



# **RÉVOLUTIONNAIRE 20/2008**

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

## **CONTEMPORARY CONFLICT**

### [Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers warn of 'genocide' as UN agencies pullout](#)

*AFP* – 13 September

Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers on Saturday accused the government of planning a genocidal campaign against Tamils as UN agencies began pulling out of the rebel-held Wannu regions in the island's north. UN agencies began pulling out of the region on Friday after Colombo said it could not guarantee the safety of aid workers as troops pushed towards the Wannu region, which comprises Kilinochchi and Mullattivu districts.

People in Kilinochchi have protested the departure of UN agencies from the Wannu region, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) said in statement through its peace secretariat. Residents had gathered outside the offices of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the World Food Programme from early Friday, said the rebels, who are fighting for autonomy in the island's north and east since 1972.

They were "demanding that the agencies should stay behind and continue their humanitarian work for the Wannu people facing a humanitarian crisis," the rebels said of the protesting residents. While protesters tried to block traffic to prevent UN vehicles from leaving the area, resident representatives had discussions with the two agencies, which had promised to raise the issue at the UN, the release said. "The appeals (from resident representatives) mostly said that the Sri Lankan government is ordering the international agencies out as it readies for the final stage of the genocide of the Tamils," the rebels said.

UN agencies say at least 160,000 people have been displaced in the past few months in the districts of Mullattivu and Kilinochchi. Some 70,000 people have fled due to fighting in the past two months alone. According to the Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies, 11 UN and other agencies have been working in the rebel-held Wannu area.

Colombo wants to avoid troops being accused of killing aid workers in a repeat of the August 2006 massacre of 17 local employees of the French aid agency Action Against Hunger in the east of the island. Tens of thousands have died on both sides during more than three decades of bloodshed.

### [Pakistan says troop fire turns U.S. helicopters back](#)

*Reuters* – 15 September

Pakistani security officials said on Monday that troops had fired on U.S. military helicopters and forced them to turn back to Afghanistan, but both the Pakistani and American militaries denied the incident.

According to the security officials, the incident took place near Angor Adda, a village in the tribal region of South Waziristan where officials have said U.S. commandos in helicopters raided a suspected al Qaeda and Taliban camp earlier this month. "The U.S.

choppers came into Pakistan by just 100 to 150 metres at Angor Adda. Even then our troops did not spare them, opened fire on them and they turned away," said one security official.

While Angor Adda villagers and officials supported that account, the U.S. and Pakistani military denied the report. Pakistan's military spokesman Major Murad Khan confirmed there had been a shooting but said the American helicopters had not crossed into Pakistani airspace and Pakistani troops were not responsible for the firing.

Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman and a U.S. military spokesman in Afghanistan said American helicopters had not come under fire. "I've checked into that and find it to be a spurious report," Whitman told reporters. "Did not happen. I've checked all the places that would know about something like that and it doesn't appear to be accurate." (I) cannot find any mission that correlates to the report I saw out of Pakistan. I can't find any (military) report of helicopters being fired upon," Whitman said.

Pakistan has been seen as an ally in the U.S. war on terrorism, and its support is key to the success of Western forces trying to stabilise Afghanistan. But Washington has become impatient over Islamabad's response to the threat from al Qaeda and Taliban fighters in Pakistan's tribal regions. The United States has intensified attacks by missile-firing drone aircraft in recent weeks.

The New York Times reported last week that President George W. Bush has given clearance for U.S. raids across the border. The raid on Angor Adda on Sept. 3 was the first overt ground incursion by American troops into Pakistan since the deployment of U.S. forces in Afghanistan in late 2001.

At least 20 people, including women and children, were killed in that South Waziristan raid, sparking outrage in Pakistan and prompting a diplomatic protest. Pakistani army chief General Ashfaq Kayani said in a strongly worded statement last week that Pakistan would not allow foreign troops on its soil and Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity would be defended at all costs.

Official denials of the helicopter incident were contradicted by Pakistani civilian officials and villagers in Angor Adda. One official told Reuters by telephone that "the troops stationed at BP-27 post fired at the choppers and they turned away." Two Chinook helicopters appeared set to land when troops began shooting, alerting tribesmen who also opened fire on the intruders, said a senior government official in Peshawar, the capital of North West Frontier Province.

A resident described the tension in the village through the night. "We saw helicopters flying all over the area. We stayed awake the whole night after the incident," he said. The fiercely independent tribesmen of the region carry weapons regardless of whether they are militants.

Despite U.S. frustration with Pakistan, its army has been involved in fierce fighting with Islamist militants in Bajaur, another tribal region, and Swat, a valley in North West Frontier Province, close to the tribal lands. Pakistani forces, using helicopter gunships and artillery, killed at least 16 fighters and wounded 25 in Bajaur on Sunday. More than 750 militants have been killed in an offensive there that began in late August.

The U.S. pressure comes at an awkward time for President Asif Ali Zardari, widower of assassinated former prime minister Benazir Bhutto. Zardari was elected on Sept. 6, having forced former army chief Pervez Musharraf to quit last month, almost nine years after he took power in a coup.

The new Pakistani president is in Britain to meet Prime Minister Gordon Brown to talk over the border situation. Bush held a video conference with Brown last week to discuss a new strategy for the lawless Pakistan-Afghanistan frontier. Zardari and Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani have both endorsed the stand taken by General Kayani.

### [Odierno warning on Iraq security](#)

*BBC* – 16 September

The new US military commander in Iraq, Lt Gen Ray Odierno, has said that recent security gains there are "fragile and reversible". He was speaking in Baghdad at a ceremony to replace Gen David Petraeus.

Gen Petraeus, who implemented the "surge" of nearly 30,000 extra US troops in Iraq, is widely credited with driving down levels of violence there. He has been promoted to oversee operations in Afghanistan and in the Middle East, including Iraq. He will take up the post as head of the US Central Command in late October, working from its headquarters in Tampa, Florida.

Gen Petraeus handed the command of the 146,000-strong US force at a ceremony in one of Saddam Hussein's former palaces on the outskirts of the capital. He thanked his troops and hailed his successor as "the perfect man for the job". Gen Odierno said he was aware of the tough task ahead, adding that the Iraqi people must take charge as "the struggle is theirs to win". He said: "Iraq is now a different country from the one I had seen first. However, we must realise that these gains are fragile and reversible."

Presiding over the ceremony, the US Secretary of Defence, Robert Gates, said the two generals had formed an "incredible team" while implementing the "surge" plan in 2007. He said that Gen Odierno, who served as deputy commander in Iraq for 15 months, knew "we are at a pivotal moment where progress remains fragile and caution should be the order of the day".

Mr Gates recalled the challenges faced by Gen Petraeus, saying: "Darkness had descended on this land. Merchants of chaos were gaining strength. Death was commonplace. "Slowly, but inexorably, the tide began to turn. Our enemies took a fearsome beating they will not soon forget," Mr Gates said. Alongside the "surge", Gen

Petraeus oversaw a major change of strategy, with coalition forces moving out of large bases and into highly populated areas. Since then, the security situation has improved markedly, with less violence and fewer deaths, and progress on both the political and economic fronts.

The BBC's Mike Sergeant in Baghdad says two other factors were crucial: a ceasefire by the Shia militia and deals with former Sunni insurgents. But on the eve of Gen Petraeus's departure, a female suicide bomber blew herself up in Diyala province, killing 22 people - a reminder that violence could easily escalate again. The big challenge for Gen Odierno will be finding ways to stop that sort of violence escalating at a time when the number of US troops are shrinking, our correspondent says.

In a BBC interview before his departure, Gen Petraeus said he would never declare victory in Iraq and that the US still faced a "long struggle" in the country. When asked if US troops could withdraw from Iraqi cities by the middle of next year, he said that would be "doable". Mr Bush has announced a cut of 8,000 US troops in Iraq by February - with some 4,500 being sent to Afghanistan.

### [Pakistan spy agency must be reformed - U.S. official](#)

*Reuters* – 16 September

The Pakistani military's powerful and controversial spy agency needs reform but there is no indication this is happening yet, the top U.S. diplomat for South Asia said on Monday. "It has to be done," Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Richard Boucher said of revamping the Inter-Services Intelligence agency, widely known as the ISI. Asked if he had seen signs of reform, he told Reuters: "No, I don't have anything in particular I would point to right now."

Despite its help in fighting al Qaeda, the ISI is viewed with deep suspicion by U.S. officials who believe it retains links to the Taliban and other militants blamed for supporting attacks on U.S. forces across the border in Afghanistan. In July, Afghan President Hamid Karzai said Pakistani agents were behind some of the violence in his country, including a suicide attack on the Indian embassy in Kabul. India also has blamed Pakistani intelligence agents, a charge Pakistan denied. The spy agency is also suspected of having a hand in helping destabilize past civilian governments in Pakistan.

Pakistan's new government led by Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani tried to rein in the ISI in July by placing it under Interior Ministry control, only to reverse course within days in an embarrassing flip-flop. Gilani's six-month-old government is grappling with rising militancy in its restive northwest and public discontent over intensified attacks by U.S. missile-firing drones.

The United States has repeatedly called on the Pakistani military to do more to gain control of its lawless regions near the border with Afghanistan, where there are 33,000 U.S. troops, many of them seeking to combat a Taliban insurgency. U.S. officials believe

the insurgents enjoy safe haven in Pakistan and see no way of defeating them without greater efforts on the Pakistani side of the border.

In what has been interpreted as a sign of U.S. impatience, American ground troops on Sept. 3 made what is believed to be their first ground incursion into Pakistan since the deployment of U.S. forces in Afghanistan in late 2001. At least 20 people, including women and children, died in South Waziristan raid, sparking outrage in Pakistan.

Asked why the new Pakistani government was more likely to act than under its predecessor, President Pervez Musharraf, Boucher replied: "It's sad to say, but the problem has become more and more acute." Pointing to growing militant violence inside Pakistan, Boucher said "increasingly, the problem is not seen as doing what the United States wants but doing what is necessary for the future of Pakistan."

Pakistani forces have intensified offensives in the northwestern regions of Bajaur and Swat in recent days and more than 150 militants have been killed, according to Pakistani security officials. Boucher praised the recent push, saying: "I think they have really shown a lot of determination, particularly in the last month or two."

He said combating militants in Pakistan's lawless area near the Afghan border went beyond reforming the ISI and required greater coordination among Pakistani agencies and between Islamabad and Washington. "The whole Pakistani state apparatus, the politicians, the security, economic development folks, is it properly lined up towards a single goal, and that's beating the terrorists and stabilizing Pakistan?" Boucher said. "As long as you have organizations, or pieces of organizations, that work in different directions, then it's harder for the government to accomplish that goal."

### [Pakistan orders troops to open fire if US raids](#)

AP – 16 September

Pakistan's military has ordered its forces to open fire if U.S. troops launch another air or ground raid across the Afghan border, an army spokesman said Tuesday. The orders, which come in response to a highly unusual Sept. 3 ground attack by U.S. commandos, are certain to heighten tensions between Washington and a key ally against terrorism. Although the ground attack was rare, there have been repeated reports of U.S. drone aircraft striking militant targets, most recently on Sept. 12.

Pakistani officials warn that stepped-up cross-border raids will accomplish little while fueling violent religious extremism in nuclear-armed Pakistan. Some complain that the country is a scapegoat for the failure to stabilize Afghanistan. Pakistan's civilian leaders, who have taken a hard line against Islamic militants since forcing Pervez Musharraf to resign as president last month, have insisted that Pakistan must resolve the dispute with Washington through diplomatic channels.

In Washington, a Pentagon spokesman said Pakistan would "correct the record" on the latest statement. "We enjoy good cooperation with Pakistan along the border," said the spokesman, Bryan Whitman. "Pakistan is an ally in the global war on terror."

However, army spokesman Maj. Gen. Athar Abbas told The Associated Press that after U.S. helicopters ferried troops into a militant stronghold in the South Waziristan tribal region, the military told field commanders to prevent any similar raids. "The orders are clear," Abbas said in an interview. "In case it happens again in this form, that there is a very significant detection, which is very definite, no ambiguity, across the border, on ground or in the air: open fire."

