkov aircraft carrier to India, which Rosoboronexport signed with the Indian Navy in 2004, projected the work would be completed in 2008. However, Russia later claimed it underestimated the scale and the cost of the modernization and demanded an additional \$1.2 billion, which New Delhi said was "exorbitant."

After long-running delays and disputes, Russia and India agreed in February to raise refit costs for the aircraft carrier, docked at the Sevmash shipyard in northern Russia for the past 12 years, by at least \$800 million. The current contract covers a complete overhaul of the ship and equipping it with modern weaponry, including MiG-29K Fulcrum aircraft and Ka-27 Helix-A and Ka-31 Helix-B anti-submarine helicopters.

The carrier, renamed the Vikramaditya, is to replace India's INS Viraat carrier, which, although currently operational, is now 50 years old. The Sevmash shipyard said on June 3 it planned to sail the aircraft carrier out into the Barents Sea for trials in 2011. In early 2012, the ship is expected to be finally refitted and trials will continue into the summer of that year. At the end of 2012, the aircraft carrier is expected to be fully prepared for its handover to the Indian navy, the company said. After it has been refitted, the Gorshkov is expected to be seaworthy for 30 years.

[Russian Navy to adopt new carrier fighters after 2016](#)

Ria Novosti – 07 September

Russia's new carrier-based fighters will replace the Su-33 naval fighter in service with the Russian Navy after 2016, a senior military official said on Sunday. The Su-33 (NATO reporting name 'Flanker-D') is a carrier-based multi-role fighter, which can perform a variety of air superiority, fleet defense, air support and reconnaissance missions. The aircraft entered service with the Russian Navy in 1995 and are currently deployed on board the Nikolai Kuznetsov aircraft carrier.

"The Russian Navy will adopt new carrier-based aircraft after 2016," said Maj. Gen. Nikolai Kuklev, the deputy commander of Russia's naval aviation. "At present, we are considering modernization and extension of service life for the Su-33 aircraft. It will certainly stay in service until 2015," the general said. He said the Navy will hold a tender on the new carrier fighter after 2010, which will involve the Su-27KUB Flanker and MiG-29K Fulcrum fighters. "Both aircraft have advantages and disadvantages. For instance, the Su-27KUB is heavier, but has a longer flight range. MiG-29K is lighter but

its combat range is shorter," Kuklev said, adding that a "golden average" has to be chosen.

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.

"We are considering extending the service life of the carrier. It will stay in service until 2020 and may be even until 2025," Kuklev said. The general also confirmed that a decision to build new aircraft carriers for the Russian Navy had been adopted. Russia's Navy commander, Adm. Vladimir Vysotsky, said in July that the Navy command had decided to form in the future 5-6 aircraft carrier task forces to be deployed with the Northern and Pacific fleets.

[Seoul opens world's second largest aircraft testing center](#)

Yonhap News Agency – 08 September

South Korea opened a new aircraft testing center Monday where its military will for the first time be able to measure the operational capabilities of aircraft and armored vehicles in extreme weather, amid high electromagnetic waves and various other conditions. The 188,000-square-meter facility in this southwestern city, 150 kilometers from Seoul, is complete with a climatic chamber for testing under different weather conditions, and an anechoic chamber where the equipment will be checked for resistance to various electric waves, including lightning, according to the Agency for Defense Development (ADD).

The 100-billion won (US\$91.2 million) facility is the second largest of its kind in the world after the United States. Britain, Japan, France are the only other countries to have an anechoic chamber, according to the agency. The facility was built jointly by ADD and U.S. aircraft manufacturer Boeing as part of an offset program related to Seoul's purchase of 40 F-15K fighter jets, ADD and Boeing officials said. Boeing provided some \$35 million worth of equipment for the climatic and anechoic chambers, they said.

"The new testing center is a state-of-the-art facility that enables us to test our weapons systems in their development and production phases under real combat-like conditions," Lee Jong-hee, director of ADD's test and experiment team, said. The testing capabilities are expected to help boost exports of the country's defense goods to other nations, which naturally prefer proven results over claimed capabilities. They would also guide South Korea's future decisions on the development of new weapons systems.

"With the opening of the aircraft testing center, our ability to develop our own weapons systems, including tanks, armored vehicles, ground and guided weapons and naval weapons, would improve significantly, while we would also secure testing abilities that are vital to the development of new fighter jets, helicopters, middle-altitude unmanned

aerial vehicles and guided missiles," Lee told reporters.

Defense Minister Lee Sang-hee, attending the opening ceremony, noted the significance of the new testing center, saying it will allow the independent development of key weapons systems. "Freedom and peace can only be enjoyed when one has the means to defend oneself, and history has proven that such means cannot be secured by a sheer volume of troops or equipment," the minister said, emphasizing defense technology as determinant of national power.

