



# **RÉVOLUTIONNAIRE 22/2008**

*The Foremost Inter-Disciplinary Defence E-Bulletin*

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

**24 October 2008**

## **Contemporary Conflict**

- Nato to attack Afghan opium labs
- Taliban stage audacious 'Tet-style' attack on British HQ city
- Iraq's Kurds, Turkish delegation meet in Baghdad
- Gunfight on Thai-Cambodia border
- Pakistan Taliban 'want to talk'
- Sri Lanka fighting forces U.N. aid convoy back
- Taliban seizes bus, executes 2 dozen passengers, Afghan officials say
- S Lanka admits heavy troop loss
- Gates says U.S. reluctant to alter Iraq troop draft
- India bombing 'kills at least 17'
- Face to face with the insurgency
- Iraqis hit back at US commander

## **Terrorism & Counter-Terrorism**

- UK terror detention plan rejected
- Hundreds face Saudi terror trials

## **Diplomacy & Defence Strategy**

- U.S. takes North Korea off terror list
- Syria and Lebanon to establish diplomatic relations
- China, Russia unveil boundary markers
- RAND Study Suggests U.S. Loses War With China
- Seoul Discounts NK Threat to Cut Ties
- Military Training Also In for Makeover
- 3 Nations Win Security Council Seats
- Russian delegation discusses mutual trade and facilities for its navy
- Russia Is Striving to Modernize Its Military

- **Russia wants presence at Czech missile defense sites – Lavrov**
- **Russia to set up military bases in Abkhazia, S.Ossetia in 2009**
- **Apples, onions cross frontier in disputed Kashmir**
- **Malaysia Has Spent More Than RM200 Million To Ensure Safety In The Straits Of Melaka**

## **Defence Acquisition and Technology**

- **France markets arms to Iraq after 2-decade lull**
- **Russia to start production of new Ka-52 helicopters in October**
- **China needs sharper eyes in space**
- **US pushing for Pak F-16 upgrade**
- **Russia has over \$5 bln in foreign naval orders**
- **Navy hunts for hi-tech submarines**

## **Non-Traditional Security**

- **Royal Navy will tackle pirate scourge**
- **NATO warships arrive to deter Somali pirates**
- **Somali pirates 'hard to defeat'**

## **Military / Peacekeeping / Humanitarian Operations**

- **Russia test-fires ballistic missile to mid-Pacific**
- **Japan concerned over Chinese submarines near maritime borders**
- **Chinese combat ships pass Tsugaru Strait**

## **Nuclear Proliferation**

- **US and India sign nuclear accord**
- **Nuclear weapons debated in Sydney**
- **N Korea wants Japan out of talks**

---

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

### [Nato to attack Afghan opium labs](#)

BBC – 10 October

Nato has agreed its troops will be allowed to attack opium factories for the first time in Afghanistan. Alliance spokesman James Appathurai said troops will act with Afghan forces "against facilities and facilitators" using drugs to finance the Taliban. Afghan forces have taken the lead in the fight against the drugs industry until now. The US wants more aggressive tactics against the opium trade.

Nato defence ministers reached agreement at a meeting in Budapest. Nato's International Security and Assistance Force (Isaf) and US-led troops have until now concentrated on eradicating poppy crops, rather than attacking opium factories and distribution networks. The BBC's Martin Patience in Kabul says anti-drug efforts by the Afghan National Army and police have been largely ineffective so far, but the Nato move could end up aggravating the security situation.

While not the focus of this new strategy, many Afghan farmers could see a drop in income. And a number of senior Afghan officials who are heavily involved in the drugs trade will not take kindly to any interference in what for them is a lucrative business, our correspondent says. Afghanistan supplies more than 90% of the world's illicit opium, the main ingredient of heroin.

Nato is stressing this is only a temporary expansion of its mission until Afghan security forces are deemed able to do the job on their own. Some Nato members have been wary of any anti-drug role, fearing that a crackdown would prompt a violent backlash against allied troops. Mr Appathurai said participation would be "subject to the authorisation of respective nations". He gave few further details. Nato defence ministers will review the mission in February.

US Defence Secretary Robert Gates welcomed the Nato decision. "Secretary Gates is extremely pleased that... Nato has decided to allow Isaf forces to take on the drug traffickers who are fuelling the insurgency, destabilising Afghanistan and killing our troops," said Pentagon press secretary Geoff Morrell.

On Thursday Afghanistan's Defence Minister Abdul Rahim Wardak addressed the Nato meeting. "We've asked Nato to please support us, support our effort in destroying the labs and also the interdiction of the drugs and the chemical precursors that are coming from outside the country for making heroin," he told reporters afterwards.

Nato's top operations commander, Gen John Craddock, also attended the Budapest talks to push for more concerted action by alliance members. He told them the Afghan opium trade is bankrolling the Taliban insurgency to the tune of \$100m (£57m) a year. "You cannot have a safe and secure environment with a scourge of narcotics rampant," he told Reuters news agency on Thursday.

His remarks come amid anxiety that opium production far exceeds global demand and that international drug cartels must have stockpiled huge quantities. The head of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, Antonio Maria Costa, is urging the international community to "find the missing opium". "These stockpiles are a time bomb for public health and global security," he has said. It is estimated that bumper poppy harvests have yielded twice as much opium as needed to satisfy every known heroin user on the planet.

British law enforcement officers working undercover in southern Afghanistan are reporting seizures of "enormous quantities of precursors" - the chemicals required to process opium - suggesting vast amounts of heroin may be hidden in the lawless region. The UN said in August that poppy production in Afghanistan was down this year after a record-breaking harvest in 2007. But the southern region of Helmand, a Taleban stronghold, accounts for nearly 66% of all Afghan opium.

### [Taleban stage audacious 'Tet-style' attack on British HQ city](#)

*The Times* – 13 October

British and Afghan forces repulsed an attempt by hundreds of Taleban fighters to attack the provincial capital of Helmand, Lashkar Gah, on Saturday night in the most audacious Taliban attack in the province since 2006. Up to 100 Taleban fighters were killed in a series of airstrikes and firefights around the city outskirts in fighting that began in the early evening as Taleban fighters were concentrating to attack the city of three sides and continued into the early hours of Sunday morning. It was the first time that the Helmand capital has been attacked.

The Taleban plan appeared to be for a "Tet Offensive" style infiltration of the city, the seat of the Afghan provincial government and home to the headquarters of the British commander in Helmand and the civilian reconstruction component of the British mission in Helmand. Had the infiltration succeeded then British and Afghan forces would have faced confused street fighting in which Western airstrikes would have been impossible without the risk of causing mass civilian deaths in the city.

A British army spokesman said that the Taleban operation displayed "a level of co-ordination that wasn't expected." He estimated the Taleban forces at around 170, though some Afghan estimates were much higher. However, British officials insisted that there was absolutely no threat of the British base falling. "Whatever their military objectives were, we didn't get to find them out, because they were defeated on the edge of the city" said the Helmand Task Force spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Woody Page.