U.S. military commanders accuse Islamabad of doing too little to prevent the Taliban and other militant groups from recruiting, training and resupplying in Pakistan's wild tribal belt. Pakistan acknowledges the presence of al-Qaida fugitives and its difficulties in preventing militants from seeping through the mountainous border into Afghanistan. However, it insists it is doing what it can and paying a heavy price, pointing to its deployment of more than 100,000 troops in its increasingly restive northwest and a wave of suicide bombings across the country.

After talks Tuesday with British officials in London, Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari said he did not "think there will be any more" cross-border raids by the U.S. He declined to comment on the order to use lethal force against American troops. Instead, he and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown issued a joint statement saying Afghanistan and Pakistan should lead the efforts to battle border militancy. The joint statement left out any mention of the United States.

American officials have confirmed their forces carried out the Sept. 3 raid near the town of Angoor Ada but given few details of what happened. Abbas said that Pakistan's military had asked for an explanation but received only a "half-page" of "very vague" information that failed to identify the intended target. Pakistani officials have said the raid killed about 15 people, and Abbas said they all appeared to be civilians. "These were truck drivers, local traders and their families," he said.

How to reverse a surge in Taliban violence in Afghanistan has become a major issue in the U.S. presidential campaign and refocused attention on the porous border with Pakistan. Pakistan's military has won American praise for a six-week offensive against militants in the Bajur tribal region that officials here say has killed 700 suspected insurgents and about 40 troops. Troops backed by warplanes killed eight more alleged militants Tuesday, officials said. In the same timeframe, there has been a surge in missile strikes apparently carried out by unmanned U.S. drones. Such attacks killed at least two senior al-Qaida commanders earlier this year.

Abbas did not say when exactly the orders for Pakistani troops to open fire to prevent cross-border raids by U.S. troops were issued. He wouldn't discuss whether Gen. Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, who replaced Musharraf as army chief last year, personally took the decision or if the orders had been discussed with American officials. The spokesman also played down suggestions that the instructions had been put into practice before dawn on Monday, when U.S. helicopters reportedly landed near Angoor Ada only to fly away after troops fired warning shots. Abbas insisted no foreign troops had crossed the border and that "trigger-happy tribesmen" had fired the shots. Pakistani troops based nearby fired

flares to see what was going on, he said. The U.S. military in Afghanistan said none of its troops were involved.

In a rare public statement last week, Kayani said Pakistan's sovereignty would be defended "at all cost." Abbas said Pakistani officials had to consider public opinion, which is skeptical of American goals in the region and harbors sympathy for rebels fighting in the name of Islam. "Please look at the public reaction to this kind of adventure or incursion," Abbas said. "The army is also an extension of the public and you can only satisfy the public when you match your words with your actions."

### [U.S. ground force option may be limited in Pakistan](#)

*Reuters* – 17 September

The Bush administration is unlikely to use commando raids as a common tactic against militant safe havens in Pakistan due to the high-stake risks to U.S. policy in the region, officials and analysts say. Bush approved a U.S. commando assault in Pakistan's South Waziristan on Sept. 3, without Islamabad's permission, as part of a presidential order on clandestine and covert operations, officials and sources familiar with the matter said. Bush's authorization for the use of ground forces without Pakistani approval was part of a larger ramp-up in U.S. strikes against militant safe havens along the shared border with Afghanistan.

An angry Pakistan complained the attack killed about 20 people, including women and children, and vowed to defend its sovereignty against foreign forces even as missiles rained down on other militant targets from unmanned U.S. drones. Days later, Pakistani officials and villagers near the site of the initial attack said U.S. helicopters crossed the border from Afghanistan in a second incursion but were forced back by Pakistani ground fire. The incident was denied by both Pakistani and U.S. military officials. As a sign of growing tensions, Navy Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, paid an unannounced visit to Pakistan on Tuesday -- his second meeting with Pakistani officials in three weeks.

But officials and sources said any future raids must be approved on a mission-by-mission basis by a top U.S. administration official because of the political sensitivities involved and the calculated risk of U.S. troops being killed or captured on Pakistani soil. It was not clear whether permission must be given by the president or can be relegated to the defense secretary. This is extremely sensitive. You can't have soldiers in the field, or even their commanders, making this kind of decision," said one official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the topic involves classified information.

Analysts said U.S. special operations and paramilitary forces have operated inside Pakistan in small numbers for years, mainly in conjunction with the Pakistani military. But U.S. involvement escalated on Sept. 3 when about two dozen U.S. special operations forces backed by an AC-130 gunship raided a suspected al Qaeda compound near the village of Angor Adda in what U.S. officials privately described as a stepped-up

campaign to disrupt increasingly dangerous militant safe havens in Pakistan's tribal region.

U.S. officials say in safe havens operated by militant groups including al Qaeda and the Pakistani Taliban, fighters have been trained for an intensifying insurgency in eastern Afghanistan that has helped make that country deadlier than Iraq for U.S. troops. The Bush administration had grown impatient at Pakistan's reluctance to take military action against militant bases.

"The U.S. military and intelligence community in Afghanistan was getting increasingly concerned that the Pakistan government was not only unable but unwilling to conduct operations against the militants," said an analyst involved in U.S. government deliberations. "This meant that if we were to deal effectively with one of the most serious concerns about the Afghan insurgency, we needed to step up activity. And that meant we needed a presidential order," the analyst said.

The United States has 33,000 troops in Afghanistan and plans to send fresh forces that will increase the overall number by nearly 2,000 by next year, a fraction of the 10,000 troops sought by U.S. commanders on the ground.

Former U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka Teresita Schaffer said the use of U.S. ground forces could increase political turmoil by inflaming the rivalry between Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari and opposition leader Nawaz Sharif. "If this is a one-off or two-off, you can get past it. But as a regular modus operandi, I don't think the Pakistani government can sustain it," she said.

Steve Coll of the New America Foundation said the use of U.S. ground forces posed particular problems for the Pakistani military, which the Bush administration is pressing for more assistance against militants. "It's hard for an army that is as sensitive as Pakistan's is to issues of sovereignty to stand passively before its own public and accept these kinds of incursions," Coll said.

### [Sri Lanka navy says kills 25 rebels, sinks 10 boats](#)

*Reuters* – 18 September

Sri Lanka's navy killed at least 25 Tamil Tiger rebels and destroyed 10 boats as some of the bloodiest fighting in months raged into a second day on Thursday, the military said. The sea battle took place off the fishing port of Nachikkudah, where fighting a day earlier had killed 40 Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebels and 10 soldiers.

In all, at least 71 people were killed on Wednesday, one of the deadliest days of combat since Sri Lanka's armed forces intensified a thrust into rebel-held territory three months ago. There was no independent confirmation of the casualties and the rebels could not be reached for comment.

The battle for Nachikkudah, about 300 km north of the capital Colombo, went offshore on Thursday. A navy spokesman said the sea battle lasted about 4-½ hours and involved naval vessels and about 20 LTTE boats. Seven small attack boats and three large ones were destroyed, and another four vessels were damaged and retreated, the spokesman said. At least 25 rebels were killed, he added.

Nachikkudah has been the scene of heavy fighting for weeks, with ground troops pushing forward and air force jets hitting LTTE bunkers and outposts with almost daily strikes. "Heavy fighting occurred throughout the day on Wednesday and the troops managed to successfully secure an area of 1.5 km of the LTTE's Nachikkudah forward defence line," military spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said.

The rebels' Nachikkudah defences protect the southern flank of Poonaryn, a strategically important spit of land on which the LTTE has artillery batteries that in the past have inflicted heavy casualties on troops crossing the narrow Jaffna Peninsula. Were the military to break through the Jaffna line and push down through the heavily mined area, it would be able to strike the LTTE from the north while it hits them on four fronts from the south.

Lieutenant-General Sarath Fonseka, the army commander, told Reuters on Thursday that the rebels this week had used a form of tear gas on soldiers, but that it was a minor problem since most frontline troops have gas masks. On Tuesday the military said they were within 5.5 km of Kilinochchi town, the LTTE's de facto capital and a prized target for Sri Lanka's military as it tries to wipe out a foe it has battled since 1983.

Pro-rebel website [www.tamilnet.com](http://www.tamilnet.com), quoting unidentified LTTE police, said a military claymore fragmentation mine had killed three people riding a bus in Kilinochchi district on Thursday. The Tigers want to establish a separate homeland for Sri Lanka's ethnic minority Tamils, in a nation that has been ruled by majority Sinhala-led governments since independence from Britain in 1948.

### [Philippines rebels appeal for help to restart talks](#)

ABC – 19 September

The Philippines' largest Muslim rebel group has appealed to the international community to help bring the government and guerrillas back to the negotiating table and end fighting in the south.

The chairman of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, Al Haj Murad Ebrahim, made the appeal on Al Jazeera television in an interview from a rebel base on the southern island of Mindanao. He says the Moros believe the best situation is going back to the peace process, because they fear the escalating violence could turn the island into another Iraq or Afghanistan.

Close to 300 people have been killed in almost four weeks of fresh hostilities in four southern provinces. Last month, three rogue commanders of the MILF went on the

rampage after a deal on expanding an autonomous Muslim region was halted by the Supreme Court.

[Pakistan, Afghanistan discuss joint force for border](#)

*Reuters* – 23 September

Pakistan and Afghanistan are discussing a possible joint force to combat militants on both sides of their border near Pakistan's tribal region, which has become a safe haven for al Qaeda and other groups, a senior Afghan official said on Monday.

Afghan Defence Minister Abdul Rahim Wardak told reporters that such a force would include U.S. troops and address soaring insurgent violence that he said has stretched the capabilities of U.S., NATO and Afghan forces inside Afghanistan. "We should have a combined joint task force of coalition, Afghans and Pakistanis to be able to operate on the both sides of the border," Wardak said at the Pentagon during a visit to Washington to discuss a Kabul plan to nearly double the size of the Afghan army.

Navy Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told Congress recently that he had ordered a new U.S. military strategy for the region that would for the first time encompass Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Wardak said the Afghan government has discussed the task force with Pakistani officials within the past several weeks. "They say they're looking at it," he said. Speaking two days after a truck-bomb attack on Islamabad's Marriott hotel, Wardak said that given recent events in Pakistan "everyone should realize we have a common threat, a common enemy and a common objective to achieve." He noted that insurgent violence in Afghanistan rose three-fold from 2005 to 2007 and said: "2008 is going to be the highest among all."

The core of the insurgency consists of 10,000 to 15,000 fighters in Afghanistan, he said, not including those who operated outside the country in areas such as Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas, on the Afghan border. "Now I think they're operating geographically in more areas and more provinces than before, and I think they have stretched the capability of the combined forces of ISAF, the coalition and Afghans," the defence minister said.

ISAF, NATO's International Security Assistance Force, totals about 47,000 troops including 13,000 U.S. forces. Another 20,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan operate under a separate U.S. command. U.S. commanders in Afghanistan have asked for three more combat brigades totaling around 10,000 troops. Washington, strapped by commitments in Iraq, plans to send one Army combat brigade and a smaller Marine force by February.

U.S. and Afghan officials blame the rising tide of attacks in Afghanistan partly on safe havens in Pakistan that they say recruit and train militants and help plan cross-border actions. But there has been frustration in Washington over Pakistan's slowness to act against militants on its soil. U.S. commandos crossed the border into Pakistan on Sept. 3 to attack a suspected al Qaeda target that officials said was contributing to violence in

Afghanistan. The operation raised an outcry from Pakistani officials who said women and children were among the 20 people killed.

"A terrorist does not recognize any boundaries," Wardak said when asked about the raid. "We have to deal with the sanctuaries and the real hide-outs of the terrorists, wherever they are."

### [Scores of militants killed in Pakistan after hotel attack](#)

*AFP* – 24 September

Pakistani troops backed by helicopter gunships killed 60 Taliban and Al-Qaeda militants near the Afghan border, just days after the Marriott Hotel was bombed, officials said Tuesday. Clashes erupted with Islamist fighters near the troubled northwestern city of Peshawar, where a soldier was also killed, and separately in the volatile tribal frontier region of Bajaur, they said.

In northern Swat, another hub of unrest, at least five people were killed in police firing and three bank branches burnt in rioting by a mob protesting this week's killing of three children allegedly in mortar attack by security forces.