Another 297,000-square-meters of testing space will be added by 2015 with five new facilities, including an electromagnetic pulse test center and new radar cross section test center to gauge stealth capabilities, according to the ADD. The opening of the Seosan facility was marked in a ceremony attended by some 400 people, followed by a trial run of the climatic chamber.

[Thailand Approves \\$197 Million Arms Buy](#)

Morning Star – 09 September

Thai Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej's under- pressure government Tuesday approved the purchase of \$197 million worth of military weapons, a spokesman said. The deal includes a THB4.9 billion (\$142 million) amphibious frigate, a small aircraft, a laser mapping system and thousands of rifles and other light weapons.

"It's related to the defense ministry and internal security," government spokesman Wichianchot Sukchotrat told reporters. The announcement was made before a Thai court ordered Samak to resign for accepting payments for hosting TV cooking shows but that was not expected to impact on the arms buy.

The purchase was approved during a cabinet meeting in the northeastern town of Udon Thani. Samak's official Government House compound has not been used since antigovernment protesters began occupying the grounds two weeks ago. The government approved the purchase of thousands of rifles and other light arms from Israel, as well as shoulder-fired missiles from Russia, the spokesman said. The frigate will be built in Thailand, he said.

Samak, who is also the defense minister, has declared a state of emergency in Bangkok over the protests, but the decree has not been used by the armed forces to take any action against the protesters.

[US to sell Harpoon missiles worth \\$ 170 million to India](#)

Rediff News – 10 September

Coinciding with the visit of Defence Minister A K Antony to the US, the Pentagon has announced the sale of Harpoon missiles to India along with associated equipment and services for a total value of about USD 170 million.

The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress of a possible Foreign Military Sale to India of Harpoon Block II missiles. The DSCA has said that India has requested a possible sale of 20 AGM-84L Harpoon Block II missiles; 4 ATM-84L Harpoon Block II Exercise missiles; containers; training devices; spare and repair parts.

India has also asked for technical support like support equipment, personnel training and equipment, technical data and publications, contractor engineering and logistics support services and other related elements of logistics support, the DSCA has said.

"This proposed sale will contribute to the foreign policy and national security of the United States by helping to improve the security of an important partner and to strengthen the US-India strategic relationship, which continues to be an important force for political stability, peace and economic progress in South Asia," the Pentagon said.

"India intends to use the Harpoon missiles to modernize its Air Force Anti-Surface Warfare mission capabilities and improve its naval operational flexibility. The missiles will assist the Indian Navy to develop and enhance standardisation and operational ability with the United States. India will have no difficulty absorbing these missiles into its armed forces," the Pentagon added. The Department of Defence has said that the proposed sale of this equipment and support will not affect the basic military balance in the region.

The prime contractor will be The Boeing Company of St Louis, Missouri and there are no known offset agreements proposed in connection with this potential sale.

"Implementation of this proposed sale will not require the assignment of any additional US Government or contractor representatives to India permanently.

"There may be US Government or contractor personnel in the country on a temporary basis in conjunction with program technical and management oversight and support requirements," the Pentagon has said. There will not be any adverse impact on US defence readiness as a result of this proposed sale, the Pentagon added.

[Russia modernizes fleet of A-50M AWACS planes](#)

Ria Novosti – 10 September

Russia has started official testing of its modernized A-50M Mainstay AWACS aircraft for the country's Air Force, a Russian electronics company said Wednesday.

The A-50 Mainstay is a Russian airborne warning and control system aircraft based on the Ilyushin Il-76 transport plane. Russia adopted the aircraft in 1984, and the Air Force currently has 16-20 A-50 planes, according to various reports.

"The A-50M is the most complex aircraft and we have successfully modernized it," said Vladimir Verba, general director of the Vega Radio Engineering Corp. "The aircraft is undergoing official tests at present and has shown excellent performance so far."

The modernization of the A-50M focused on the replacement of outdated analogue equipment with digital electronics systems. "We have greatly improved the processing of

the information and significantly decreased the processing time," Verba told RIA Novosti.

In many aspects, the A-50 is compared to the E-3 Sentry of the U.S. Air Force. The A-50 can detect targets up to 400 km (250 miles) away. The aircraft is fitted with an aerial refueling system and electronic warfare equipment.

Russia's state arms exporter, Rosoboronexport, said Monday that Russian companies would provide after-sale services for three A-50EI AEW aircraft that have been sold to India. The export version is fitted with the Israeli-made Phalcon radar system. The first aircraft was scheduled to arrive in 2007-08 but delivery has been delayed.

[N Korea 'builds new missile site'](#)

BBC – 11 September 2008

North Korea is close to completing a second launch site for long-range missiles, reports say. The existence of site, 30 miles (50km) from the Chinese border, was made public by an independent analyst using satellite imagery.