"At around 1700hours we detected terrorist vehicles moving in just to the west of the river (on the western edge of Lashkar Gah). By 1730 there were three or four separate groupings. There appeared to be a plan to attack on three different sides, with a blocking force on the fourth side. We waited until the terrorists were concentrated and then attacked with maximum effect," he added.

The British Army spokesman said that an initial airstrike in a wooded area called Bolan, west of the city, killed 27 Taleban fighters and injured approximately the same number. There were then follow up strikes by British Apache ground attack helicopters on further concentrations of Taleban fighters. Afghan National Army and Police were also involved in ground skirmishes around the city limits which continued until 3am on Sunday morning.

Daoud Ahmadi, a spokesman for the Helmand governor Gulab Mangal said that 62 Taleban fighters were killed but that the number could rise. "Afghan National Security Forces did a really good job of limiting the Taleban to the outskirts of the city," said Colonel Page. "It is impossible to say if the target was the British PRT, though it is a possibility." The British Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) base in Lashkar Gah is heavily defended with 30ft Hesco walls and wire fences designed to prematurely detonate rocket propelled grenades. It contains hundreds of British troops and the large civilian reconstruction component of the UK mission from the Foreign Office and the Department for Overseas Development (DfID).

Today, local residents who didn't want to be named for fear of Taleban retribution said they saw two truckloads filled with dead and wounded Taleban driven away from the Lashkar Bazaar area on the east of the city after the attack. Another report was of Taleban dead being buried in the Bolan area. Although the Taleban attack appears to have been decisively defeated, local people said that there was atmosphere of rising panic inside Lashkar Gah. "They attacked from everywhere," said one local man, who asked that his name only be given as Mirwais. "There were rockets and mortars. No one could sleep, everyone was trying to hide themselves. I don't trust the Afghan government or the British. Tell me where to escape to."

Haji Salim Khan, a tribal elder of the Alizai tribe living in Lashkar Gah said: "They were throwing artillery to the city. Children and women were weeping and screaming. I asked my tribe to protect me and twenty of my tribesmen surrounded my house. This is a shame, a shame, a shame, upon the British. They turned off the lights of the PRT and shut the doors. There are rumours they are going to withdraw from the city." Colonel Page said that no lights were turned off in the PRT and that local people were, on the contrary, reassured by the defeat of the Taleban attack: "The atmospherics we are getting are very far from that situation," he said. "There is a lot of confidence that Lashkar Gah was safe last night and will continue to be safe. The Afghan National Security Forces and British forces will continue to maintain that as the status quo."

The attack follows heavy fighting in recent days in the district of Nad Ali to the west of Lashkargar. Previously a government stronghold, the district and neighbouring Marja fell to Taleban fighters in September. British forces from 3 Commando Brigade retook Nad Ali district centre with Afghan Army troops in a three day operation that finished on Saturday.

A statement by Qari Yousuf Ahmadi, the official Taleban spokesman for southern Afghanistan, had a different version of events. "Until four in the morning the fight went

on. We killed 25 government soldiers and destroyed ten Ranger vehicles. Several others soldiers were wounded. We targeted the NDS (Afghan intelligence department), the governor's residency and office and some other areas. Hundreds of Taleban participated in the fight. Four Taleban were killed and their bodies remain on the battleground. Three others were wounded. "The rumours spread by the enemy that they killed dozens of Taleban are just to keep up the morale of the soldiers of the puppet government. It was a huge attack from three directions."

### [Iraq's Kurds, Turkish delegation meet in Baghdad](#)

AP – 14 October

Turkish officials on Tuesday pressed the president of Iraq's Kurdish enclave to crack down on the Kurdish separatists launching cross-border attacks from their Iraqi mountain sanctuaries. It was the first direct talks in four years between Turkey and Massoud Barzani, president of the three-province semiautonomous Kurdish region of northern Iraq.

The meeting was held as Turkish media reported that five Turkish soldiers were wounded Tuesday in a Kurdish guerrilla attack on a military convoy in southeastern Turkey. Turkey has been pressing the Iraqi Kurdish administration to cut supply lines in its territory used by the guerillas of the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, which has been fighting for autonomy in Turkey, and to arrest and hand over its leaders who live across the border in Iraq.

Turkish pressure has increased since PKK rebels killed 17 Turkish soldiers on the Turkey-Iraq border earlier this month. Iraqi Kurdish authorities condemned the Oct. 3 attack but the Turks are demanding more. Iraqi Kurds, which have their own police and armed force, are largely responsible for security in the northern areas of the country where the PKK operates rather than U.S. or Iraqi government troops.

The Tuesday meeting took place in the U.S.-protected Green Zone and lasted about two hours, Turkey's state-run Anatolia news agency reported. Turkey's special envoy for Iraq Murat Ozelik was quoted as saying the talks were held in a "positive atmosphere" and that Turkey had communicated to the other side its suggestions concerning security.

A spokesman for the self-ruled Kurdish region in northern Iraq, Fouad Hussein, said earlier that the meeting was being held to discuss bilateral relations. He did not elaborate. The PKK, branded a terrorist group by the United States and the European Union, has been fighting for autonomy in southeastern Turkey since 1984. Tens of thousands of people have been killed.

Iraqi Kurdish forces known as peshmergas had fought against the PKK alongside Turkish troops during incursions in 1990s. Turkey is again trying to win support of Iraqi Kurds against the rebels. Barzani and other Iraqi Kurdish officials met regularly with Turkish officials during former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein's regime. But relations cooled

following the 2003 U.S.-led invasion as Kurdish national aspirations skyrocketed, and the last such meetings were held in 2004.

### [Gunfight on Thai-Cambodia border](#)

*BBC* – 15 October

Two Cambodian soldiers have been killed in an exchange of gunfire with Thai troops along a disputed section of their border. The clash, near the ancient Preah Vihear temple, has prompted Thailand to urge its nationals to leave Cambodia. Tension has been high since July, when hundreds of soldiers on both sides faced off metres apart. Both sides have said they want to find a peaceful solution and will hold talks to discuss the conflict. Thailand and Cambodia both claim they own the area around the temple, which recently became a Unesco World Heritage site.

Officials from both countries have claimed the other side fired first. The exchanges of small arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades were reported to have continued for about an hour. Cambodian Foreign Minister Hor Namhong said two soldiers had been killed and two wounded while Thai officials said five Thai troops had been wounded. Mr Hor Namhong said another 10 Thai soldiers had been captured but would be well treated and returned home if Bangkok requested. However, Bangkok said that none of its soldiers were missing. A Cambodian army official told the Associated Press news agency that commanders from both sides were trying to negotiate a ceasefire.

Thai Prime Minister Somchai Wongsawat said the fighting was "small scale" and that he was committed to reaching a settlement over the issue with Cambodia, which he described as "a good neighbour". After fighting broke out, Thailand alerted air force jets and readied transport planes to evacuate Thai nationals from Cambodia.

The military stand-off began in July when Cambodian troops detained three Thai protesters who had entered the site illegally. More than 1,000 soldiers from both countries moved into the area, digging trenches into the rough terrain around the temple. In August, military personnel agreed to withdraw most of the troops from the area but in early October, Cambodia claimed that Thai troops had returned. Thailand has denied that its troops entered Cambodian territory.