Pakistan's new civilian government vowed at the weekend to crack down on militant "hotspots" in the wake of Saturday's devastating suicide attack on the hotel in Islamabad, in which at least 60 people died. In the biggest battle, troops on Monday launched a "search and cordon" operation to clear extremists from a strategic road tunnel and other hideouts in Dara Adam Khel, a restive region just outside Peshawar, the army said. "Helicopter gunships and artillery are pounding the miscreants' hideouts. More than 50 miscreants have been killed so far and one soldier was also martyred," military spokesman Major Murad Khan told AFP.

Khan said troops took control on Monday of the Japanese-built Kohat tunnel, a key road leading out of Peshawar that was occupied by hardline forces last month. Soldiers were now carrying out operations in the main bazaar in Dara Adam Khel, which is home to Pakistan's biggest private weapons market, he said.

Peshawar remains on high alert after gunmen kidnapped Afghanistan's incoming ambassador, Abdul Khaliq Farahi, and shot dead his driver in the city on Monday. "We strongly suspect Farahi has been moved to some tribal district," possibly Dara Adam Khel, a senior police officer involved in the hunt for the envoy told AFP on condition of anonymity.

Separately Pakistani troops killed six militants in a mortar attack on a militant vehicle, and another four in a gun battle in Bajaur on Monday, in both cases after rebels tried to attack security checkpoints, officials said. Pakistani forces launched an operation in Bajaur last month, which officials say has left more than 800 people, mostly militants, dead. Nearly 300,000 residents have been displaced by the fighting.

Analysts say the Marriott attack in Islamabad was likely in revenge for the offensive in Bajaur -- which is believed to be the hideout of Osama bin Laden's Egyptian deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri. Pakistani officials say an Al-Qaeda cell based in Islamabad was believed to be behind the hotel blast, in which the bomber rammed a truck into the outer gates of the Marriott.

The attack has increased pressure on Islamabad to crack down on Al-Qaeda and Taliban militants in Pakistan's tribal regions who are also accused of launching attacks on US and NATO troops in neighbouring Afghanistan. Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari was due to hold his first face-to-face talks with US counterpart George W Bush on Tuesday on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly on the mounting violence.

Tensions between the allies in the "war on terror," launched in 2001 after Al-Qaeda's September 11 attacks, are at an all-time high after a series of incursions into Pakistan by US-led forces based in Afghanistan. Pakistani officials said their troops had fired into the air on Sunday to repel two US helicopter gunships approaching the tribal belt from Afghanistan. In a further indication of the instability in Pakistan, British Airways said it had "indefinitely" cancelled its six weekly flights to Islamabad because of the turmoil.

## **TERRORISM & COUNTER-TERRORISM**

### [20 killed, 98 injured in Delhi bomb attacks](#)

*AFP* – 14 September

Indian police said Sunday that 20 people were killed and close to 100 injured in a string of coordinated bomb attacks that ripped through busy shopping areas in the capital. The blasts on Saturday evening struck five crowded areas of New Delhi within 45 minutes, and were claimed by a Muslim militant group calling itself the 'Indian Mujahideen.'

A further three bombs, also placed in crowded areas of the capital, were found and defused, Delhi police spokesman Rajan Bhagat told AFP. One had been placed at India Gate, one of the country's most iconic monuments and a major tourist attraction in the heart of Delhi. "We have very vital clues, positive clues, we are very hopeful we will solve this case," he said, confirming that the latest toll stood at 20 dead and 98 injured. Indian television channels said several suspects were detained in overnight raids, but gave no further details.

The bombs were of varying intensity and the targeted locations in south and central Delhi were all packed with evening shoppers. Two of the blasts hit Connaught Place -- the city's largest financial and commercial centre -- while two more hit the upmarket shopping district of Greater Kailash. A fifth ripped through a busy electronics and automobile components market. A bomb disposal expert said the devices appeared to have been packed with steel ball bearings and nuts and bolts "to cause maximum harm."

"Everything turned black in front of me," said one witness, Gulab Singh, who was in Connaught Place when one of the bombs exploded. "I saw at least one woman almost flying in the sky, hurled by the deafening blast which we heard. There was a stampede by panic-stricken people. Many fell down and some were trampled on." India went on high alert after the blasts, boosting security at airports, rail stations and city centres. The Delhi metro was also shut.

In an email sent to several media outlets minutes before the first blast the Indian Mujahideen challenged authorities to "stop us if you can." Little is known about the origins and make-up of the militant group, which had also claimed responsibility for a wave of bombings in July that killed at least 45 people in the western commercial city of Ahmedabad and the southern technology hub of Bangalore.

Security services suspect it may be a front for groups banned by the Indian government over the past few years such as the Students' Islamic Movement of India. Others say it could also be a loose coalition of the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed militant groups. The email threat was traced to a Mumbai suburb, reports said. A similar email sent before the Ahmedabad bombings was also sent via a hacked wireless connection in the suburbs of Mumbai.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh vowed that "the challenge posed by terrorism and communalism would be fought tooth and nail," while President Pratibha Patil denounced what she described as a "mindless act of violence."

Triple blasts in New Delhi in October 2005, blamed on Pakistan-backed Islamic rebel groups, claimed nearly 70 lives, while a 2001 attack on India's national parliament complex also blamed on Muslim militants killed 14 people. Pakistan's new President Asif Ali Zardari condemned Saturday's attacks.

### [India concerned about Pakistan support for militants](#)

*Reuters* – 15 September

The defence minister said on Monday he was seriously concerned about support for militants from Pakistan after a string of bomb attacks in the nation's capital killed 22 people at the weekend. A.K. Antony's remarks came as police said they were closing in on several Muslim suspects for the bombings in the heart of New Delhi in which nearly 100 people were wounded.

India, which used to blame Pakistan for violent attacks in the country including in the disputed region of Kashmir, has in recent months become more cautious about making these allegations. Some of the violence may have been perpetrated by home-grown groups, it has said.

But on Monday Antony reiterated long standing concerns. "Militants are getting support from across the border and it is a matter of serious concern," Defence Minister A.K.

Antony said when reporters asked him if he thought militants were still sneaking in from Pakistan. Islamabad has repeatedly rejected Indian allegations.

At least five bombs exploded in quick succession in crowded markets and streets of the capital on Saturday evening wounding a 100 people. A group calling itself the Indian Mujahideen (IM) sent an e-mail to television stations shortly after the first explosion saying it was responsible.

Police said on Monday they had identified Abdul Subhan Qureshi, a convent-educated computer expert and member of a banned Islamic students' group, as the chief suspect in the New Delhi attack. They said he was also involved in bombing Ahmedabad in July. They are also looking for a man they named as Qayamuddin, also known as Ashfaque. "We are close to cracking the case," Delhi police spokesman Rajan Bhagat said. "We have picked up some people."

Anger has mounted over the failure of the government to prevent attacks. More than 150 people have been killed after bombings in four major cities in recent months. In each case, suspects were named and Muslims were rounded up, but the attacks continue. "What's changed?" asked an editorial in the Indian Express newspaper on Monday. Police are massively understaffed and under-resourced. There is no central database of militant suspects and little time for meticulous investigations.

"We have not had a dedicated task force to look into the deficiencies in our counter-terrorism mechanism," said B. Raman, a former head of India's spy agency RAW. A prominent Muslim cleric accused the authorities of cracking down on innocent members of the community and warned it would fuel anger. "Immediately after the Delhi blasts, the government has again started persecuting innocent Muslims by dragging them from their homes for questioning," Maulana Syed Ahmed Bukhari, the chief cleric of Jama Masjid, India's largest mosque, told Reuters. "Please stop this immediately across India or face the anger of Muslims in India."

Analysts say there is already a sense of alienation among India's minority Muslims, many of whom feel government efforts to stamp out Islamist militancy often victimise the entire community. Alienation was also fuelled by communal riots in Gujarat in 2002, when around 2,500 people, mostly Muslims, were hacked and burnt to death. Little has been done to catch the culprits despite a national outcry.

### [India needs tough anti-terror laws, says govt panel](#)

*Reuters* – 16 September

India needs a tough law to fight attacks like the deadly weekend bombings in New Delhi, a government panel said on Tuesday, as police released sketches of key suspects. There were immediate signs of dissent within the government, though, after the Home Minister Shivraj Patil told NDTV news channel the country already had strong enough laws in place. In its report, the panel asked the government to consider tougher laws to deal with growing militancy in India.

"We need a comprehensive anti-terror law, but there should be adequate safeguards," said Veerappa Moily, a senior member of the ruling Congress party, who headed the panel. India's main opposition, the Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, which accuses the centrist Congress party-led coalition of following a policy of appeasement, wants the reinstatement of a tough anti-terrorism law it promoted when in power.

Congress scrapped the law saying it had been misused to harass Muslims. But Muslims say they are still being persecuted under the present regime and were planning to protest, because they were being unfairly targeted in a police manhunt. Minority Muslims told Reuters in several Muslim-dominated areas of New Delhi that police were conducting a "witch hunt" and accused authorities of reinforcing stereotypes about Muslims.

Terrorists do not belong to any religion," said Feroze Alam, a young trader in New Delhi's Daryaganj district. "They should be hanged. Why don't the police realise this and stop persecuting Muslims alone?" Some 20 Muslim organisations plan to meet in New Delhi next month to work a strategy to counter those stereotypes. "It is time to unite and protest against these attempts to harass Muslim youths and brand them as terrorists," Maulana Syed Ahmed Bukhari, the chief cleric of Jama Masjid, India's largest mosque, told Reuters.

Bukhari met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh last week. Singh said after deadly 2006 train bombs in the western city of Mumbai that alienation of Muslims would only make matters worse. "After every blast case, they have dragged innocent young men from their homes, and this has not stopped despite repeated requests," Bukhari said. "It is high time we put an end to this persecution." Police spokesman Bhagat denied police discriminated against Muslims. "We don't look at a suspect's religion. We work on positive leads," he said. Muslims make up around 13 percent of mainly Hindu India's 1.1 billion population, but lag behind in literacy and face discrimination in jobs.

Police have already named two Muslim suspects and released five sketches of three men they said had placed explosives in busy market places and streets in India's capital on Saturday, killing at least 22 people. The Indian Mujahideen militant group, which says it is avenging atrocities against Muslims in India and claimed several major attacks in recent months, said it was responsible for the blasts that also wounded more than 100 people.

"The sketches were drawn with information from witnesses who saw these men either move suspiciously or place suspect-looking bags," police spokesman Rajan Bhagat said. New Delhi has long blamed Pakistan for fomenting trouble inside India, mostly in the disputed northern region of Kashmir, but more recently has said some of the violence may have been perpetrated by home-grown groups.

### PM worries about home-grown militant threat

*Reuters* – 16 September

India has long faced attacks from Pakistan-based militant outfits, but the involvement of home-grown Islamist groups is now adding a "new dimension" to the problem, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said on Wednesday. Singh's comment is an explicit, high-level acknowledgement home-grown groups were now carrying out bombings in India, which has traditionally blamed Pakistan for violent attacks on its soil.

In recent months New Delhi has become more cautious about making allegations against Pakistan, and, instead has spoken of the complicity of home-grown Islamists in recent attacks, including a weekend bombing in New Delhi that killed 22 people.

"The role of Pakistan-based terrorist groups cannot be minimised but the involvement of local elements in recent blasts adds a new dimension to the terrorist threat," Singh told a meeting of governors of states. "We have reports that certain Pakistan-based terrorist outfits are constantly seeking to set up new terrorist modules within our country. This is a matter of utmost concern."

The Indian Mujahideen militant group, which says it carried out several major attacks in recent months to avenge "atrocities" against Muslims in India, said it was responsible for the bombs in New Delhi. The group sent emails to media outlets denying the government's initial claims that it was actually a front for Pakistan-based militant organisations.

Security analysts say although Indian radicals may share the violent and anti-Western ideology of Islamist extremists around the world, their motivation is rooted in a sense of injustice at home. Their most powerful recruiting tool has been the 2002 riots in Gujarat where human rights groups say around 2,500 people, mostly Muslims, were hacked and burnt to death. After the deadly train bombings in Mumbai in 2006, Singh said the alienation felt by many Muslims was worsening matters.