Reports say South Korea's defence minister Lee Sang-Hee told a closed-door parliamentary session that the project was 80% about completed. "We're watching it closely," he was quoted as saying by AFP news agency.

Joseph Bermudez, a senior analyst at Jane's Intelligence Group, first located the site in early spring with the help of a private satellite imagery analysis company, Talent-keyhole.com.

It is built on the site of a small village called Pongdong-ni, which was displaced during construction. The launch site is larger, more costly and more sophisticated than the Musudan-ri launch site North Korea's east coast, Mr Bermudez was quoted by CNN as saying. North Korea used Musudan-ri to launch a Taepodong-1 missile in 1998 over Japan. A Taepodong-2 missile was launched from there in 2006, but it failed.

It comes as international efforts to urge North Korea to abandon its nuclear programme are at an impasse. North Korea agreed in February 2007 to give up its nuclear ambitions in return for aid and diplomatic concessions, but the progress of the deal has been far from smooth.

After a long delay, Pyongyang handed over details of its nuclear facilities in June 2008. In return, it expected the US to remove it from the list of state sponsors of terrorism. But the two sides cannot agree on a process to verify the information that North Korea handed over and Pyongyang now appears to be starting to reassemble its main nuclear plant.

NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY

[Pirates Emboldened By Ransom Payments, Says Report](#)

Bernama – 02 September

Pirates in the Gulf of Aden are now largely ignoring African ships in favour of cargo ships and tankers owned by global shipping lines, said Andrew Mwangura, head of the Kenya-based East African Seafarers' Assistance Programme. They are also setting their sights on tourists in their luxury yachts.

He said calls for the affected parties not to pay ransom had gone unheeded, spurring further piracy activities. "We told people not to pay ransom but they started paying. Other gunmen realised they can earn money this way and started taking ships hostage instead of robbing them," he was quoted by Emirates Business 24/7 as saying. "For many years, piracy was simply robbery but now it has changed," added Mwangura.

The business daily also quoted the Somali ambassador to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Hussein Bullaleh, as saying that no safety could be guaranteed for UAE ships sailing through Somalia's waters in the absence of a national army and a strong marine force.

Two Malaysian MISC Bhd tankers were hijacked in the Gulf of Aden, between Yemen and Somalia, on Aug 19 and 29, with the Malaysian Foreign Ministry scrambling to seek the release of the crew comprising Malaysians and Filipinos.

The ministry has set up a special unit to monitor the hijacked Malaysian tankers besides requesting assistance and cooperation from its counterparts in Yemen and Somalia to ensure the safe release of the crew.

[Malaysia Sends Navy to Protect Ships Near Somalia From Pirates](#)

Bloomberg – 03 September

Malaysia will send two naval vessels to the Gulf of Aden after pirates hijacked two tankers operated by MISC Bhd., the country's largest shipping line, in less than a fortnight. The vessels will accompany four MISC ships operating in the area, Akmal Hisham, press secretary for Deputy Prime Minister Najib Razak, said by phone today. He declined to say when the ships will depart.

MISC, the world's largest owner of liquefied-natural-gas tankers, said yesterday that it had stopped vessels from using the Gulf of Aden, off the coast of Somalia, until it had put additional security measures in place. The waterway, which leads to the Red Sea and the Suez Canal, accounted for more than a third of global piracy attacks in the second quarter. Fiona Clare Pereira, general manager of MISC's corporate affairs department, declined to comment.

Somali pirates are demanding a ransom of about \$4.7 million for the return of the two MISC vessels, Andrew Mwangura, head of the Seafarers Assistance Programme, said

yesterday. The pirates have also demanded \$4.5 million in exchange for the release of two other ships, he added.

The International Maritime Bureau advises vessels to stay at least 200 nautical miles (370 kilometers) from the Somali coast. The number of piracy attacks off the African country's 3,300-kilometer (2,060-mile) long coastline tripled last year to 31, according to the agency.

MISC's Bunga Melati 5, a chemical tanker, was seized on Aug. 29, 10 days after the Bunga Melati Dua, carrying palm oil, was taken. The Nigerian-owned Yenagoa Ocean was hijacked on Aug. 9, followed by a Japanese bulk carrier on Aug. 21. Somali pirates last week released an Omani fishing vessel seized about eight months earlier after the owners paid a ransom of \$120,000, police said. The Star newspaper reported the Malaysian naval deployment earlier today.

[Malaysia Beefs Up Security At Thai Border](#)

Bangkok Post – 04 September

Malaysian police have increased patrols and stepped up security at the northern border of its Kelantan state as precautions against an influx of Thai immigrants following political unrest in the country, state police said Thursday.

"We are monitoring the situation closely and so far there is no indication of an influx of Thai immigrants," state deputy police chief Amir Hamzah Ibrahim told the official Bernama news agency. Amir was quoted as saying that stringent checks were being carried out at the border areas to prevent undesirable people, who could pose a threat to national security, from entering the country.