But on Tuesday, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen threatened to turn the area into a "death zone" if the Thai troops did not withdraw. The two countries have held several rounds of talks but have so far failed to reach a settlement. Mr Hor Namhong said that talks to be held on Thursday were a good sign that the countries could begin to resolve this week's conflict, which was said was "an incident between soldiers and not an invasion by Thailand".

The stand-off between the two countries centres on 1.8 square miles (4.6 sq km) of scrub near the 900-year-old Preah Vihear temple, which sits on a jungle-clad escarpment dividing the countries. The temple is only accessible from Thailand and the area around it is heavily mined - a legacy of Cambodia's long war against the Khmer Rouge guerrillas.

An international court awarded the temple to Cambodia in 1962, but land surrounding it remains the subject of rival territorial claims. The decision by the UN in June to list Preah Vihear as a World Heritage Site reignited lingering nationalist tensions.

Disputes between the two countries date back centuries when the Thai and Khmer monarchs fought each other for territory and power. In 2003, the Thai embassy in Phnom Penh was torched by rioters angry over the alleged comments of a Thai actress who said that the Angkor Wat temple complex should be returned to Thailand.

### [Pakistan Taleban 'want to talk'](#)

*BBC* – 15 October

Taleban militants fighting the Pakistan army in the country's tribal areas say they are willing to hold unconditional talks with the government. Maulvi Omar, a spokesman for the militants, said they were also willing to lay down their arms if the military ceased operations against them.

The army is conducting operations against militants in the tribal region of Bajaur and the Swat valley. The operations are said to be a serious effort to eradicate the Taleban. The army wants them and al-Qaeda to be removed from Pakistan's tribal regions next to the Afghan border.

"We are willing to negotiate with the government without any conditions," Maulvi Omar told the BBC Urdu service on Wednesday. "We are also willing to lay down our arms, once the military ceases operations against us." Pakistan's government has said that it is willing to talk to the militants once they lay down their arms.

But it has also said it will not tolerate the presence of any foreigners in the region. Maulvi Omar said that the local Taleban did not want foreign militants in the region and would help the government to remove them. "We can set up a shura [elders] committee to liaise with the authorities in removing such people," he said. Maulvi Omar said it was useless to debate the security situation in parliament without taking the Taleban into confidence. "What is the use of discussing the situation without talking to us?" he asked. Pakistan's military says it has killed and captured hundreds of militants in recent fighting in Bajaur and Swat.

The military also says that it has destroyed fortified encampments and training facilities of the militants in Bajaur. But locals point out that this is mainly a series of exaggerated claims made by the military. They say the militants never fight in regular positions, or behind fortifications, in Pakistan or Afghanistan. The tribesmen also say that claims that dozens of militants have recently been killed are also exaggerated.

Local journalists say that many of the places where the military claimed to have killed the insurgents were abandoned weeks before any attack. They also say that there is a big discrepancy between the number of bodies recovered and buried and the numbers of militants the military claim to have killed.

[Sri Lanka fighting forces U.N. aid convoy back](#)

*Reuters* – 16 October

A U.N. convoy carrying food and aid to more than 230,000 refugees in northern Sri Lanka was forced to turn back on Thursday due to artillery shelling and fighting, officials said. The convoy was only the second to enter the war zone since the government last month ordered most aid agencies out, saying it could not guarantee their safety.

The 50-truck convoy had left Vavuniya, 250 km (155 miles) northeast of the capital Colombo, at noon carrying 750 metric tonnes of food to a growing number of people trapped by fighting between government forces and separatist Tamil Tiger rebels. "There was fighting close to the convoy and we decided to turn them back. Right now we are trying to get security assurances from both sides so we can start the process again tomorrow," U.N. spokesman Gordon Weiss in Colombo said.

The clashes came as the vehicles passed Pullyankulam, where it was due to turn east toward refugee camps that aid workers and diplomats say are increasingly at risk of disease outbreaks with the onset of monsoon rains. Growing numbers of people in the last month have fled an intensified military drive against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), and are now trapped between rebels who will not let them leave and an army whose offer of safe passage they distrust. The army says it is 2 km (1 mile) outside of the LTTE's defacto capital of Kilinochchi, and is increasingly confident of defeating the separatist rebels and ending the 25-year-old war.

Military spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said a claymore mine attack and artillery rounds struck near the convoy. U.N. security officers on the convoy could not determine the source or exact type of weapons used, "but it was more than light arms fire," Weiss said. Nanayakkara blamed the rebels: "I think they didn't want these food items to be given to the civilians." The rebels could not be reached for comment.

Sri Lanka routinely accuses the Tigers of hiding behind civilians and amplifying humanitarian crises to their military and propaganda benefit. Diplomats and aid workers say that is often the case, and that the government makes an effort to provide aid to its civilians through government agents who manage distribution. But it is often overwhelmed by the scale of the problems. This is the second aid convoy to enter the war zone in as many weeks. Both were allowed in after diplomats lobbied the government to make an exception to the aid ban because of the scale of the refugee crisis.

[Taliban seizes bus, executes 2 dozen passengers, Afghan officials say](#)

*Los Angeles Times* – 20 October

Taliban militants seized a bus in volatile southern Afghanistan and executed at least two dozen passengers, beheading some of them, officials said Sunday. The attack took place in Kandahar province, which was the home base of the fundamentalist Islamic movement

before it was toppled by a U.S.-led invasion in late 2001. The incident illustrated the extreme danger of travel in the Afghan countryside, even along main roads such as the one where the bus was commandeered. Many of the passengers were women and children.

In recent months, the Taliban and fellow insurgent groups have been staging attacks on roads that connect major cities in an apparent effort to show that the government does not exert any significant control in the hinterlands. Violence in Afghanistan this year has hit its highest level since the conflict began. Many of those killed have been combatants, but civilian deaths in 2008 so far have been estimated by the United Nations at more than 1,300.

The district where the bus attack took place, Maywand, is strategically important. Western troops have been struggling to choke off infiltration routes that lead into it from Helmand province, the center of Afghanistan's drug trade. Many Taliban fighters based in Pakistan are believed to cross the border into Helmand and make their way from there via Maywand to the area surrounding Kandahar, the south's main city, which is about 40 miles to the east.

Canadian forces, who make up the bulk of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization-led contingent deployed across Kandahar province, have been suffering steady losses in near-daily clashes with insurgents in Maywand and nearby districts. Despite the presence of Canadian and Afghan troops, Maywand is considered Taliban territory. Reports about the bus assault, which took place Thursday, were sketchy but chilling. Many attacks that take place in distant rural areas do not come to light until days or even weeks later.

Afghan authorities said the passengers were traveling in a two-bus convoy, a measure intended to boost their safety. Militants who had set up a checkpoint fired on the first bus, which managed to race away. However, they were able to halt the second, which had about 50 people on board. Between 24 and 30 passengers were killed execution-style at the scene, according to Kandahar Police Chief Matiullah Khan. One child who managed to get off the bus was killed in the gunfire that raked the vehicle.