He said on Wednesday India had tightened security on its borders to prevent attacks.

"But in view of the growing involvement of local elements, this is not enough," he said, calling for "vast gaps" in intelligence apparatus to be bridged. He said certain suggestions were being considered, including the setting up of dedicated anti-terrorism agencies and tougher laws.

### Pakistanis bear brunt of bomb blast

*BBC* – 21 September

Suicide bombers have hit the Pakistani capital, Islamabad, on a number of occasions in recent months, but the blast on Saturday was on an altogether different scale. The man who rammed his truck into the front gate of the Marriott Hotel was sitting on an estimated 1,000kg (one tonne) of explosives, a quantity never before used by militants in attacks inside Pakistan. The number of dead may rise well above the official toll of 54 once salvage workers get to the rest of the hotel's burned-out rooms.

The Marriott was the first five-star hotel to be built in Islamabad and has been a favourite haunt for diplomats, dignitaries, the city's Westernised elite and well-off foreign visitors. As such, it has been an obvious target for Islamist militants. Twice in the past it has suffered bomb attacks. On both occasions it sprang right back to business as usual. But that won't happen this time. The huge truck-bomb set nearly the entire building on fire. It was a blaze that lasted for well over eight hours.

Some reports say the target this time around may have been some US security officials staying at the hotel. But once again it looks like Pakistanis bearing the brunt of militant anger at the United States. Nearly all of the identified dead so far are Pakistanis.

No militant group has accepted responsibility for the attack. But the obvious suspect is the Tehrik-e Taleban Pakistan (TTP), a loose umbrella organisation of militant groups in the north-western tribal areas, on the border with Afghanistan. The head of the TTP is the feared militant, Baitullah Mahsud, the man the previous government said planned the assassination of Benazir Bhutto. He operates from the South Waziristan region which is known for its camps of suicide bombers who are mostly recruited from schools and religious seminaries.

Over the years, the TTP has displayed the ability to penetrate high-security zones, often hitting close to military or other high-profile targets. Saturday's blast occurred in just such a high-security zone. Security all over the capital had been upgraded because the country's new civilian President, Asif Zardari, was giving his maiden speech to parliament. That event, which took place just four hours before the blast, brought together the entire political leadership of the country, the military top brass and the diplomatic corps under a single roof.

In a brief address to the nation after the blast, President Zardari said: "We are not afraid of death, it will come at the appointed time, but we are determined to clear this cancer [of militancy] from Pakistan." He called upon "all democratic powers" to help save Pakistan against this threat. But few Pakistanis expect a quick victory over the militants. In fact, many believe the situation has gone from bad to worse since the spectacular defeat of the allies of former president and military chief Pervez Musharraf in February's general elections.

Saturday's attack is the 11th by a suicide bomber in the country this year. It is the sixth in Islamabad since July 2007, when the army carried out a bloody 10-day siege of the city's radical Red Mosque. More than 100 people, most of them members or backers of a vigilante group raised by a seminary attached to the mosque, were killed in that conflict. Many analysts consider the Red Mosque confrontation to be the catalyst that sparked the beginning of the end for Pakistan's earlier policy of appeasement towards the Islamic militants in the north-west of the country.

Before the Red Mosque, the reluctance of the state to fully take on the Islamic militants led to policies that weakened both the tribal administrations and the military, leaving the

militants in control of huge areas of the region bordering Afghanistan. The Red Mosque deaths provided the trigger for certain militant groups - notably those in the eastern parts of South Waziristan and further north in Swat and Bajaur - to decide that the main target was the Pakistani state. Within four months of the siege, these groups came together in the TTP alliance, with Baitullah Mahsud as its head. Since then, dozens of attacks on military, police and diplomatic targets have shaken the military and embarrassed the government.

During September alone suicide bombers have hit targets in various parts across northern Pakistan, such as Islamabad, Lahore in the east, and Mardan and Charsadda in the west. These attacks have come in the wake of intensified military action against TTP groups in Swat and Bajaur. Bajaur has seen the most sustained operation by the military against militants. Hundreds of thousands of civilians have been displaced by the fighting. Added to this volatile cocktail are the recent US missile strikes and one ground operation in the tribal areas. These have helped the militants regain some of the public sympathy they have progressively lost during the last year. Whatever goes wrong now, many people blame the Americans.

Saturday's attack is interpreted by analysts as indicative of the pressure the militants appear to be under in Swat and Bajaur. The fact that they are gunning for the Pakistani establishment - and the Marriott Hotel is very much a symbol of that establishment - may also suggest the militants have lost some of their global ambitions they had after 9/11.

The Pakistani government and the militants are also engaged in a battle for the support of ordinary Pakistanis. It remains to be seen what impact the televised images of the charred wreck of the Marriott, where hundreds of Muslims had been taking their evening Iftar meal during Ramadan, will have across the nation.

## **DIPLOMACY & DEFENCE STRATEGY**

### [Bangladesh to seek closer ties with China](#)

*Reuters* – 14 September

The head of Bangladesh's army-backed interim government, Fakhruddin Ahmed, will seek an extension of preferential treatment for Bangladeshi goods during a four-day visit to China this week, officials said on Sunday.

Foreign minister Iftekher Ahmed Chowdhury said political and economic ties with China, one of Bangladesh's main development partners and supplier of military hardware, were very important. Fakhruddin leaves on Monday and will meet Premier Wen Jiabao and other top Chinese leaders, a foreign ministry spokesman said.

Chowdhury gave few details about Fakhruddin's trip but political observers said he would ask for China's help in power generation, agriculture and infrastructure development. "Bangladesh will also seek for extension of preferential treatment for Bangladeshi goods in China," one official told Reuters on Sunday.

It will be Fakhruddin's first overseas visit since taking power in January 2007 after months of political violence. He is also expected to seek China's support for his efforts to hold free, fair and credible elections in December.

### MOFA to set up a special task force on ASEAN

*The China Post* – 15 September

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) has approved a plan to set up a task force on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in an effort to enhance relations with the organization that is vitally important to Taiwan's interests, diplomatic sources have said.

The ASEAN unit, like the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) unit, will be a working-level task force under the Department of East Asian and Pacific Affairs that integrates government resources and streamlines operations in exclusively managing relations with ASEAN as a whole.

A senior official, acknowledging that current diplomatic efforts in the Southeast Asia are mostly bilateral in nature, stressed the new task force would focus on participating in ASEAN activities on a regional level, promoting dialogue and cooperation and even exploring the possibility of reaching a free trade agreement in the future. Established in Thailand in 1967, ASEAN is comprised of 10 member countries -- Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar.

Official statistics show that Taiwan has invested more than US\$51.1 billion in ASEAN nations, while two-way trade surpassed US\$60 billion in 2007. Under President Ma Ying-jeou's diplomatic approach, relations with ASEAN, together with the U.S., the European Union and Japan, is one of the top priorities. He recently issued a directive to the MOFA to establish an inter-agency task force on ASEAN at the National Security Council level, a strategic move aimed at strengthening relations with the region and preventing Taiwan from being marginalized.

"Once the inter-agency task force is established, the MOFA unit would also serve in a supporting role to the task force," noted the official, who requested anonymity, adding that the unit is in the recruiting stage and will soon begin operations.

In an recent interview with CNA, Foreign Minister Francisco H.L. Ou questioned how Taiwan, located in the Southeast Asia region, would survive if it is marginalized by ASEAN countries. "We have to find ways to get our foot in the door, " Ou said at the time.

The official noted that at the bilateral level, Taiwan still does not have an official presence in three of the 10 ASEAN member countries -- Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar - - and he indicated that Taiwan would try to establish representative offices in those countries.

He stressed that the establishment of the ASEAN unit was a clear indication that under President Ma's "modus vivendi" diplomatic strategy, "Taiwan's diplomacy will be more proactive and pragmatic in the international arena," rather than passive and inactive as it is often portrayed by the opposition party.

### [India, Bangladesh resume maritime border talks](#)

*The Economic Times* – 15 September

With disputes over allocation of off-shore territories for oil and gas exploration piling up, Bangladesh and India on Monday resumed talks on their maritime boundary in the energy-rich Bay of Bengal after a gap of 28 years. Officials and experts began three-day parleys here. The last meeting was in 1982 and had ended after preliminary talks, The Daily Star reported.

Bangladesh shares the bay with India and Myanmar but has not demarcated the sea territory with them, which is creating disputes mainly over offshore search of oil and gas. None of the countries have yet claimed their marine boundaries in the UN.

Foreign Adviser Iftexhar Ahmed Chowdhury said in a statement Sunday, "The technical level talks are taking place after 28 years. We believe today both the governments are now deeply committed to strengthening their relations through resolutions of all outstanding issues."

Back in June, New Delhi and Yangon strongly opposed Bangladesh's offshore block bidding for exploration of oil and gas. Previously, Dhaka raised objections when India and Myanmar floated an international tender for searching offshore in 2006, accusing them of overlapping Bangladesh territory but did not get any reply from India. A seven-member team led by Indian Rear Admiral B R Rao and the Bangladesh delegation led by additional foreign secretary M A K Mahmud will discuss different technical issues.

A Bangladeshi official source said Dhaka would insist on the determination of the starting point, which is crucial for registering with the UN a valid claim on common territories. It will emphasise a joint inspection for the delimitation of maritime boundary.

The Bay of Bengal has become very important, especially after India's discovery of 100 trillion cubic feet (tcf) gas in 2005-06 and Myanmar's discovery of 7 tcf gas at the same time. Besides, India also discovered two billion barrels of oil. The bay in Bangladesh's territory, which has not been tapped at all, promises huge natural resources, experts say. In 2006, sedimentary rock oolite was discovered, which promises oil and gas.

"Without a win-win negotiation, Bangladesh might not be able to tap its own resources in future while our neighbours might get to enjoy it all as they have made good progress in their demarcation jobs," The Daily Star quoted an unnamed energy expert as saying.

India and Myanmar need to finish the maritime demarcation with Bangladesh shortly as they are set to file their claims to the UN on June 29 and May 21 next year respectively.

Under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), Bangladesh also has to file its claim within July 27, 2011. Bangladesh is yet to make any progress in preparing its papers with proper boundary survey due to lack of experience, skilled manpower and equipment. The government is planning to take help from the US, Britain and Australia, sources in the foreign ministry said.

In 2004, the foreign ministry formed a committee with members from Petrobangla, Geological Survey of Bangladesh, the Navy, Spaarso, Inland Water Transport Authority and Surveyor of Bangladesh. The purpose of this committee was to recommend how to mark the deep-sea territory fulfilling requirements of the UN and as per the law of the sea. However, the committee became dysfunctional within a year.

International law allows each country to have 200 nautical miles from its coast to the sea to enjoy rights. However, this is a tricky matter as the coasts of India and Bangladesh and Myanmar follow a curve, which implies overlapping of territory. As per international practices, in such a case, the neighbours should inform each other and reach a mutual understanding before exploring such areas.

Earlier, Bangladesh foreign ministry officials held two rounds of talks in April and September with Myanmar and the discussions yielded "good results" regarding common usage of the Naf river and estuary, official sources said. But progress in resolving the sea boundary is still far to go as Myanmar is asking for eco-distance system in the East to West boundary, while Bangladesh is asking to demarcate in equity basis North to South.

Another round of talks may take place with Myanmar next November. Oil and gas exploration in the Bay of Bengal is a very recent phenomenon. Both India and Myanmar discovered gas in the bay between 2005 and 2007. India has held off-shore block bids and has many oil companies working in the Bay. In Bangladesh on May 7, seven oil and gas companies submitted their bids in 15 offshore blocks out of 28. The response was lukewarm.

### [Nepal's Maoist PM says needs China, but India crucial](#)

*Reuters* – 15 September

Nepal wants to develop relations with neighbouring China, but its "age-old" ties with India remain crucial, the Nepali Maoist prime minister said on Monday. India appeared miffed after Prime Minister Prachanda travelled to China last month for the Olympics closing ceremony, departing from a tradition which has seen incoming Nepali leaders make New Delhi their first foreign port of call.