Illegal entries and smuggling activities are rampant at the porous Thai-Malaysia border at the north of Malaysia. The extra security measures are in response to rising political tensions in Thailand.

On Tuesday, embattled Thai Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej invoked a state of emergency in Bangkok as part of efforts to quash intensifying street protests against his seven-month old administration.

[Myanmar responded well to cyclone victims: WHO](#)

AFP – 04 September

Myanmar's military rulers provided a rapid response to victims of Cyclone Nargis last May despite criticism for shunning foreign aid, the World Health Organisation said Thursday. "In the first week, the Ministry of Health had already sent around 50 doctors from Yangon General Hospital" to the worst-affected areas, WHO emergency relief coordinator Rudi Coninx told AFP.

"Within the first week they had all the staff necessary... I thought that worked quite well," he said. Coninx was the only official from WHO's headquarters in Geneva who was immediately able to go to Myanmar straight after the cyclone struck on May 2-3 as he

happened to have a current visa. He said he found "lots of very committed people at the Ministry of Health, who were working day and night," adding this was all the more laudable given that Myanmar only spends around 1.4 percent of its Gross Domestic Product on health.

WHO's deputy regional director for Southeast Asia, Poonam Singh, said that despite media reports, the government was "actually doing quite a lot to meet the health needs of the people. "Right from the beginning, the WHO representative to Myanmar met every morning with the health ministry and we managed to get around the visa restrictions by recruiting locals," she told the WHO's internal Bulletin newsletter.

The WHO estimates that 84,537 people died in the cyclone with a further 53,836 missing, and that Myanmar needs two billion dollars to rebuild shattered health facilities, some three quarters of which were damaged or destroyed in the storm.

Myanmar's ruling generals drew worldwide condemnation for blocking foreign aid from entering the country in the crucial days after the cyclone pummelled the Irrawaddy delta. Last month, the United Nations said 1.56 million dollars (about one million euros) of international cyclone aid has been lost due to the military regime's complex foreign currency rules.

[China, Japan, ROK to share info on nuke safety](#)

China Daily – 05 September

China, Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK) will sign an agreement to establish an information sharing mechanism on nuclear safety in Tokyo today. Representatives from the nuclear regulatory bodies of the three countries have agreed to set up an inter-governmental hotline on nuclear accidents, a source from China's National Nuclear Safety Administration (NNSA) said.

Japan, with the longest history of nuclear power development among the three, will also share its experience on nuclear security and management with China and South Korea, Kyodo News reported Thursday. It said the agreement includes the exchange of information on anti-seismic technologies at nuclear-related facilities as both China and Japan face challenges from earthquakes.

The deadly earthquake that hit Sichuan province in May at one time threatened the safety of more than 100 radioactive sources. All were eventually made safe. Similarly, reactors at a nuclear power plant near Niigata in northwestern Japan stopped automatically after a 6.8-magnitude earthquake last year.

Nuclear power has now become an important solution to tackling the world's energy problem. According to the Japan Atomic Industrial Forum, a non-profit organization, there are 55 nuclear power plants operating in Japan, 20 in South Korea, and 11 in China. An additional 38 plants are either being constructed or planned in the three countries.

China will accelerate development of the nuclear energy sector, particularly in the coastal regions, to ease mounting pressures on coal transportation and electricity transmission, the National Energy Bureau said earlier.

By 2020, nuclear power will make up a minimum of 5 percent of China's total energy mix, from the current level of less than 2 percent. With the establishment of the NNSA in 1984, nuclear safety is being closely monitored. No major incidents have been reported at nuclear installations in the past two decades.

[China launches natural disaster monitoring satellites](#)

Xinhua – 06 September

China launched two satellites to monitor the environment and natural disasters at 11:25 a.m. here on Saturday. The two satellites, launched from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center in Shanxi Province and carried by a Long March 2C rocket, were expected to enhance the country's capacity to forecast natural disasters, according to Bai Zhaoguang, a leading scientist and designer of the satellites.

The satellites are the first of their kind put into space by China. They are expected to have a lifespan of more than three years. They have state-of-the-art imaging systems and infrared cameras and provide a global scan every two days. The satellites can closely track natural disasters, Bai said, and provide quick assessments of damage to guide rescue and reconstruction work.

"The role of the satellites will be significant when China faces such natural disasters as this year's snowstorms and massive earthquake," he said. The satellites are unparalleled in monitoring the environment in terms of their scale, speed and ability to operate regardless of weather, he said.

China had several natural disasters this year. In the winter, prolonged snowstorms affected large areas of southern and central China and stranded millions of people. On May 12, an earthquake measuring 8.0 on the Richter Scale struck southwest Sichuan Province. It is feared more than 87,000 died in the disaster. China used satellite images to help assess damage to infrastructure after that quake.