Western news agencies quoted a Taliban spokesman as saying that 27 people were dragged from the bus and shot, and that they were Afghan soldiers. The army denied that, saying regulations prohibit soldiers from traveling in the area by civilian transport. Some of the passengers were reported to have been freed, but a precise count was impossible to obtain. Civilians are usually too frightened to discuss attacks by insurgents in any detail, and those released dispersed quickly to their home districts.

An Afghan Defense Ministry spokesman, Gen. Mohammed Zahir Azimi, put the death toll at 31. He said six decapitated bodies were recovered elsewhere in the district, in addition to about 25 bodies found at the scene. Elsewhere in the south, U.S.-led troops killed three militants in weekend clashes in Helmand, military and Afghan authorities said.

[S Lanka admits heavy troop loss](#)

*BBC* – 20 October

At least 33 troops were killed fighting Tamil Tiger rebels in northern over the weekend, the government says. The Tamil Tigers also suffered heavy losses, the defence ministry said. There has been no word from the rebels. The military claims to have breached a key rebel defensive line near the rebels' administrative headquarters in the northern town of Kilinochchi.

The army's losses are among the highest it has admitted suffering in fighting to capture the rebel-held town. The army is pursuing an offensive to defeat the rebels and end their fight for independence for minority Tamils. The Ministry of Defence said troops and rebels fought battles in several areas to the south and west of Kilinochchi on Saturday and Sunday. "During these clashes on the weekend, 33 soldiers were reported killed in action, 48 injured and three others were reported missing," a statement on the ministry's website said.

It said ground and radio monitoring sources had reported "heavy damages" to the rebels. The bodies of 11 Tamil Tiger fighters had been recovered by troops, the statement said. There was also heavy fighting around a Tiger naval base to the west of Kilinochchi. The BBC's Roland Buerk in Colombo says it is rare for the military to admit taking such heavy casualties.

A long earth embankment at Vannerikulam to the south of Kilinochchi - the last major defensive line protecting the town - was captured during the fighting, according to the ministry. Our correspondent says the military offensive could be slowed by the monsoon rains that have now begun in the north of Sri Lanka. Photographs from the battlefield posted on the ministry of defence website showed vehicles bogged down in heavy mud. The ministry also claimed the Tigers had used poisonous gas during the battles. The rebels could not be reached for comment and the government blocks independent journalists from going to the areas where the fighting is taking place.

Capturing Kilinochchi would be a major symbolic victory for Sri Lanka's government - the rebels have run a civil administration from offices in the town. But many residents and rebels are reported to have abandoned it for areas further east still under Tamil Tiger control. Much of the Tigers' military strength is concentrated to the east of the town, towards Mullaitivu on the coast.

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka's President Mahinda Rajapaksa has told Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh that the military has been instructed to avoid causing civilian casualties. There have been protests by some Tamils in southern India against the Sri Lankan military offensive. Last week, the Indian government said a military victory would not end the ethnic conflict and called for a political settlement. The rebels have been fighting for a separate homeland for a quarter of a century and about 70,000 people have been killed in the violence.

[Gates says U.S. reluctant to alter Iraq troop draft](#)

*Reuters* – 21 October

Washington does not want to alter a draft security pact with Iraq, despite demands for change from Baghdad where the document failed to win support from Iraqi political leaders, U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates said on Tuesday. After months of painstaking talks that ended last week, Iraq effectively called for reopening negotiations to address objections to the status of forces agreement (SOFA) draft that would require U.S. forces to leave Iraq by the end of 2011.

But Gates told reporters at the Pentagon that the door to change was "pretty far closed" and warned that failure to reach a SOFA deal or renew the U.N. mandate for U.S. troops to remain in the country would mean suspension of U.S. operations. "There is great reluctance to engage further in the drafting process," the U.S. defense chief said. "This is not just kind of a paper exercise. The consequences of not getting an agreement are very real," he added. "We basically (would) stop doing anything."

Objections by Iraqi political leaders appeared to be about details rather than the broad thrust of the pact, which is intended to replace the U.N. mandate that expires December 31. "The cabinet has agreed that necessary amendments to the pact could make it nationally accepted," government spokesman Ali al-Dabbagh told Reuters after a cabinet meeting. "The cabinet will continue its meetings (in coming days), in which ministers will give their opinions and consult and provide the amendments suggested. Then this will be given to the American negotiating team."

Gates dismissed objections from Iraqi politicians, saying differing political opinions in Iraq would likely balance each other out and could lead to progress in the end. "We just have to let the Iraqi political process play out," Gates said. The Iraqi announcement on Tuesday was an apparent reversal for Baghdad, which had previously described last week's draft as a final text and said as recently as Saturday that it was unlikely to be renegotiated.

The draft would require U.S. troops to leave Iraq after 2011 unless Baghdad asks them to stay and allow Iraqi courts try U.S. military service members accused of serious crimes while off duty. It would mean that foreign troops, which now operate under a U.N. Security Council mandate, would function for the first time under the authority of the elected government in Baghdad. Both sides call it a milestone for Iraqi sovereignty. Some Iraqi politicians have expressed reservations over details such as the mechanism for trying of U.S. troops. Only Kurdish groups have so far given the text full support.

Humam Hamoudi, a leading member of parliament from the Shi'ite alliance, said that among those voicing doubts in recent days was Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, who has yet to speak about the pact in public. "The prime minister said: what (the Americans) have given with the right hand they have taken away with the left hand," Hamoudi told a news conference. Maliki's Shi'ite rivals -- followers of cleric Moqtada al-Sadr -- strongly oppose the pact, as does the leadership of mainly Shi'ite Iran, which has influence among

Iraqi Shi'ites. A senior, non-Shi'ite government source said the delay was prompted by Shi'ite politicians under Iranian pressure. "It seems there was a (Shi'ite) alliance decision to reject it," he said. "I can only explain these Shi'ite delaying tactics by Iranian pressure. There's no other explanation."

Gates said renewing the U.N. mandate was a less attractive option than the SOFA. It would require a vote by the U.N. Security Council that could draw a veto from Russia. "What really needs to happen is for us to get this SOFA done. It's a good agreement. It's good for us. It's good for them. It really protects Iraqi sovereignty," he said. Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari, a member of a Kurdish group that backs the draft, said the pact was unlikely to pass before the U.S. presidential election on November 4.

### [Face to face with the insurgency](#)

*BBC – 22 October*

The body of a 20-year-old Iraqi girl turned up recently in a small Sunni town south of Tikrit. Her own family had killed her. She had been having an affair with her cousin, but that was not the problem: cousins often marry in this part of the world. But they had decided to have sex and he had persuaded her to let him film this "just for us". Of course, he could not resist showing the tape to his friends, to boast.

The pictures started to circulate in this small town and her family found out the couple had been sleeping together. Honour demanded that they murder her - not him, naturally. The US army officer telling me this story said his soldiers had wanted to find the boy involved and give him a good beating. The officer, too, was furious, but also resigned to the situation. After more than a year here, he knew only too well that Salahaddin province was never going to be Kansas.