The move was seen in New Delhi as an attempt by the Maoist-led government to embrace communist China at the expense of its long-standing friendship with India. The Maoists won a historic election and came to power following a landmark peace deal signed in 2006 with the government to abolish the country's 239-year-old monarchy and declare Nepal a republic.

On his first visit to India as prime minister, Prachanda said he wanted to reaffirm Nepal's commitment to "age-old ties" and the need to forge a stronger relationship with India. "I think that due to our historical, cultural and geographical relations, due to our whole tradition of inter- dependence, the relation with India is crucial and vital," Prachanda said in New Delhi. "Although we also want to develop a relation with China, but it cannot be compared right now, no questions of comparison."

Addressing an India-Nepal business meeting in the capital, Prachanda said Nepal was ready to invite investments from India, particularly in the hydro-power sector. "We would like to start afresh ... big projects should be undertaken, not petty projects in the hydropower sector," Prachanda said.

Kathmandu is unhappy that a trade deficit with India rose to \$1.1 billion in the financial year up to mid-July 2007 from \$977 million in the same period last year. Bilateral trade now exceeds \$2.3 billion, but Nepal says business opportunities are there to be explored in the Himalayan nation. "India should help us realise the dream of being together and growing together ... I call upon the private sectors in both countries to work together and chart our mutually beneficial areas."

### [Defence Minister says Indonesia not part of Asian arms race](#)

*Channel News Asia* – 18 September

Indonesia will not join an Asian arms race, the defence minister said Thursday, after Australia announced it planned to build up its military in response to a regional weapons buying spree. Indonesia will avoid any major boost to military spending over the next five to 10 years as it focuses on the economy and social spending, Juwono Sudarsono said at a press conference with his Australian counterpart Joel Fitzgibbon.

Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd last week flagged a rise in defence spending to respond to military expansion by newly affluent Asian states but did not give a figure for the increase.

Indonesia plans to buy a small number of high-tech jets and submarines to reach "technological parity" with its neighbours but will continue to focus on relief operations for disasters that regularly hit the archipelago nation. "The bulk of our defence (spending) is on transport because we need transport to provide relief efforts in terms of both man-made as well as natural disasters," Sudarsono said. "We don't feel that we are engaged in an arms race, certainly not on strike force capabilities."

The defence minister said Indonesia had broken off negotiations with Russia to buy submarines because of excessive maintenance costs. Indonesia is now looking at offers from Germany and South Korea for two new submarines to double its underwater fleet, but the number is far below the eight the country would want to fully guard its busy straits, Sudarsono said. Indonesia is going ahead with the purchase of three Sukhoi fighter jets from Russia and has secured weapons for all four Sukhois already in operation, he said.

Speaking to reporters last week, Rudd said Australia was "in a region where there is an explosion in defence expenditure." "There has been an arms race under way -- well, an arms build-up, let me put it in those terms -- in the Asia-Pacific region for the better part of the last decade," he said.

Indonesia and Australia enjoy a close military relationship but ties are periodically strained by mutual distrust and Indonesian suspicion of Australian support for separatist movements in far-flung provinces.

### [Taiwan's 16th attempt to join UN rejected](#)

*Channel News Asia* – 18 September

The United Nations has rejected Taiwan's bid to join the global body, blocking the island's 16th such attempt, officials said Thursday. Taiwan this month launched a bid to join the 16 UN Specialised Agencies rather than seeking full membership to the global body. The move was seen as an olive branch to Beijing, which views Taiwan as part of its territory.

However, the UN General Committee on Wednesday decided not to put Taiwan's proposal on the agenda of the UN plenary session. "We regret it took the decision," Taiwan's foreign ministry spokesman Henry Chen told AFP. "There is no chance of getting the proposal to clear the UN floor this year."

Taiwan lost its UN seat to China in 1971. Beijing opposes the island's efforts to join the body, seeing it as tantamount to seeking independence. While saying "China's objection is expected," Chen called for "the right of the 23 million people in Taiwan to join international organisations" and urged Beijing to be flexible and help resolve the issue.

Tensions across the Taiwan Strait have eased since President Ma Ying-jeou was elected in March on a platform to boost the economy and improve ties with China. Taiwan and China split in 1949 after a civil war. Only 23 nations formally recognise Taiwan rather than China. Both sides are accused of using generous financial packages to woo allies away from each other.

### [Finally, China ready to talk border with India](#)

*Times of India* – 18 September

China has indicated that it is keen to go ahead with border negotiations instead of being diverted by the bitterness over Beijing's role at the National Suppliers Group. National Security Advisor M K Narayanan was received by Chinese Vice-President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People on Thursday afternoon suggesting China's seriousness about boundary talks.

The thread of the border talks, which last took place at the 11th round in September last year, was picked up again by Narayanan and the Chinese special representative, Dai

Bingguo, who has since been elevated to the position fairly powerful position of State Councillor. "I have extremely happy you have continued to associate with me," Narayanan said in his opening remarks while obviously referring to Dai's recent promotion. Dai was the vice foreign minister during the meeting last year.

There were signs that new developments that have taken place since the last year's meeting will have an impact on the course of the two-day talks. Incursions by Chinese troops into the Indian border, attempts by Beijing to raise the Sikkim issue and the bitterness over China's role at the NSG are some of the new problems that have come up over the past one year.

"Both should maintain peace and tranquillity in the border area before the boundary issue is resolved," Xi, the Chinese vice president said while receiving Narayanan. He also expressed over growing friendship between the two countries and referred to the recent visit of Sonia Gandhi, president of the Indian National Congress, to attend the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games.

Xi expressed the hope that the two sides will work out a fair and reasonable framework to settle the boundary at an early date. An acceptable framework will be worked out through mutual consultation and friendly dialogue, he said. China was committed to developing the strategic and cooperative partnership with India, he said. Narayanan said the Indian government was keen to settle the boundary issue at an early date though a process of consensus between leaders of the two countries.

India and China share about 2,000 km of border. The two countries began discussing the boundary dispute in 1980 and have since signed two agreements in 1993 and 1996 for maintaining peace and stability in the border areas. The mechanism of special representatives was created in 2003 and there have been 11 rounds of talks since then.

The mechanism got a boost during Chinese premier Wen Jiabao's visit to India in 2005 when the two countries signed an agreement of political guideline on demarcation of the border. The 11 rounds of talks on the issue has helped create mutual trust and benefited both sides, Xi said.

## **DEFENCE ACQUISITION AND TECHNOLOGY**

### [China's military ambition fuels Asian arms race](#)

*Telegraph* – 13 September

Beijing deploys the world's biggest army, its defence spending is rising faster than any other power and, to cap it all, its forces will this month carry out their first spacewalk. With India, Japan and Russia also investing heavily in defence, a new Asian arms race is under way. According to official figures, Beijing's military budget this year is 418 billion yuan - £35 billion - a rise of 17.8 per cent on 2007. This already exceeds Britain's defence budget of £34 billion and places China's military spending second only to the US.

According to figures from Jane's, the military specialists, it has risen by 178 per cent in the past seven years, even after adjusting for inflation. At this rate, China will spend £180 billion - half of the Pentagon's current budget and five times Britain's - by 2020. But the greatest change is not in how much China is spending, but where the investment is going. Under Chairman Mao, China regarded the army as a massed revolutionary block whose sheer scale would simply absorb any threat, foreign or domestic.

Only since the first Gulf War in 1991 has China started focusing on the new generation of military hardware it may face in the event of war. Beijing's military planners know they cannot rely on China's size alone as a deterrent.

The result has been a three-pronged strategy. China is upgrading technology while downsizing the army. The first prong is to increase the number of short- and medium-range missiles it has aimed at Taiwan, the future of which is China's number one military priority.

The second is to build a navy capable of projecting power into the Pacific and beyond, both to deter US intervention on Taiwan's side and to guard vital shipping lanes in the Indian Ocean. But this will not be a classic "blue water" navy with a global reach - China still has no aircraft carriers.

The third prong is the outermost line of defence: a space and anti-satellite programme that may one day be strong enough to threaten US weapons and guidance systems. This is asymmetric warfare at its most dramatic.

China's submarine building programme is at last starting to show success after years in which it relied on Russian imports. Beijing is presently building two submarines capable of launching nuclear missiles and another boat designed for attack missions. Once these reach completion, China's navy will have five ballistic missile submarines - compared with Britain's four - and seven other nuclear submarines. Projecting power across thousands of miles of ocean is the only purpose for a fleet of this kind.

This helps explain why India is building a nuclear submarine of its own and leasing another from Russia. India's navy presently enjoys a slender advantage over China in that it possesses one aircraft carrier and is acquiring another two. In practice, however, China's superior submarine fleet probably negates this gain.

In the past, China's alliance with Pakistan worried India most. There are historical tensions too - China and India fought a bloody border war in 1962 over disputed territory in the Himalayas. But of greatest importance is a long-term rivalry for pre-eminence in Asia between the world's most populous nation and its biggest democracy.

On the other hand, some observers say both countries are too busy with other threats to be too concerned with each other. A study by *Jane's Industrial Quarterly* concluded that that helping their industrial base was a major reason for the military build-up by both

India and China. Their shared aim is to replace Russian military imports and boost their own exports, while gaining knock-on benefits for civilian industry.

To the extent there is an armed race between the two powers, it may be a means of giving weight to their rising international status. "There is a feeling that China needs to have a modern military to be able to have a seat at the top table internationally," said Matthew Smith, a Jane's military economist. "Both India and China require a huge amount of military modernisation just to bring them up to present-day standards. They are building from a very low base."

### [Taiwan's plan to buy fighters still not accepted by U.S.](#)

*Central News Agency* – 15 September

The government's request to purchase F16C/D jet fighters from the United States has still not been accepted by Washington, a ranking official in the Presidential Office said Monday after receiving an update on Washington's position.

The F16 C/D fighters are among a package of weapons systems Taiwan would like to purchase from the United States, but Taipei has yet to have its request to buy the fighters accepted by Washington, said the official, who asked not be named. "All other seven types of arms procurements are in the pipeline, but the F16 C/D requests have yet to be sent," he said.

The Ministry of National Defense has made considerable efforts to send its price & availability requests to Washington, but they have been repeatedly rebuffed, he said. The official said the U.S. has yet to clearly explain its reasons for denying the request up to now, and he hoped the difficulties in procuring the fighters would not affect the approval process for the other weapons systems.

The seven systems in the package pending in Washington are Apache helicopters, anti-tank missiles, Patriot PAC-3 anti-missile batteries, a feasibility study of diesel-powered submarines, P3C anti-submarine aircraft, sea-launched Harpoon missiles and Black Eagle helicopters.

The official said that Taiwan has completed the process of sending the required letters of offer and acceptance on the seven items, and it was now left for the United States to approve the purchase. He expressed the hope that the U.S. executive branch would notify Congress of its approval of the arms procurement package before Congress goes into recess this fall.

### [101 tanks never fired in anger, one owner](#)

*The Australian* – 16 September

The army is offering its 1960s vintage Leopard 1 tanks for sale to a foreign buyer and is negotiating with several unnamed countries, a Defence Department spokeswoman said yesterday. The once formidable German-built Leopards are now surplus to requirements.

Much of the ADF's inventory is being upgraded or replaced under a \$20 billion-a-year defence acquisition program.

The tanks never saw action, although a squadron was loaded in preparation for deployment to East Timor in 1999 but then unloaded because in the words of one senior armoured corps officer: "It might have sent the wrong message to the Indonesians."

The Howard government bought the army 59 refurbished M1A1 Abrams from the US as it was concerned the Leopards had passed their use-by date and were vulnerable to the latest anti-armour missiles. For \$60 million and weighing in at close to 70 tonnes each, the ADF got a much heavier and more capable tank -- powered by a 1500 horsepower jet engine -- but fewer of them, continuing a trend of diminishing armoured support for the army. Due to its size and weight the Abrams was only recently able to be carted on railway rolling stock.

The 42 tonne Leopards, worth \$600,000 each in their day, entered service in 1977 as a replacement for the British-made Centurion. A fuel miser compared with the Abrams, the Leopard was powered by a 37.4 litre V-10 MTU diesel engine and armed with a 105mm cannon. The tanks were verging on obsolescence in Germany when they were acquired by the ADF.