[PNG warned of environmental mining disaster](#)

ABC – 06 September

More attention should be given to a potential environmental disaster in Papua New Guinea near one of the world's largest copper mines, warn some scientists.

Melbourne-based river scientist Dr Ian Campbell is concerned about large areas downstream from Papua New Guinea's Ok Tedi mine being affected by acid mine drainage.

He presented his concerns at this week's River Symposium in Brisbane. "It's a nightmare waiting to happen, I think," Dr Campbell said, who recently advised on environmental issues for 16 months at Ok Tedi Mining Limited. He says sulfur-laden mine waste has

built up in and around the Fly River and if the river's floodplains dry out, this could trigger a mass poisoning of animals and plants.

Dr Campbell, who has also previously served with the Mekong River Commission, says if the sediments dry out and are exposed to oxygen, the sulfur will oxidise and create sulfuric acid, which dissolves toxic metals and creates a long-term toxicity. He says his reading of company data suggests around 150 square kilometres of the Fly River floodplains, downstream from the Ok Tedi mine could be potentially affected by acid mine drainage.

Ok Tedi Mining Limited says they are aware of the problem of acid mine drainage and a few pockets (the largest of which extend up to a few hundred square metres) of oxidation had already occurred. But the company disagrees with Dr Campbell on the extent of the area that could be affected by acidity. "At most, these subject sediments cover 'tens' of square kilometres," managing director Alan Breen said. He says the river floodplains are very unlikely to dry out and flooding is expected to increase over the next 200 years.

As part of the solution, the Ok Tedi mine is in the process of storing extracted sulfur from the mine waste in a pit on the floodplain of the Ok Tedi river, just upstream from its junction with the Fly River. But Dr Campbell says this could compound the problem if the river changes its course and cuts into the pit, releasing a pulse of sulfur into the river.

Mr Breen says the new pit for storing sulfur extracted from mine waste has been independently assessed as safe by an expert review team. He adds that experts have also concluded that "for between 100 to 1,000 years, there is minimal risk of the Ok Tedi channel migrating towards the storage pits." "This company spends more than \$1.5 million each year on world-leading environmental consultants, including a number of Australian and other universities and the CSIRO," Mr Breen said. "Dr Campbell's view of some of the scientific findings digressed somewhat from this collective viewpoint."

Environmental engineer Dr Gavin Mudd of Monash University, who specialises in mine waste management, says a number of research papers have "played down" the acid mine drainage problem. Dr Mudd, who has worked for mining companies as well as Aboriginal communities and has been following the Ok Tedi issue since 1994, agrees with Dr Campbell's estimates of the potential area affected. "I think that's a much more realistic assessment of the nature of the problem at Ok Tedi," Dr Mudd said.

He says there is scientific controversy over how the mine waste will behave in the river, and whether calcium carbonate - either naturally occurring or deposited with the waste - can prevent acid from forming. "It's not exactly a simple question," he said. But, he says, the environmental impacts of the Ok Tedi mine have been consistently underestimated since the mine began and he thinks the company's assessment is "optimistic".

Both Dr Mudd and Dr Campbell say the water level in the river is currently artificially high because of the accumulated sediment in the river bed. "In the future this area will dry

out maybe in 10 years, maybe in 100, maybe in 1,000 - but whenever that happens this will cause a major problem for the floodplain and those that depend on it," Dr Campbell said. And both say climate change predictions for tropical areas such as this are highly uncertain, which means flash floods could occur and threaten the storage pits that are being built. "All it takes is one big flood to go through and break some of channels, that wasn't predicted, and you get the channel changing course," Dr Mudd said.

Perth-based environmental scientist Dr Alan Tingay agrees the new waste dumps could be of concern. "The last I heard was the mine was going to close down in 2013," said Dr Tingay, who until last year was an independent adviser to a process designed to compensate communities which have been affected by other impacts of the mine. "These dumps will be there forever and their integrity I think can not be guaranteed. "Basically [the company is] trying a large scale environmental experiment in an extreme rainfall zone where there is significant potential, in my view, for erosion." Dr Tingay is particularly concerned about the challenge in revegetating the waste dumps and ensuring their protection from erosion in the long term. "There are no provisions that I'm aware of for the ongoing maintenance of those dumps or for repair of those dumps should it be required," he said.

Environmental concerns have dogged Ok Tedi mine for many years. The mine was originally 52 per cent owned by BHP Billiton, which sold its stake in 2002 after concerns over environmental damage caused by the mine.

MILITARY / PEACEKEEPING / HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS

[Indian military mounts mammoth flood rescue effort](#)

AP – 03 September

Hungry villagers rioted, desperate families swam for their lives and chaos spread across a wide swath of flooded plains in northern India Tuesday as authorities mounted one of the country's largest relief efforts. Soldiers and aid workers scrambled to reach hundreds of thousands of people still stranded on rooftops, trees and specks of dry land more than two weeks after monsoon rains caused the Kosi River to burst its banks and turn hundreds of square miles of Bihar state into a giant lake.