In the same way, the US government has come to accept it is never going to implant Jeffersonian democracy in Baghdad. So goals have been adjusted, compromises made. The US forces know they have to be pragmatic if they are ever going to leave this place. Take Sheikh Sabah al-Shamari. He was once an insurgent, he told me. But I met him as he laid on a lavish lunch for the Americans.

Huge metal dishes of lamb and rice were set down on the floor. We sat cross-legged to eat with our hands. Grabbing a particularly fatty hunk of meat - the best bit - and pressing it into my palm, the sheikh told me how the Americans were paying him to provide militiamen loyal to the coalition. This is the so-called Tribal Awakening, known to some as the Sons of Iraq movement but also dubbed, rather absurdly, the Concerned Local Citizens - a name thought up by some PR genius in the US military.

Whatever the title, the Tribal Awakening has brought relative peace to the Sunni areas of Iraq. The sheikh told me - with the American officer next to him in full agreement - that 60% of his men were former insurgents. Once they had tried to kill the Americans, now they were helping them, he said. Flashing a charming smile at the US soldiers, the sheikh

added: "We like the coalition. They brought security here; if they don't stay we'll have the Iranians and al-Qaeda. We still need them."

The American officer with me quietly explained that the sheikh had been accused of embezzling the money for Tribal Awakening militiamen and had been briefly jailed. But the coalition needed all the friends it could get and the sheikh had risked his life to help, surviving more than one assassination attempt. So he was released. All this meant that there had not been a bomb attack against this particular unit of the 101st Airborne for months. There was a time when they used to get blown up or shot at by snipers every couple of days.

The coalition believes it has broken the back of the insurgency in Sunni areas of Iraq. It says it has won over the local population, jailing or killing those insurgent leaders who cannot be persuaded to change sides.

### [Iraqis hit back at US commander](#)

*BBC* – 22 October

The Iraqi government has criticised US military chief Mike Mullen for warning of "major security losses" if Iraq does not pass a key security deal. Ignoring the warning, Iraq's cabinet called for changes to the draft pact, which allows US forces to stay in Iraq after their mandate ends in December. Government spokesman Ali al-Dabbagh said the admiral's remarks were an unwelcome source of "deep concern."

Separately, bombs killed four people in the restive northern city of Mosul. However, officials said the city was now safe for Christians, after almost half the 20,000-strong community fled to other parts of the country following a spate of attacks.

Reacting to Tuesday's warning from the US military chief, Mr Dabbagh said in a strongly worded statement that the "Iraqi government is deeply concerned by the statement of Adm Michael Mullen. "Such a statement is not welcomed by Iraq. All Iraqis and their political entities are aware of their responsibilities and are assessing whether to sign the deal or not in a way that it is suitable to them. "It is not correct to force Iraqis into making a choice and it is not appropriate to talk with the Iraqis in this way."

Adm Mullen warned that Iraq risked security losses of "significant consequence" unless it approved the deal to keep American forces in Iraq beyond the end of the year. He told AFP that Iraqi forces would "not be ready to provide for their security" before the expiration of the current UN mandate on 31 December. "It's time for the Iraqis to make a decision," Adm Mullen said.

US Defence Secretary Robert Gates also warned of "dramatic consequences," saying the US would have to "basically stop doing anything" if there were no Status of Forces Agreement (Sofa). Also addressing Adm Mullen's remarks, Iraq's military spokesman Brig Gen Qassim Atta said Iraqi forces were ready to handle security across the country, noting that they already control 11 of Iraq's provinces. Iraqi political leaders are

demanding changes to a draft deal already agreed with Washington that would allow US forces to stay in Iraq until 2011. The current UN mandate for US-led coalition forces expires at the end of the year.

Meanwhile in Mosul, said to be the last urban stronghold of al-Qaeda, a bomb in a parked car killed four people and wounded four others. But the director of Iraq's human rights ministry, Ghanem al-Ghanam, said security forces had managed to stem the flight of Iraqi Christians from Mosul after a spate of attacks that killed at least 12 Christians since late in September. Mr Ghanam said a fact-finding mission found that 2,275 families had abandoned their homes and jobs, taking shelter in remote Christian villages in Nineveh province. Officials blame Sunni and Kurd extremists and al-Qaeda for the attacks.

In the capital, two car bombs wounded five people in central and western Baghdad, police said. And in Qaim, 300 km (185 miles) west of Baghdad, Iraqi police said they found the remains of 34 people who were believed to have been killed two years ago.

## **TERRORISM & COUNTER-TERRORISM**

### [UK terror detention plan rejected](#)

*Al Jazeera* – 14 October

Britain's upper house of parliament has rejected a controversial proposal to detain terrorism suspects without charge for 42 days to facilitate police investigations. Hours after the House of Lords voted 309-118 against the bill on Monday, the government agreed to drop the plan from the counter-terrorism bill, but said it planned to propose a replacement clause.

Jacqui Smith, the home secretary, said the new version will require a court order for every extended detention sought for a terrorism suspect, and for parliament's endorsement in each case. The government initiated the proposed detention period, extended from the present 28 days, saying it was needed to fight the complex international "terrorist threats" facing the country. In June the lower House of Commons endorsed the 42-day plan by a slim margin of nine votes. Chris Huhne, an opposition legislator from the Liberal Democrats, said the House of Lords vote was "a crushing defeat" for the government, and that it had "completely lost" the argument over the best way to combat terrorism.

The issue has divided Britons in recent years amid raised fears of attacks. At the time of the September 11, 2001 attacks in the US, there was a two-day limit on detention without charge, which could be increased to seven days with court permission. Tony Blair, the former British prime minister, and his successor, Gordon Brown, have maintained that extra time is needed to build cases against terrorism suspects because of their extensive contacts overseas and their use of multiple computers.

Andy Hayman, a former police officer who led London's counter-terrorism operations until last year, has said that an extension detention will help police to tackle increasingly

complex terrorism cases. There have been a number of thwarted or failed attacks in Britain since the London suicide bomb attacks that killed 52 commuters in July 2005. Two men are currently on trial for allegedly trying to ram a flaming jeep into Glasgow airport in June 2007 after failing to detonate car bombs outside a London nightclub and bus stop.

Opponents of the 42-day measure note that there have not been any cases when 28 days were needed to evaluate a terrorism suspect. A study by the British rights group Liberty found that the 28-day limit in Britain is the longest detention period in 15 Western democracies, Jen Corlew, a spokeswoman, said. A number of prominent politicians, writers and the Council of Europe have criticised the controversial proposal, saying it was a threat to civil liberties. The council, Europe's top human rights watchdog, said the proposal would have put in peril a terror suspect's right to a fair trial.

### [Hundreds face Saudi terror trials](#)

*BBC* – 21 October

Saudi Arabia has laid charges against 991 suspected al-Qaeda militants, the interior minister says. Prince Nayef bin Abdul Aziz said authorities had started to "bring the suspects before the judiciary". He gave no details of trial dates, specific charges or the identities of suspects. He said 164 people had died in militant attacks since 2003.