The pensioned-off Leopards are now under canvas in a field at the army's Bandiana storage facility in Victoria awaiting a foreign military buyer. "The Leopard fleet consists of around 100 vehicles. Discussions are continuing with a number of potential buyers," the Defence spokeswoman said. "Scrapping is generally the least favoured option such that it is unlikely that the Leopard tanks or Iroquois helicopters will need to be disposed in this way."

Old they may be but the Leopards retain a lethal bite and strict conditions will apply to their sale. Rogue states such as North Korea need not apply. About two dozen well-used Iroquois choppers -- Bell UH-1H Hueys of Vietnam-era fame are also up for sale. Other defence equipment recently sold or disposed of includes the navy's Fremantle-class patrol boats, the last of which was unloaded in May. In service from 1977 and briefly enjoying a starring role in ABC's Patrol Boat series, the hard-working Fremantles were scrapped except for two of the 15, which were donated as civic gifts and are now permanently dry-docked.

### [Armed Forces Ready For Modernisation Of Military](#)

*Bernama* – 15 September

The Malaysian Armed Forces (ATM), which celebrates its 75th anniversary Tuesday, is ready to enter a dimension of modernisation with professionalism. ATM chief General Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Zainal said the modernisation of the armed forces was in line with its development capability plan as stated by the dimension development plan.

He said that among the modernisation programmes were the acquisition of Agusta A-

109H helicopters for the army, submarines and the Sukhoi SU 30 MKM fighter aircraft. "It is a first step by ATM to bring about change, in line with our objective. In a modern, challenging and dangerous environment, ATM is committed to ensuring that its personnel are exposed to the latest military and technology systems," he told reporters in a special interview here recently, in conjunction with the anniversary celebrations.

ATM's tactical or operational aspects would also be upgraded through the acquisition of weapons and strategic technological assets to arm the three ATM branches - Army, Navy and Air Force. Abdul Aziz said equipments and weapons for the army would be integrated with combat and armoured vehicles, artillery and communications equipment. As for the navy and air force, the weapons would focus more on early warning assets, data link, reconnaissance, combat and communications to face a multi-domain war. "The equipments being acquired by ATM include the SUKHOI 30 MKM fighter aircraft, replacements for the Nuri helicopters, Scorpene submarines and multi-role ships.

"ATM is also upgrading its information technology capability, in line with the long-term development capability characterised by Real Time Information Technology." He said in line with modernisation and future threats, ATM would be developing a Future Soldier System (FSS) programme for its personnel. Abdul Aziz however, said the FSS development programme needed a thorough, systematic and continuous study. "FSS involves the future warfare concept, current technological development, doctrine and sub-systems. The FSS philosophy will focus on tangible and intangible development, professionalism and knowledge level of ATM personnel.

"ATM personnel who command this aspect can conduct their duties in a "network centric" environment, the catalyst for modern conflicts," he said. He said the acquisition of equipments and weapons was aimed at creating a versatile armed forces capable of meeting any possibility, adding that ATM was always committed to safeguarding national security to instill confidence in the people.

"I am hopeful that the development of ATM can be coordinated with national development. ATM can be a role model as an organisation that gives priority to high professionalism." The 75th anniversary motto, 'Our Commitment, Your Confidence' is ATM's sacrifice for the country. We will protect the country's security and sovereignty with all professionalism," he said.

Abdul Aziz said, to ensure stability and national security, ATM cooperated with security agencies like National Security Council, Police (PDRM), Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency, Immigration and Customs. Cooperation with the police involved annual operation and training, and its report was tabled at the annual ATM/PDRM Operation and Training Coordination Committee.

ATM also has military cooperation and training with foreign countries, via operations, training and military exercises. "Bilateral training with foreign countries were Keris Strike Exercise (Malaysian Army and United States Pacific Command), Cope Taufan (RMAF

and USAAF), Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) and Kekar Malindo Exercise," said Abdul Aziz.

### [Russia may give more missiles to Iran](#)

*Times of India* – 18 September

Russia is negotiating the delivery of more air defence systems to Iran despite Western demands for a halt in sales to Tehran over its refusal to stop uranium enrichment. "Contacts between the two countries (on delivery of air defence systems) are continuing and we do not see any reason to suspend them," Russian arms exporter Rosoboronexport chief Anatoly Isaikin told reporters Thursday at the Africa Aerospace and Defence-2008 (AAD-2008) exhibition near Cape Town in South Africa.

Isaikin said deliveries of Russian anti-aircraft weaponry to Iran were aimed exclusively at increasing its air defence capability and were not subject to international restrictions. Iran recently took delivery of 29 Russian-made Tor-M1 air defence missile systems under a \$700-million contract signed in late 2005. Russia has also trained Iranian Tor-M1 specialists, including radar operators and crew commanders.

The US and Israel, which say they have kept open the military option against Iran, were alarmed by media reports, which started circulating as early as 2005, on the possible delivery of the state-of-the-art S-300 surface-to-air missiles to Iran. The advance version of the S-300 missile system, called S-300PMU1 (SA-20 Gargoyle), has a range of over 150 km and can intercept ballistic missiles and aircraft at low and high altitudes.

The Islamic republic has conducted several high-profile war games this year, including a three-day of air force and missile defence exercises to conclude Thursday, while promising swift retaliation in the event of any act of aggression against the country.

Iran is currently under three sets of relatively mild UN Security Council sanctions for refusing demands to halt uranium enrichment, which it says it needs purely for electricity generation despite Western accusations that the programme is geared toward weapon production.

### [Russia successfully test launches Bulava missile from submarine](#)

*RIA Novosti* – 15 September

The Russian Navy on Thursday successfully tested a Bulava sea-launched ballistic missile, which hit targets on testing grounds in Kamchatka in Russia's Far East, a spokesman for the Defense Ministry said.

The Bulava, designed by the Moscow Institute of Thermal Technology, is carried by Borey-class Project 955 nuclear-powered submarines. Fourth-generation Borey-class nuclear-powered submarines armed with Bulava missiles will form the core of Russia's fleet of modern strategic submarines.

The first submarine in the series, the Yury Dolgoruky, was built at the Sevmash plant in the northern Arkhangelsk Region and will soon join the Russian Navy. It will be equipped with 16 Bulava (SS-NX-30) ballistic missiles, each carrying up to 10 nuclear warheads and having a range of 8,000 kilometers (5,000 miles). Two other Borey-class nuclear submarines, the Alexander Nevsky and the Vladimir Monomakh, are currently under construction at the Sevmash plant.

### [What's driving China space efforts?](#)

*BBC* – 25 September

The launch of Shenzhou-VII by China is another reminder of the country's growing confidence and capability in space. It delivers a message to the traditional space powers: after a slow start, China is rising fast.

This mission is a critical step in a "three-step" human spaceflight programme aimed at docking spacecraft together to form a small orbiting laboratory and, ultimately, building a large space station. It has sent a robotic spacecraft, Chang'e, to the Moon and there are plans to land a robotic rover on the lunar surface in 2010. Last year, China faced international criticism when it used a medium-range ballistic missile to destroy an ageing weather satellite in a weapons test. But what are the forces driving Beijing's space endeavours?

Economic reasons are first and foremost, explains Dean Cheng, senior Asia analyst at think tank CNA in Washington DC. "From a civilian perspective, you are fostering the development of advanced technologies," he explains. Another driver is diplomacy, said Mr Cheng. A wide-ranging space programme showed the rest of the world that China had arrived on the international stage. "That fits with hosting the Olympics, that fits with a burgeoning economy, and that fits with the world's largest foreign capital reserves," he explained.

There is also a domestic motivation: success in space helped legitimise China's regime in the eyes of its population. "There are problems like melamine in milk. There are issues of corruption. But the party has shown it is able to achieve things that no previous Chinese government has ever done, and that China is among the first-rank powers in advanced technology," Mr Cheng told BBC News.

Then there is the military rationale: a nation that could launch multiple satellites on one rocket could put multiple warheads on a single rocket. Space technology also required the development of precision capabilities which carried over to weapons systems. Beijing's manned efforts should be considered separately from the rest of its space programme, Mr Cheng said.

"The manned programme is all the things I have mentioned and more. It is a sign of a wealthy country - this is a luxury item. It puts China ahead of every other Asian country - significantly - in terms of space," he explained. Human spaceflight also served as advertising for the country's commercial launch capability. If China was sufficiently

confident in its own space technology to launch its citizens into space, then it was certainly safe enough to launch another country's satellites.

"It is a prestige programme, no question," said Dr Roger Launius, senior curator in the division of space history at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington DC. "I think China has entered the [manned spaceflight] arena for the same reasons that the United States and the Soviet Union did in 1961. "It is a demonstration of technological virtuosity. It's a method of showing the world they are second to none - which is a very important objective for them."

China's steady, methodical progress in space has certainly highlighted the challenges faced by Nasa as it grapples with the transition to a post-shuttle era. The space shuttle is due to be retired in two years. But its replacement, Ares-Orion, will not begin flying until 2015. In the interim, the US will be reliant on Russia for launching crew to the International Space Station. But tensions between the two nations over the Georgia conflict mean that Nasa has faced considerable political pressure to keep the shuttle flying beyond 2010. And, unlike China, the European Space Agency has not developed a manned space transportation system of its own.

However, suggestions that China has engaged in a new space race with the US or the other traditional space powers are wide of the mark, experts say. "This is not the 1960s. We are not watching China put up repeated manned shots one after the other. But they are intent on ensuring they don't have any spectacular failures either" said Dean Cheng. Dr Launius agreed: "There is not the same level of concern or interest registered in the US for a competition with China in space. I don't think they view that as an issue in Europe either."

He added: "There is a space race underway, but it is an Asian space race. It is between China, Japan, maybe Korea, certainly India. They are competing with each other for stature in that context. "And the Chinese, because of their full service capability - humans, robots and military - are at this point in time probably the leaders in that race. But those other countries have lots of capability too."

Though China may only be the third country to launch a human into orbit, it still has a long way to go if it plans to mirror the achievements of the US and Russia. "When you look at the programme as an observer from the outside, they've shown success in building spacecraft that can fly humans and do certain things," said Roger Launius. "You can't build space stations until you can do those kinds of activities. You can't go to the Moon until you can do those kinds of activities. And they're not there yet. "They're planning an EVA (spacewalk) this time and I hope they are successful. But one EVA does not make a programme."

## NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY

### [China's cabinet orders inspections, reform of dairy industry](#)

*Xinhua* – 17 September

An executive meeting of the State Council (cabinet), presided over by Premier Wen Jiabao, on Wednesday decided to launch national comprehensive tests of dairy products and reform the dairy industry.

According to the meeting, the incident involving the tainted Sanlu milk powder reflected chaotic industry conditions, as well as loopholes in the supervision and management of the industry. It is necessary to learn lessons, properly deal with the incident, improve the inspection and supervision system and strengthen the management of the dairy industry, the meeting said.

The meeting also reached six other decisions and ordered governments at all levels to implement them. These decisions include:

- providing the best and free medical care to those sickened by melamine-contaminated milk powder,
- confiscating and destroying all sub-standard products,
- strictly supervising the production of dairy companies with on-site inspectors,
- revising regulations on the supervision and management of the industry,
- subsidizing dairy farmers and encouraging more production by those enterprises with higher-quality products and,
- finding the cause of the incident and punishing those responsible.

The Sanlu Group, a leading Chinese dairy producer based in the northern Hebei Province, admitted last week that it had found some of its baby milk powder products were contaminated with melamine, a chemical raw material. It issued an immediate recall of milk formula made before Aug. 6.

Three infants have died so far. There are at least 6,244 infant victims of the contaminated milk powder, of whom 158, or 2.5 percent, have acute kidney failure, the Ministry of Health said on Wednesday.

### [Indonesian Navy To Tighten Security In Border Areas](#)

*Bernama* – 17 September

The Indonesian Navy will tighten security in the eastern and western sea border areas to minimise various illegal activities such as environmental pollution, smuggling, and even

manipulation of shipping documents and evasion of tax on Indonesia-Singapore and Indonesia-Thailand routes.