The road linking Saharia village to the rest of the hard-hit Saharsa district washed away Monday. Those who could braved the fast-flowing, neck-deep water, carrying bicycles above their heads and bags of clothes on their shoulders. Some swam out into the stream, dragging frightened cattle after them. "The water came on Saturday, and since then no government officials have come to us," said Ram Bachan Rai, 60, a Saharia resident.

The army sent more than 5,000 soldiers to join rescue efforts, while officials said more than half of the 1.2 million stranded had been rescued. Officials did not yet have a precise tally of those killed by the flooding, but estimates ranged from dozens to thousands. The relief effort was the first to deploy all three branches of India's military — the army, navy and air force, said Prataya Amrit, a top disaster management official in Bihar. With

the extra forces, officials hoped to complete the rescue phase of operations in two days, Amrit said.

But even as attention turned to housing and feeding the refugees, relief efforts were haphazard amid the chaos. New areas were cut off, posing fresh challenges to rescuers. Strong currents hampered their work, with the military being extra cautious after one of its boats capsized over the weekend, killing 19 people.

Though residents of Saharia village said no government officials had come to their aid, they were visited by relief workers from UNICEF and the European Union. "We are going from place to place trying to assess the needs of the people, see what gaps there are and how we can fill it," Malini Morzaria of the EU's aid department said as she waded through knee-deep water to reach an isolated hamlet.

Near Saharia, the government set up a camp in a school, where some 1,000 people huddled with their cattle and goats. The refugees were getting shelter, medical treatment and three meals a day of cooked rice and lentils. There was a pump with clean water where mothers were vigorously scrubbing the flood waters off their children. However, there was not enough room for everyone. Some refugees camped under a large tree, while others staked a claim to a nearby gas station. "Influential people are taking all the relief materials," complained Rajendra Sah, 43, one of those living under the tree.

As frustration grew among the homeless, crowds attacked government offices and there were reports of looting. In Madhepura, one of the biggest flooded towns, residents stormed a government office late Monday throwing stones and demanding food, television news reports showed. In Saharia, a man said thugs had stolen his family's vital supplies. "People came in a boat and took away the grain we had stored on the roof," said Chetu Yadav, 28. "They were armed so we were afraid to challenge them."

With the numbers in the camps for the displaced expected to nearly double in the coming days, there were fears that crowded and unsanitary conditions could lead to outbreaks of diseases such as cholera. Officials say the flooding is expected to continue until November, when the last of the monsoon rains taper off. Only then will workers be able to plug the breach in the Kosi River that is more than a mile wide and growing. The river, which flows down from the Himalayas into India where it joins the Ganges River, dramatically changed course after the breach, moving dozens of miles to the east and inundating hundreds of square miles.

The monsoon season, which starts in June, brings rain vital for the farmers of South Asia but also can cause widespread destruction. In India's northeastern state of Assam, floods have submerged roughly 1,500 villages, drowned 15 people and displaced hundreds of thousands, said the state's relief minister, Bhumidhar Barman. State authorities were working hard to reach affected areas, Barman said.

Two of Assam's major rivers, the Brahmaputra and the Barak, were flowing above the danger levels at more than a dozen places, according to a bulletin issued by the Central

Water Commission, a federal flood monitoring agency. In neighboring Bangladesh, flooding cut off at least 50,000 people, news reports said. A flood warning agency said the situation was "likely to deteriorate." News reports said three people drowned Monday in flood-ravaged areas north of the capital, Dhaka.

Chinese Spy Ship Spotted Off Taiwan - Officials

Morning Star – 09 September

A Chinese spy vessel was detected cruising off Taiwan as the island's military prepares for its biggest annual exercise, officials said Tuesday. Dong Fang Hong 2, a Chinese surveillance ship believed to be collecting data on Taiwan's military, was spotted on September 2 northeast of the island in international waters, Apple Daily said, citing an unnamed coast guard source.

It said the Taiwanese Navy sent two frigates to track the Chinese ship to the Bashi Channel. Taiwan's defense ministry confirmed the report. "I believe it has something to do with collecting (our) military data," Chief of General Staff Huo Shou-yeh said. It comes ahead of a five-day exercise starting September 22 involving more than 20,000 troops and reservists simulating an invasion by China.

The spy ship episode was used by the pro-independence opposition Democratic Progressive Party to attack China-friendly President Ma Ying-jeou. "This is another warning signal to Ma. Beijing will by no means reciprocate despite Ma's repeated conciliatory steps," DPP legislator Tsai Huang-lang said. But Lin Yu-fang of the ruling Kuomintang played down the significance of the event, saying he believed that Taiwan's military has also tried to collect information on China's forces.