Analysts say Riyadh has been reluctant to try suspected militants, fearing a backlash by domestic sympathisers. "In the past few years, the kingdom has been the target of an organised terrorist campaign linked to networks of strife and sedition overseas," Prince Nayef said in a statement reported by the Saudi Press Agency. He added that the campaign was directly linked to the organisation called al-Qaeda.

Militants have been responsible for more than 30 attacks in the conservative Muslim kingdom since May 2003, he added. Ninety civilians and 74 members of the security forces had been killed, while 439 civilians and 657 members of the security forces had been injured, he said. Another 160 attacks were foiled, his statement said.

The US-based group Human Rights Watch said it had requested authorisation to send observers to the trials. The group said Saudi Arabia held about 3,000 suspected militants in its intelligence detention facilities for years without charge or access to legal counsel. In November 2007, it freed 1,500 suspects after a re-education programme but has arrested many more since, it said.

## **DIPLOMACY & DEFENCE STRATEGY**

### [U.S. takes North Korea off terror list](#)

*CNN* – 11 October

The United States on Saturday removed North Korea from its list of states that sponsor terrorism, State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said. "Based upon the

cooperation agreement North Korea has recently provided ... the secretary of state this morning rescinded the designation of the DPRK [Democratic People's Republic of Korea] as a state sponsor of terrorism, and that was effective as of her signature," McCormack said.

McCormack said the United States and North Korea had reached agreement "on a number of important verification measures" of North Korea's nuclear program. These include participation by all members of the Six Party Talks, the role of the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency, access to all of North Korea's nuclear facilities and what procedures would be used in the verification process. "Every element of verification that we sought is included in this package," McCormack said at a news conference.

A senior State Department official said earlier that President Bush made the decision Friday night to remove North Korea from the terrorism list. The official said verification of North Korea's statements about its nuclear program will start right away, and the North Koreans will immediately reverse actions they have taken in recent weeks to restart their reactor and reprocessing facilities that produce plutonium for nuclear weapons. The North Koreans are expected to make a separate announcement Saturday, McCormack said.

McCormack said Japan had agreed to formalizing the agreement at the Six-Party level, although the issue of North Korea's abduction of Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s has not yet been addressed. See why North Korea was on the terror list » President Bush spoke Saturday morning with Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso, telling him that the United States "will never forget the abduction of Japanese citizens by the North Koreans," White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe said. "We will continue to strongly support Japan's position on the abduction issue and will urge North Korea to take immediate steps to implement the commitments it made this summer as part the agreement reached with Japan," he said.

North Korea was added to the list of state sponsors of terrorism in 1988, the fourth country to be added. Cuba, Syria, Sudan and Iran remain on the list. Countries designated as state sponsors of terrorism are subject to limitations on foreign aid, a ban on defense exports and sales, restrictions on exports of "dual use" items -- those that could be used for defense or non-defense purposes -- and a variety of financial and other restrictions. In recent weeks, North Korea objected to the way the United States and its allies were proposing to verify that North Korea was revealing all its nuclear secrets.

The question of removing North Korea from the terror list had been under intense deliberations in the Bush administration over the past several days, since the U.S. point man in the negotiations, Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, had returned from talks in North Korea. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice had talked by phone to her counterparts in China, Japan and South Korea, and according to a spokesman on Friday, she expected to talk to Russia's foreign minister in coming days.

Speculation had been rising in Washington that the Bush administration would decide to "de-list" North Korea, despite fierce opposition from some of Bush's fellow Republicans. Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, R-Florida, the ranking Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, issued a strongly critical statement after Saturday's announcement. "While I am not surprised by today's decision, I am profoundly disappointed," she said. "Given the regime's decision to restart its plutonium reactor at Yongbyon and actions barring access to the site by inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency, it is clear that North Korea has no intention of meeting its commitment to end its nuclear program."

Republican presidential candidate Sen. John McCain put out a statement Friday opposing taking North Korea off the terrorism list. "I have previously said that I would not support the easing of sanctions [against] North Korea unless the United States is able to fully verify the nuclear declaration Pyongyang submitted on June 26," McCain said. "It is not clear that the latest verification arrangement will enable us to do so."

McCain's Democratic rival, Sen. Barack Obama, had a more positive view, calling North Korea's agreement to the verification measures "a modest step forward." But, he said, any failure on Pyongyang's part to follow through with its side of the agreement must be met with swift action. "President Bush's decision to remove North Korea from the list of state sponsors of terrorism is an appropriate response, as long as there is a clear understanding that if North Korea fails to follow through there will be immediate consequences," Obama said.

"If North Korea refuses to permit robust verification, we should lead all members of the Six-Party Talks in suspending energy assistance, re-imposing sanctions that have recently been waived, and considering new restrictions." Participants in the Six-Party Talks, besides the United States and North Korea, are South Korea, China, Japan and Russia.

### [Syria and Lebanon to establish diplomatic relations](#)

*Guardian* – 14 October

Syria and Lebanon are to establish diplomatic relations for the first time ever, putting ties between the neighbours on a more equal basis — and helping Damascus emerge from its regional isolation. Bashar al-Assad, the Syrian president, has issued a decree paving the way for the dispatch of an ambassador to Beirut, the official Sana news agency reported. Lebanon's foreign minister is due in Damascus tomorrow to agree a date.

The two countries have not had normal diplomatic ties since they gained their independence from France over 60 years ago, with Syria seeing Lebanon as part of its historic territory. Damascus has been by far the dominant side in their relationship since 1976, when its "peacekeeping" troops intervened in Lebanon's civil war and retained firm control for nearly 30 years. The assassination of the former Lebanese prime minister Rafiq al-Hariri in 2005 — which was widely blamed on Syrian agents though denied by Damascus — led to international pressure and street protests that forced Syria to

withdraw its forces. Lebanon's anti-Syrian factions have also blamed Damascus for a series of attacks targeting its enemies.

Lebanese politicians from the majority, western-backed March 14 camp welcomed the news but called on Syria to move swiftly to a final demarcation of the border between the two countries. "It's a positive move and the start of a process of building healthy relations between our brotherly countries," said Walid Jumblatt, the Druze leader of the Progressive Socialist party, who has been bitterly hostile to Damascus in the past.

Assad has been under pressure from the US and its allies over his close relations with Iran and support for the Lebanese Shia movement Hizbullah and the Islamists of Hamas in the Palestinian territories. Yesterday George Bush warned Syria to respect Lebanon's sovereignty and urged it to establish full diplomatic ties with Beirut.

Tensions have risen in recent weeks after thousands of Syrian troops were deployed close to the Lebanese border, though Syria insisted they were only there to prevent smuggling. Some of the credit for the Syrian shift goes to Nicolas Sarkozy, the French president, who reversed the policy of his predecessor, Jacques Chirac, and worked to coax Assad in from the cold. Sarkozy invited Assad to an EU summit in Paris and then visited Damascus. Between those two events Lebanon's new president, Michel Suleiman, went on a first ever state visit to Damascus and forged the agreement to establish formal relations. But Syria only went ahead after the formation of a new Lebanese coalition government that gave its Hizbullah ally and other pro-Syrian groups a big say in Lebanese decision-making.