Quoting Navy spokesman Rear Admiral Iskandar Sitompul, Indonesian news agency, ANTARA, said here on Tuesday that the navy's task was not only protecting the country's territorial integrity but also supporting law enforcement efforts at sea. "We will also follow up cases until they are brought to court to make sure violators receive sanctions. We will not allow any violator to be let off easily," he said when inspecting foreign vessels that had been seized for illegally dumping wastes in the country's waters and exporting granite and sand to Singapore.

Although the navy is facing financial difficulties, which is affecting its procurement of equipment, armament and personnel, it will continue with its efforts to tighten security of the country's waters, he said. "We are indeed facing various shortcomings but it does not mean we are relaxing our efforts in ensuring the safety of national waters. We will tighten security in the eastern as well as western borders," he said.

Several cases of environmental pollution have been recorded in the western Indonesian waters this year. On April 7, black oil waste was discovered being dumped in Sambu island, and on June 27 the same waste had also been dumped in the Tanjung Riau waters in Batam, and the latest on July 24, a patrol unit from the Batam naval base seized Bright Star and MT Hafai boats carrying two tonnes of black oil waste.

The two boats were operated by PT Golden Star Marine owned by a Singaporean, who lived in Samulun island, Singapore. The company is known to have 16 tankers that have a capacity between 100 to 4,000 tonnes. The two boats are now held at the navy base in Batam and are being processed, he said.

The navy earlier also foiled attempts to illegally export 5,540 tonnes of granite and sand to Singapore by four boats belonging to a shipping company in Singapore. The boats were seized on Saturday night and Sunday morning, the chief of the Batam naval base, Col Faisal said on Monday. If the smuggling operations had been successful, Indonesia would have lost Rp35 billion (about RM12.8 million), he said.

Faisal said following the seizure of several tug boats operating in Indonesian waters to Singapore and Thailand so far it was discovered that some operators had manipulated documents. As an example he referred to the case of TBB Sea Shore 7 that was seized on Sunday. He said the boat carried a mining license under the name of PTB Wira Penta Kencana but in its manifest the license was given to PTB Aneka Mining Sukses without the knowledge of the government of the region where the granite came from.

"In other words, the transfer of license is non-existent," he said. He said several exporters often did not have tax documents. "It seemed they have ignored them. They would only pay the tax if they were discovered. Meanwhile they could conduct three to four trips every month. Imagine the loss the state could suffer," he said.

From January to September 3 this year, the ministry of fishery and marine resources have seized 186 foreign boats poaching fish in the country's waters. The number is up from 181 last year.

### [Russia sends naval vessels to Somali waters](#)

*Lloyd's List* – 23 September

RUSSIA is to dispatch naval vessels to tackle the Somali piracy problem, in a surprise development that may create as many headaches as it solves for merchant shipping. The move comes after last week's statement from a wide range of maritime organisations, demanding that the United Nations take "real and immediate action" on the issue, including implication by greater use of force. But the tacit assumption behind the call was that the US-led coalition that already deploys a naval task force in the region - albeit ineffectively in the eyes of many - would take the lead in such a policy.

While it will be difficult formally to condemn the Russian initiative - which draws its legitimacy from a resolution passed at the United Nations Security Council earlier this year, partially at the instigation of the International Maritime Organization - industry sources nevertheless were cautious in their evaluation of the possible consequences.

The main concern in shipping circles seems to be that Russia has expressly stated that it will act independently, rather than co-ordinate anti-piracy efforts with the coalition.

Roger Holt - secretary general of statement signatory Intercargo - commented: "Obviously the additional resources are welcome at face value, but co-operation has to be co-ordinated through the UN. That is the only way an effective response can take place."

A representative of the International Maritime Bureau, the anti-piracy watchdog, added: "If it's going to help in the effort to curb piracy, then it's most certainly welcome. At the same time, it should not jeopardise the efforts of others. The navies should know that each other is going to help out."

News of the new line from the Kremlin was carried by RIA Novosti yesterday. According to the state-owned news agency, Russian admiral Vladimir Vysotsky said: "We are planning to participate in international efforts to fight piracy off the Somalia coast, but Russian warships will conduct operations on their own."

Officially, the reason for the decision is that Russian nationals are frequently among the crews of civilian ships hijacked by Somali pirates. But the real motives appear rather more political than that. Experts point out that, the USSR had extensive involvement in the Horn of Africa, once sponsoring Somalia as a client state before switching to support the nominally Marxist Ethiopia in the Ethiopia-Somalia war of 1977-78.

But even before the collapse of the Soviet Union, Moscow was too weak to maintain that kind of reach, according to Yuri Fedorov, a specialist on Russian military matters with

the Chatham House think tank. With a transition to more assertive nationalism over the last period, culminating in the recent conflict in Georgia, Moscow may now be sending warships to the region to make a point, he believes.

Professor Fedorov noted: "Explanation number one is that Russia would like to demonstrate that it has enough political, financial and military resources to allow it to pursue an active policy all over the world, and in areas close to the Middle East in particular. "The second explanation is that Russia would like to demonstrate that it is not only an aggressor but also participates in fighting against piracy and other international problems."

He ruled out co-ordination with the principle western states in the wake of the fighting in the Caucasus and the current strained relationship between Russia and NATO. Prof Fedorov believes that Russia is prepared to use fire power against pirates, but only as a last resort, and its naval assets will concentrate on a protective role.

### [Military can't guarantee safety off Somalia: US Navy](#)

*Reuters* – 15 September

The U.S. Navy said on Monday allied warships were doing all they could to thwart piracy in the strategic Gulf of Aden, but shipping companies should take their own measures to protect their vessels and crews. The warning came as it emerged Somali pirates had hijacked another vessel off the Horn of Africa on Sunday, bringing the total seized so far this year to more than 30.

The U.S. Navy said the international naval force CTF-150 had stopped more than 12 attacks since May. CTF-150 comprises of warships from nations including Britain, France, Canada, Germany, Pakistan and the United States.

"The coalition does not have the resources to provide 24-hour protection for the vast number of merchant vessels in the region," said Combined Maritime Forces commander, U.S. vice admiral Bill Gortney. "The shipping companies must take measures to defend their vessels and their crews," he said in a statement, urging merchant ships to employ their own security teams.

Last week global shipping groups clubbed together to call for naval powers to do more to protect the corridor. The seeline in the Arabian Sea between Yemen and Somalia links Asia to Europe via the Suez Canal and is critical to Gulf oil shipments.

Gortney said multinational naval patrols in support of the U.N. International Maritime Organization's (IMO) call in August for assistance to fight piracy was only part of the solution. "Coalition maritime efforts will give the IMO time to work international efforts that will ultimately lead to a long-term solution," he said. "This is a problem that starts ashore and requires an international solution. We made this clear at the outset -- our efforts cannot guarantee safety in the region."

[China removes 7,000 tonnes of tainted milk](#)

*Xinhua* – 23 September

A total of 7,074 tonnes of tainted dairy products have been removed from retail outlets across China, State Administration for Industry and Commerce (SAIC) said here on Tuesday. They included 4,246.7 tonnes of milk powder and 1,562.1 tonnes of liquid milk contaminated with melamine, SAIC statistics showed.

Up to Tuesday, 2.18 million inspectors from industry and commerce departments across China visited 6 million dairy firms. The country has received 310,000 complaints of tainted milk products and replaced 614.5 tonnes of milk for customers. So far, almost 13,000 infants nationwide have been hospitalized with kidney problems as a result of drinking milk contaminated with melamine. The chemical, which was added illegally, makes the protein content of milk appear higher than it actually.

Sanlu Group, one of the four former famous dairy producers in China, began receiving complaints about sick infants as far back as December 2007, but did not make it known to the public till this month. The other three milk powder manufacturers, namely Mengniu, Yili and Guangming, were also exposed as involved in the scandal.

Two high ranking officials, including China's top quality control official Li Changjiang and Wu Xianguo, the Communist Party chief of Shijiazhuang City where the headquarter of Sanlu was based, stepped down on Monday for their poor performance in handling milk contamination cases.

## **MILITARY / PEACEKEEPING / HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS**

[Russian strategic bombers patrol Caribbean](#)

*RIA Novosti* – 15 September

Two Russian Tu-160 Blackjack strategic bombers that landed in Venezuela last week will carry out a patrol mission over the Caribbean on Monday, a Russian Air Force spokesman said. The bombers landed at Venezuela's Libertador airfield on September 10 and were accompanied by NATO fighters during the 13-hour flight from their home base in central Russia.

"The current patrol mission will be conducted over neutral waters in the Caribbean," Lt. Col. Vladimir Drik said. "The aircraft will take off from Libertador airbase and spend about six hours in the air."

The Tu-160 Blackjack is a supersonic, variable-geometry heavy bomber, designed to strike strategic targets with nuclear and conventional weapons deep in continental theaters of operation.

According to the spokesman, the bombers are carrying dummy missiles without warheads and will practice patrol sorties in a tropical climate. Following the training mission, the Tu-160 crews will meet with Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez on Tuesday.

"The meeting will take place on September 16 at the invitation of the Venezuelan president," Drik said. The spokesman added that the bombers will return to their home base in southern Russia on September 19.

"The aircraft will take off from an airfield near Caracas on September 18 and conduct a 15-hour return flight to Russia. Their landing at a base in Engels [Saratov Region] is scheduled for September 19," Drik said. Earlier reports indicated that the bombers had been scheduled to return home on September 15.

[ANALYSIS / Sea borders prove porous / Intrusion of unidentified sub exposes holes in surveillance](#)

*Yomiuri Shimbun* – 17 September

The incursion of an unidentified submarine into Japan's territorial waters Sunday exposed the vulnerability of the nation's territorial surveillance system. The submarine temporarily entered Japan's territorial waters southwest of Kochi Prefecture at about 7 a.m. Sunday, according to the Defense Ministry.

When a Chinese nuclear submarine entered the country's territorial waters off the Sakishima Islands in Okinawa Prefecture four years ago and navigated underwater in the area for three hours, the Maritime Self-Defense Force had been tracking the vessel for several days before it entered Japanese waters utilizing information acquired by spy satellites of U.S. forces and other sources.

This time, however, the unidentified submarine entered Japanese territorial waters close to Honshu. An MSDF destroyer spotted the submarine, which was sailing submerged, but lost sight of it apparently after the submarine carried out tactical maneuvers to elude pursuit by sonar. Although the Aegis-equipped destroyer Atago is equipped with a high-performance, low-frequency sonar, sound waves transmitted by sonars tend to be reflected by the thermocline--the layer separating warmer surface water from cold deep water. It is believed that the submarine managed to hide in thermoclines as it was familiar with the locations of such spots.

China's marine research vessels are particularly active in information-gathering activities. Since the late 1990s, China has been conducting research on sea temperatures and the topography of seabeds, mobilizing marine research ships in areas around Japan including the East China Sea, the Sea of Japan, the Tsugaru Strait and the Izu Islands. Given that, it would not be a surprise if the unidentified vessel turns out to have been a Chinese submarine.

The ability of the MSDF destroyers to detect vessels is certainly inferior to that of P3C patrol aircraft, which track submarines by dropping sonar buoys, known as sonobuoys,

into the sea. Nevertheless, as a senior MSDF officer put it, MSDF vessels are supposed to shadow suspicious vessels until the task is taken over by patrol aircraft. Given the fact that the unidentified submarine managed to reach as close as the sea off Shikoku, it is clear that the MSDF must improve its antisubmarine capabilities.

This time, the defense minister did not issue an order for the SDF to conduct security patrols, although the Maritime Policing Act is supposed to be invoked to allow such patrols whenever a submarine is found to be cruising submerged within Japanese territorial waters. Explaining why it decided not to issue the order, the Defense Ministry cited the following reasons:

- The submarine was in Japanese territorial waters only for a short time.
- The MSDF lost sight of the vessel soon after it left Japanese territorial waters.

The government need not hesitate to invoke the Maritime Policing Act, a provision of the Self-Defense Forces Law. It should be noted, however, that even if the patrol order is issued, all the MSDF can do is to ask the submarine in question to surface and leave Japanese waters. This is because SDF activities in peacetime are based on the Police Duties Execution Law.