Tensions across the Taiwan Strait have eased since Ma was elected in March on a platform to boost the economy and improve ties with China. The Taipei government has agreed not to deploy long-range missiles capable of hitting Shanghai, the China Times reported earlier this month, although it has started rolling out shorter-range cruise missiles.

The two sides resumed dialogue in June and a month later launched regular direct flights for the first time in nearly six decades. The Ma administration has also allowed more Chinese tourists to visit the island and relaxed controls on China-bound investments, issues which had been shunned by the former pro-independence government.

NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

China calls for balance of nuclear nonproliferation, energy use

Xinhua – 02 September

China's Foreign Ministry said in Beijing on Tuesday that the country hopes the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) can resolve the relationship between nonproliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy in a balanced way. "China hopes the NSG finds a way to strike a balance between nuclear nonproliferation and the peaceful use of energy,"

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu told a routine press conference.

Jiang's remarks came before a new round of talks in Vienna scheduled for Thursday and Friday on nuclear cooperation between India and the United States. Jiang said China has a consistent and clear stance on the issue of India-U.S. nuclear cooperation. China has taken an active part in the NSG discussions, Jiang said. "China believes that all countries have the right to peacefully use nuclear energy and conduct international cooperation in line with the nonproliferation obligation." Cooperation should be conducive to safeguarding the completeness and effectiveness of the international nonproliferation system, Jiang added.

The 45-member NSG ended a two-day conference in Vienna on August 22, with no agreement on whether to lift a ban on nuclear trade with India. The NSG member countries decided to meet again on September 4-5 to try to resolve difference over whether to allow nuclear fuel and technology exports to India for civilian use.

[North Korea takes nuclear equipment out of storage](#)

Los Angeles Times – 04 September

In a challenge to the Bush administration, North Korea is taking the first steps toward putting back together the nuclear reactor it was dismantling as part of a now-tattered agreement to denuclearize. South Korean and U.S. officials reported Wednesday that in the preceding 48 hours, international monitors had observed the North Koreans taking mothballed equipment out of storage at Yongbyon, a nuclear compound 60 miles north of Pyongyang, the capital.

North Korea suspended the dismantling process Aug. 14, saying that the United States had broken a promise to remove it from a State Department list of terror-sponsoring nations. North Korean officials have also warned that they would restore some of what they had dismantled. Restarting the reactor, which is the only source of plutonium for the communist regime's weapons program, would take at least a year and a considerable investment. U.S. officials said Wednesday that it was not clear how serious an effort North Korea was making to rebuild what it had dismantled.

"Our understanding is that the North Koreans are moving some equipment around that they had previously put into storage," State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said at a briefing Wednesday. White House Press Secretary Dana Perino said President Bush still hopes to remove North Korea from the terrorism list, but will not do so until inspectors are allowed to verify information provided as part of the deal to detail Pyongyang's nuclear inventory. "Once North Korea simply agrees to a verification protocol, then the United States would take them off of our state sponsor of terrorism list," she said. "But we're not going to do it without it." Still, this latest development is a setback to Bush's hopes of claiming as part of his legacy the removal of the nuclear threat from North Korea -- one of his original "axis of evil" nations, along with Iran and Iraq.

South Korea's chief nuclear negotiator, Kim Sook, said this week that North Korea was probably just trying to extract further concessions. "We need not overreact," said Kim, speaking at a seminar Monday in Seoul. "They are trying to pressure the United States and other parties to back down rather than engage. The North should realize that verification is a core element" of the deal, he said.

To old North Korea hands, the move is a typical tactic by Pyongyang, entirely predictable under the circumstances. "It is par for the course. There is nothing terribly surprising about this," said Scott Snyder, a Washington-based expert at the Asia Foundation who wrote a book about North Korea's negotiating behavior. "They are betting that this is a legacy issue for President Bush and that he will back down."

[US frustrated over China's refusal to come clean on nuke capability](#)

Asia Bulletin – 05 September

Pentagon officials have claimed that China continues to resist disclosing details of its strategic nuclear weapons programs despite both governments having had several exchanges and discussions in the past two years. The Washington Times quoted one unnamed defense official as saying that Beijing has adopted stalling tactics, which has left Washington quite frustrated over what he called excessive secrecy and a lack of dialogue.

One factor responsible for the current stalemate on the issue has been the absence of a visit by General Jing Zhiyan, the commander of China's nuclear forces, to the U.S. Strategic Command or the United States despite President Hu Jintao having made a promise to do so in 2006.

Pentagon press secretary Geoff Morrell said the nuclear discussions are going slowly, but making progress. "At the suggestion of Defense Secretary Gates during his trip to Beijing last fall, the U.S. and Chinese militaries have agreed to expand our exchanges and deepen our dialogues, including regarding nuclear policy and strategy," he said. "Those discussions are helping us better understand each other and reduce the risk of miscalculation. Of course, they are in their early stages, and this process is going to take considerable time, but so far at least it is going better than we had anticipated," he added.