"Whether this is a PR move or not Syria's recognition does now become a legal reality," said Timur Goksel, a former UN official and now lecturer at Beirut's American University. "The fact that Lebanon is formally acknowledged is very significant. It's on paper. Assad has read the mood in Lebanon — that there can be no going back to the old days. And he's trying to look good internationally."

Other analysts doubted how much difference the move would make. "The Syrians are making concessions that look like they are complying with the demands of the international community," said Nadim Shehadi, a Middle East expert at London's Chatham House. "It will make some difference but it's basically a PR exercise that will help the process of Syria's rehabilitation." The two countries signed a "brotherhood" agreement in 1991, which anti-Syrian Lebanese politicians say is skewed heavily in Syria's favour and implemented by a "Syrian-Lebanese Higher Council" that deals with bilateral issues.

### [China, Russia unveil boundary markers](#)

*Los Angeles Times* – 15 October

China and Russia jointly unveiled boundary markers Tuesday in a final step toward resolving a territorial dispute along their eastern border, their foreign ministries said. The two Cold War rivals battled over the frontier in the 1960s and 1970s, but have agreed to a

settlement under which Russia will reportedly cede 67 square miles (174 square kilometers) of territory to China.

The deal is "the result of years of negotiations and shows our strategic partnership," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang told reporters at a regularly scheduled news conference. "The settlement is a concrete step of the two countries to implement a treaty of good neighborliness and friendly cooperation." Under the agreement, Russia is handing over all of Yinlong Island, known as Tarabarov Island in Russian, along with the largely uninhabited half of Heixiazi Island, or Bolshoi Ussuriysky.

The tug-of-war over the eastern part of their 2,700-mile (4,300-kilometer) border reaches back centuries to their competition for territory as imperial China and Czarist Russia expanded toward each other. China had at one time demanded both islands in their entirety, claiming they were illegally annexed by the former Soviet Union in 1929. Since the fall of the Soviet empire, however, the sides have moved to end such disputes, finding a common cause in opposition to Western dominance and drawing closer through warming military and economic relations.

Tuesday's ceremony on Heixiazi included diplomats, military, police and local officials and followed an exchange of documents affirming the border agreement, the Russian and Chinese ministries said. Heixiazi and Yinlong lie at the confluence of the Amur and Ussuri rivers in Manchuria, about 1,000 miles (1,600 kilometers) northeast of Beijing.

### [RAND Study Suggests U.S. Loses War With China](#)

*Defense News* – 16 October

A new RAND study suggests U.S. air power in the Pacific would be inadequate to thwart a Chinese attack on Taiwan in 2020. The study, entitled "Air Combat Past, Present and Future," by John Stillion and Scott Perdue, says China's anti-access arms and strategy could deny the U.S. the "ability to operate efficiently from nearby bases or seas." According to the study, U.S. aircraft carriers and air bases would be threatened by Chinese development of anti-ship ballistic missiles, the fielding of diesel and nuclear submarines equipped with torpedoes and SS-N-22 and SS-N-27 anti-ship cruise missiles (ASCMs), fighters and bombers carrying ASCMs and HARMs, and new ballistic missiles and cruise missiles.

The report states that 34 missiles with submunition warheads could cover all parking ramps at Kadena Air Force Base, Okinawa. An "attack like this could damage, destroy or strand 75 percent of aircraft based at Kadena," it says. In contrast, many Chinese air bases are harder than Kadena, with some "super-hard underground hangers." To make matters worse, Kadena is the only U.S. air base within 500 nautical miles of the Taiwan Strait, whereas China has 27. U.S. air bases in South Korea are more than 750 miles distant, and those in Japan are more than 885 miles away. Anderson Air Force Base, Guam, is 1,500 miles away. The result is that sortie rates will be low, with a "huge tanker demand."

The authors suggest China's CETC Y-27 radar, which is similar to Russia's Nebo SVU VHF Digital AESA, could counter U.S. stealth fighter technology. China is likely to outfit its fighters with improved radars and by "2020 even very stealthy targets likely [would be] detectable by Flanker radars at 25+ nm." China is also likely to procure the new Su-35BM fighter by 2020, which will challenge the F-35 and possibly the F-22. The authors also question the reliability of U.S. beyond-visual-range weapons, such as the AIM-120 AMRAAM. U.S. fighters have recorded only 10 AIM-120 kills, none against targets equipped with the kinds of countermeasures carried by Chinese Su-27s and Su-30s. Of the 10, six were beyond-visual-range kills, and it required 13 missiles to get them.

If a conflict breaks out between China and the U.S. over Taiwan, the authors say it is difficult to "predict who will have had the last move in the measure-countermeasure game." Overall, the authors say, "China could enjoy a 3:1 edge in fighters if we can fly from Kadena - about 10:1 if forced to operate from Andersen. Overcoming these odds requires qualitative superiority of 9:1 or 100:1" - a differential that is "extremely difficult to achieve" against a like power.

If beyond-visual-range missiles work, stealth technology is not countered and air bases are not destroyed, U.S. forces have a chance, but "history suggests there is a limit of about 3:1 where quality can no longer compensate for superior enemy numbers." A 24-aircraft Su-27/30 regiment can carry around 300 air-to-air missiles (AAMs), whereas 24 F-22s can carry only 192 AAMs and 24 F-35s only 96 AAMs.

Though current numbers assume the F-22 could shoot down 48 Chinese Flankers when "outnumbered 12:1 without loss," these numbers do not take into account a less-than-perfect U.S. beyond-visual-range performance, partial or complete destruction of U.S. air bases and aircraft carriers, possible deployment of a new Chinese stealth fighter around 2020 or 2025, and the possible use of Chinese "robo-fighters" to deplete U.S. "fighters' missile loadout prior to mass attack." The authors write that Chinese counter stealth, anti-access, countermissile technologies are proliferating and the U.S. military needs "a plan that accounts for this."

### [Seoul Discounts NK Threat to Cut Ties](#)

*Korea Times* – 16 October

North Korea Thursday threatened to cut off all inter-Korean ties if South Korea continues its "hawkish stance" on Pyongyang. The Ministry of Unification, however, downplayed the threat, saying it did not see the commentary carried by the Rodong Shinmun newspaper as North Korea's official statement.

"Since the paper is published by the North's ruling Workers' Party, we consider the commentary just speaks for the party's position in a roundabout way," ministry spokesman Kim Ho-nyoun said. Cautiously stating that the ministry does not place a great deal of weight on the remarks, Kim said the government is paying attention to every issue in a bid to improve inter-Korea relations. He reiterated that Seoul is still willing to

resume dialogue with Pyongyang.

The North Korean newspaper said, "If the group of traitors keeps to the road of reckless confrontation with the DPRK, defaming its dignity despite our repeated warnings, this will compel us to make a crucial decision, including the total freeze of North-South relations." DPRK stands for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the official name of North Korea. Local experts in inter-Korean affairs said that some civic groups which have sent propaganda fliers to the North provoked the communist state to issue the warning.