The Swedish Navy used to chase off Russian submarines by dropping depth charges on them. Unless Japan is able to issue forcible warnings to trespassing vessels, as other countries do, it will be impossible to prevent foreign submarines from intruding into Japanese territorial waters.

### [Russian strategic bombers to join military drills with Belarus](#)

*RIA Novosti* – 22 September

Russian strategic bombers will conduct practice launches of various types of missiles on October 6-12 during large-scale Russia-Belarus military exercises which started Monday, the Air Force commander said.

The Stability-2008 exercises will last until October 21 in various regions of Russia and Belarus with the goal of practicing strategic deployment of the Armed Forces, including the nuclear triad, to counter potential threats near the Russian border. "The exercise will involve the majority of personnel and strategic aircraft in service with strategic aviation," Col. Gen. Alexander Zelin said. "The crews will deploy the entire range of on-board weaponry."

According to various sources, the Russian Air Force currently has in service at least 141 Tu-22M3 Backfire-C, 40 Tu-95 Bear-H and 16 modernized Tu-160 Blackjack strategic bombers. The bombers carry long-range cruise missiles and short-range nuclear missiles as primary weaponry.

Moscow has repeatedly stressed the need to continue the development of Russia's Strategic Nuclear Forces, including its airborne component, and said they should be able

to respond promptly and effectively to any aggression. The Russian Air Force combat training program has scheduled more than 200 exercises with 350 live firing drills for the second half of 2008.

### [Russian navy ships head to maneuvers in Venezuela](#)

*AP* – 23 September

A Russian navy squadron set off for Venezuela Monday, an official said, in a deployment of Russian military power to the Western Hemisphere unprecedented since the Cold War. The Kremlin recently has moved to intensify contacts with Venezuela, Cuba and other Latin American nations amid increasingly strained relations with Washington after last month's war between Russia and Georgia. During the Cold War, Latin America became an ideological battleground between the Soviet Union and the United States.

Russian navy spokesman Igor Dygalo said the nuclear-powered Peter the Great cruiser accompanied by three other ships sailed from the Northern Fleet's base of Severomorsk on Monday. The ships will cover about 15,000 nautical miles to conduct joint maneuvers with the Venezuelan navy, he told The Associated Press. The deployment follows a weeklong visit to Venezuela by a pair of Russian strategic bombers and comes as Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez — an unbridled critic of U.S. foreign policy who has close ties with Moscow — plans to visit Moscow this week. It will be Chavez's second trip to Russia in about two months.

The intensifying contacts with Venezuela appear to be a response to the U.S. dispatch of warships to deliver aid to Georgia which angered the Kremlin. Chavez said in an interview with Russian television broadcast Sunday that Latin America needs a strong friendship with Russia to help reduce U.S. influence and keep peace in the region. In separate comments on his Sunday TV and radio program, he joked that he will be making his international tour to Russia and other countries this week aboard the "super-bombers that Medvedev loaned me," a reference to Russian President Dmitry Medvedev. "Gentlemen of the CIA, to be clear, I'm joking," Chavez said with a laugh. Chavez has repeatedly warned that the U.S. Navy poses a threat to Venezuela.

Russia has signed weapons contracts worth more than \$4 billion with Venezuela since 2005 to supply fighter jets, helicopters, and 100,000 Kalashnikov assault rifles. Chavez's government is in talks to buy Russian submarines, air defense systems and armored vehicles and more Sukhoi fighter jets. Russian and Venezuelan leaders also have talked about boosting cooperation in the energy sphere to create what Chavez has called "a new strategic energy alliance."

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Igor Sechin, who visited Venezuela last week, announced that five of Russia's biggest oil companies are looking to form a consortium to increase Latin American operations and to build a \$6.5 billion refinery to process Venezuela's tar-like heavy crude. Such an investment could help Venezuela, the world's ninth-biggest oil producer, wean itself from the U.S. refineries on which it depends to process much of its crude. Sechin warned the United States that it should not view Latin America as its own

backyard. "It would be wrong to talk about one nation having exclusive rights to this zone," he said in an interview broadcast Sunday.

## **NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION**

### [UN nuclear agency criticises Iran](#)

*BBC* - 15 September

The International Atomic Energy Agency says it has not resolved questions about a possible military dimension to Iran's nuclear programme. In its latest report, the UN nuclear watchdog said it had failed to make meaningful progress in assessing Iran's past nuclear activities. Iran was also continuing to enrich uranium in defiance of a UN Security Council resolution, it said.

The US said Iran could face further sanctions unless it changed course. Iran says its nuclear programme is aimed solely at civilian atomic energy, but Western nations accuse Iran of seeking to develop a nuclear weapon.

In its report, the IAEA said that Iran was failing to co-operate with its investigators. In May, the UN watchdog said Tehran was withholding information about projects to develop a nuclear warhead, convert uranium and test high explosives. It called for access to key sites, documents and officials so that investigators could assess Iran's position that its nuclear work was for peaceful purposes. But, said the IAEA, no such access had been granted.

"Regrettably the agency has not been able to make any substantial progress on the alleged studies and other associated key remaining issues which remain of serious concern," the report said. Without greater transparency from Iran, the IAEA would "not be able to provide credible assurances about the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran", it added. Iran says documentation on its alleged projects has been fabricated.

The IAEA also said that Iran was continuing to install new cascades of centrifuges to enrich uranium in defiance of a UN Security Council order. Around 3,800 centrifuges were now in operation at Iran's enrichment plant in Natanz, an increase of 300 since May, the report said.

Responding to the report, the US said Iran could face more punitive measures. "The Iranian regime's continued defiance only further isolates the Iranian people," White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe said. Iran should suspend uranium enrichment or "face further implementation of the existing United Nations Security Council sanctions and the possibility of new sanctions", Reuters news agency quoted him as saying. The report will be discussed by the IAEA's board of governors next week.

[Australia MPs oppose uranium sale](#)

*BBC* – 18 September

Australia should not sell uranium to Russia, a parliamentary committee says. It said the \$800 million deal should not go ahead until Russia assuaged doubts about the separation of its civilian and military uses of uranium. The deal was signed by former Prime Minister John Howard and Russian leader Vladimir Putin last year.

The committee said assurances were needed on Russia's compliance with, and long-term commitment to, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Opposition members of parliament supported the uranium sales. They argued Australia would benefit from the trade, and said safeguards against any future military use of the uranium were adequate.

But the report presented to parliament on Thursday recommended that "further consideration is given to the potential ramifications for this agreement". The committee said any facilities taking Australian uranium should be inspected by the International Atomic Energy Agency. Russia has insisted that it would only use Australian uranium for civilian purposes, to generate power at home, and would not export it for use elsewhere.

Some reports of the committee's findings suggested that opposition to the deal was strengthened by Russia's recent incursions into Georgia. Australia's Foreign Minister Stephen Smith warned earlier this month that if Russia failed to withdraw its troops from neighbouring Georgia, Australia might withhold approval of the new agreement. Australia has 40% of the world's known uranium resources and exports the product to more than 30 countries under strict conditions.

[Pakistan close to boosting atom bomb means - report](#)

*Reuters* – 19 September

Pakistan is close to completing a second plutonium-producing reactor, is well into building a third and these could increase its ability to make atomic bombs, a U.S. think-tank said on Thursday. "The wider implication ... (is that) there is a real risk this will exacerbate an India-Pakistan nuclear arms race and increase tensions more broadly between the two," the Institute for Science and International Security said in a report. The regional arch-rivals have fought three wars, are both outside the global Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and have tested nuclear arms with Western technology imported ostensibly for peaceful atomic energy.

But a 45-nation nuclear export cartel approved a waiver to its rules this month allowing trade with India as part of a civilian nuclear cooperation pact it struck with the United States. The entire undertaking could erode the NPT, critics say.

ISIS, a well-connected Washington-based group, has been a prominent tracker of nuclear proliferation issues focusing on Iran, North Korea and Syria as well as Pakistan and India. Emailed to Reuters, the ISIS report included commercial satellite images taken two

weeks ago and in February and May showing construction of the second and third Khushab complexes.

Pakistan has an operating heavy-water reactor and heavy-water production plant already at Khushab. A row of cooling towers indicated the second reactor was close to completion and could be ready to operate in a year's time, according to the 10-page report. "Once completed, these reactors will increase several-fold Pakistan's ability to make weapons-grade plutonium (fuel)."

The report estimated the reactors would run on power of "about 100 megawatts or more", which could enable the two combined to yield plutonium for 8-10 atomic bombs a year. "When finished, the second and third Khushab reactors will allow a significant increase in the quantity and quality of Pakistan's nuclear weapons."

The report said India could easily match Pakistan's moves given its own ability to churn out plutonium in heavy water reactors and a fast-breeder reactor under construction. "Rather than witnessing a wasteful and dangerous surge in the production of fissile materials for weapons in South Asia, the United States should make a key priority convincing Pakistan to join negotiations on a universal, verified Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty," the report said.

U.N. negotiations on such a treaty, which would ban production of nuclear weapons fuel, have made no headway for years because of a lack of consensus among nuclear powers. Pakistan built its first nuclear power station in 1972 with Canadian help. But Western countries, under pressure from Washington, later severed cooperation amid suspicion that Pakistan was covertly developing nuclear weapons. Pakistan conducted five nuclear tests in 1998 in response to those of India, becoming a nuclear-armed state.

### [North Korea prepares to restart Yongbyon reactor](#)

*Channel News Asia* – 19 September

North Korea is preparing to restart its Yongbyon nuclear reactor amid a deadlock in international disarmament talks, a Pyongyang official said Friday. "We are making thorough preparations to restore (nuclear facilities)," said foreign ministry official Hyon Hak-Bong. "You may say we have already started work to restore them," he told reporters at the border truce village of Panmunjom before the start of talks between the two Koreas on energy aid.

North Korea said last month it had stopped disabling the plutonium-producing reactor and other plants and would consider restoring them, in protest at Washington's refusal to drop it from a terrorism blacklist. The North's negotiating partners have reported that equipment was being moved back to the site. Asked by reporters when the reactor would be restarted, Hyon replied: "You'll come to know soon." Hyon, deputy chief of the foreign ministry's US affairs bureau, did not elaborate.

As part of a six-nation aid-for-disarmament agreement, the North last November began

disabling its Yongbyon plants. In return the five negotiating partners - South Korea, the United States, Japan, China and Russia - promised to provide one million tons of heavy fuel oil or equivalent energy assistance to the impoverished communist state. In June the North handed over a list of its nuclear programmes and facilities and the United States began the process of removing it from a terrorism blacklist. But Washington says it will not take the final step until the North agrees on ways to verify its nuclear declaration.

On August 26 the North announced that in protest it had halted disablement work and would consider restarting the reactor. Nearly half of the promised energy aid has been delivered. Officials from the two Koreas were meeting Friday to discuss further deliveries. Hwang Joon-Kook, head of the South Korean foreign ministry's North Korean nuclear issue bureau, heads the Seoul delegation.

In London the International Institute for Strategic Studies said Thursday that North Korea could put its nuclear programme back on track in less than a year. Uncertainty over the health of leader Kim Jong-Il means its stalemate with Washington over its nuclear programme is likely to continue, it added. "Diplomatic efforts to stem the nuclear proliferation challenges posed by Iran and North Korea are both deadlocked," IISS chief John Chipman said. "It will take North Korea less than one year to undo the steps that up until August it was taking to disable its declared nuclear facilities."

### [Bush, Hu agree to work on N. Korean nuclear issue](#)

*NHK* – 23 September

US President George W Bush and Chinese President Hu Jintao have agreed to work in persuading North Korea to comply with a six-party agreement on the nation's denuclearization.

US National Security Council spokesperson Gordon Johndroe told reporters on Monday that Bush and Hu reached the agreement during telephone talks on Sunday. He says the 2 leaders shared concerns about North Korea's suspension of works to disable its nuclear facilities and its move to restore them.

US State Department spokesperson Robert Wood expressed concern about North Korea's demand that International Atomic Energy Agency remove the seals and monitoring equipment at its Nyongbyon nuclear facilities.

Wood says the US is concerned about a series of North Korean remarks and will persuade the country to comply with the six-party agreement on its denuclearization.