U.S. officials familiar with the talks said the Chinese have refused to visit Stratcom and that discussions so far have been tightly scripted. The officials said they think China fears that revealing even very basic data would provide intelligence that could be used to counter Chinese nuclear forces.

Some U.S. officials think China does not have a prepared nuclear strategy for its relatively small but growing nuclear arsenal. Additionally, China's strategic policy on stockpiling missiles remains unknown. The Pentagon also does not know whether China has multiple warhead missiles or whether it is adding warheads to single-warhead missiles. The Pentagon's latest annual report on China's military states that Beijing is increasing both the number and the quality of its nuclear forces. It estimates that the

current force includes about 60 long- and medium-range nuclear missiles.

China's military, for its part, views the dialogue with the Pentagon as a way to try to limit the number of U.S. missile defense interceptors, both on land and at sea, so that China's missiles will not be countered by a future expanded U.S. missile defense system, U.S. officials said. A Chinese embassy spokesman said the issue of U.S.-China nuclear talks is "very sensitive" and declined to comment.

[Australia will not sell uranium to India](#)

NHK – 08 September

Australia says it will not sell uranium to India unless India signs the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Australia's Trade Minister Simon Crean announced the policy on Monday.

On Saturday, Australia joined the other members of the Nuclear Suppliers Group in approving a one-off waiver that allows nuclear supplier nations to sell India nuclear technology and fuel for power generation.

Crean said that while Australia welcomed the safeguards and commitment India has agreed to regarding its civilian nuclear program, it is in its best interests not to sell uranium to a nation that has not signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. He said Australia should use its strength as a supplier of uranium to really ensure that the appropriate safeguard measures are in place.

Last year, former Prime Minister John Howard of the Liberal Party indicated that he would support uranium export to India for peaceful purposes in response to the US call to lift the embargo on nuclear trade with India.

The Labor Party government under Prime Minister Kevin Rudd promised to scrap an agreement negotiated by the Howard government. Crean said Labor is committed to supplying uranium to only those countries party to the NPT. Australia has the world's largest uranium reserves

[Top-level China, India talks amid nuclear deal tension](#)

AFP – 09 September

Asian giants India and China held high-level talks on Monday amid tension over Beijing's purported reluctance to back New Delhi's civilian nuclear ambitions. India has criticised Beijing for being unwilling to support a waiver that would enable New Delhi to trade with the Nuclear Suppliers' Group (NSG), which controls global atomic commerce, without signing non-proliferation pacts. The NSG exemption, approved Saturday, is key for energy-hungry India to buy nuclear fuel, technology and reactors to power its economy.

Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi, who arrived in India Sunday, met his counterpart Pranab Mukherjee and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. "We were rather disappointed because the Chinese suddenly jumped into the arena supporting -- they didn't say anything themselves -- the naysayers," India's national security adviser M.K. Narayanan said. "We will of course express some kind of disappointment... saying that we expected more from them," he added.

After closed-door meetings with Indian leaders, Yang said Beijing did not try to block the waiver at the NSG meeting. "The Chinese side adopted a responsible and positive attitude... with regard to discussions at the NSG and now we see a consensus was reached," Yang told reporters. "We didn't do anything to block it. We played a constructive role," he said.

China had earlier voiced concerns over lifting the ban since India, which had been denied access to nuclear technology because it tested a nuclear weapon in 1974, is not a member of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty. But India finally made a "formal declaration" Friday to stand by its non-proliferation commitments and uphold its moratorium on tests, and China withdrew its earlier opposition. An Indian official said New Delhi's disappointment with China's stance at the NSG followed "repeated assurances" from President Hu Jintao that Beijing would not oppose a consensus on the entry of New Delhi.

Uday Bhaskar, a former head of the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses, said the friction was part of longstanding competition between the economic and strategic rivals. But he noted that there had been a "concerted attempt by both sides to set aside differences" and normalise bilateral ties despite mistrust stemming from a brief but bitter border conflict in 1962. "Clearly, until now China has been the major power in Asia, which was skewed in China's favour," Bhaskar said. "With India entering the NSG, a new strategic equation has been introduced into Asia and this clearly has caused disquiet to China," he said. Beijing's alleged change of position was a "covert attempt to prevent a successful rise of India." "China's credibility in bilateral relations with India is at stake" with New Delhi likely to adopt a more "wary" approach, he said.

Besides differences at the NSG, India and China would review progress made in 11 rounds of talks to resolve a thorny boundary dispute, officials said. India says China occupies 38,000 square kilometres (14,700 square miles) of its Himalayan territory, while Beijing claims the whole of the northeastern Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, which is 90,000 square kilometres.