Last Friday when North Korea celebrated the 63rd anniversary of its ruling party, the civic organizations released helium-filled balloons containing criticism of the North's leadership and promotion of free democracy despite being asked not to from the governments of both sides. In addition, a civic group asking to remain anonymous said that it will soon release papers regarding North Korean leader Kim Jong-ill's alleged illness.

The North had already sent a strong message on the flier issue during working-level military talks earlier this month, said Cheong Seong-chang, director of the inter-Korean relations studies program at the Sejong Institute in Seoul. "Given North Korea's economic situation and its leader Kim's health condition, it appears that Pyongyang is in a very sensitive period," he said.

The Rodong Shinmun also criticized the Lee Myung-bak administration for not implementing inter-Korean agreements, including the June 15 Joint Declaration signed between former President Kim Dae-jung and Kim Jong-il in 2000, which calls for broader economic cooperation. Concerns are rising that the North may halt operations of a joint tour program at the North Korean city of Gaeseong and the inter-Korean industrial complex there.

### [Military Training Also In for Makeover](#)

*Kommersant* – 16 October

Along with the reform of the Russian military and the staff of the Defense Ministry, military education will also be reorganized. The number of military training institutions will be cut from 65 to 10 in a move that is sure to be unpopular. The Defense Ministry will retain six academies, one military university and three military science centers (that will be a new form of educational institution).

One of those military science centers will be formed around the General Military Academy through its merger with four officers' training schools and a number of cadet schools. Another will be the Academy of the Radiation, Chemical and Biological Defense Forces and Engineering Forces in Kostroma. The air force and naval fleet will have their own training centers and a Military Missile and Space Defense Academy will be founded and located either in Serpukhov or Kubinka. The Military Academy of the Armed Forces in Ryazan will have a number of functions.

The Military Academy of Communications in Stavropol and the General Staff Academy will be retained, and the Military Diplomatic Institute (which trains students for intelligence work abroad) and the Defense Ministry Scientific Research Institute will become part of the General Staff Academy. The Military University and Military Medical Academy will continue training servicemen in humanities and medicine. All military construction school, physical fitness institutes and the financial and economic academy will be closed.

The Defense Ministry noted that the military education system was expensive (with a budget of 900 million rubles) and inefficient. Military institutes do not attract a large number of students and the number of officers in the Russian armed forces is being rapidly curtailed. There will be no transition period for the reform, although some military training functions, particularly the preparation of military lawyers, will be transferred to civilian schools. Kommersant has learned that military psychologists, economists, translators and other narrow specialists will also be trained by civilians.

The 50,000 students in the military educational system will be reassigned to institutions within the new system. In 2005, the “military departments” in civilian institutions were reduced by 80 percent, which led to a flurry of protest and petitioning. Deputy chairman of the State Duma Committee on Defense and United Russia member Mikhail Babich has already objected to this round of reforms. The Defense Ministry itself acknowledges that some of the changes will be painful. It mentioned in particular the merger of the world-renowned Zhukov and Gagarin Military Aviation Academies.

### [3 Nations Win Security Council Seats](#)

*New York Times* – 17 October

Japan easily drubbed Iran in the election on Friday for a two-year seat on the Security Council, while the recent financial meltdown in Iceland appeared to have contributed to its loss against Austria and Turkey in the heavily fought contest for two seats reserved for a group of mostly European countries.

Some Council members portrayed the lopsided vote against Iran, with Japan garnering 158 votes to Iran’s 32, as an international referendum critical of the country’s confrontational stance over its nuclear program. “Its comprehensive defeat — a thrashing of Iran — is a very important signal of the whole membership’s concern about Iran’s actions,” said Sir John Sawers, Britain’s ambassador to the United Nations, a position echoed by the United States. Ambassador Alejandro D. Wolff, the deputy permanent representative for the United States, said, “Hopefully they will understand that this means that there is no support from the international community for that type of behavior.”

Even the ambassador from South Africa, which is about to give up its two-year seat and has had numerous face-offs with the Western permanent members, thought that worries over Iran’s nuclear program, which have led to three rounds of United Nations sanctions, played a role. “I think it is quite a low number,” said Dumisani S. Kumalo, the South

African ambassador, referring to the number of votes Iran received. “It may not have helped that it is also on the agenda of the Security Council. I suppose some people may have had difficulty with that.” Some countries have worried that Iran could behave as Rwanda did in the early 1990s, when it used its seat to hinder resolutions aimed at curbing violence there.

The Iranian Mission to the United Nations issued a statement saying that it considered the votes that it received an endorsement for its call to broaden the way the Council is selected. It did not mention the nuclear standoff directly but blamed the “false propaganda campaign by certain major powers” as contributing to its defeat. Iran says its atomic work has been aimed solely at producing electrical power, but Western countries fear that Iran’s goal is to produce weapons.

Iran ran a low-key campaign, arguing that it deserved the spot because it had not been on the Council since 1956, while this will be Japan’s 10th time, the last one ending in 2006. Iran issued a small brochure with a bar graph pointing out that difference, along with pictures of Iranian industrial complexes and famous historic sites in the country. It also included a classical Iranian poem that ended, “If thou feel not for the other’s misery, a human being is no name for thee.”

In any case, Japan is considered a formidable rival, given its huge foreign aid program and the fact that it is the second-largest contributor to the United Nations budget behind the United States. It gives \$304 million to the organization each year, beyond financing nearly 17 percent of the almost \$7 billion in annual costs for peacekeeping, according to the Japanese Mission. “The reality is that nobody expected Iran to prevail against Japan even if there was no nuclear problem,” said Colin Keating, a former New Zealand ambassador and now the head of Security Council Report, a nonprofit organization that tracks the body. He suggested that 32 votes meant that Iran does have a few committed friends.

The 10 nonpermanent seats out of 15 total on the Security Council drew heated competition because the Council is the only body with real power in the United Nations. The vote for the seats is one of the few truly electric events on the General Assembly calendar. All 192 member states showed up, a rarity. Each member’s vote carries the same weight, and the outcome is often viewed as a kind of popularity contest for a member’s standing in the world. Competing nations often drop out rather than live with the embarrassment of receiving few votes.

Iceland, too, was facing two formidable opponents in Austria and Turkey. More than 100 nations have diplomatic outposts in Vienna because of its role as a regional headquarters for the United Nations, and Austria has been campaigning for the seat for years. Turkey last held a seat in 1961 and has been seen by other members as working hard to establish peace in a difficult region — it has been the liaison between Israel and Syria, for example.

Many ambassadors said Iceland's effort was dented by the widespread publicity given to its bank failures, especially since there is an informal understanding that it helps for countries that want a seat to be able to contribute generously to aid programs. Iceland's ambassador, Hjalmar W. Hannesson, said he had expected a sympathy vote, saying that 141 countries had promised to vote for his nation. Ultimately, Turkey got 151 votes, Austria 133 and Iceland 87. (A two-thirds majority, or 128 seats, was needed to win.)

Regional groups often select their candidates beforehand, so Mexico was elected without opposition for the Latin America seat, while Uganda took the Africa slot. In addition to South Africa, the countries that will leave the Council on Jan. 1 are Belgium, Indonesia, Italy and Panama.

### [Russian delegation discusses mutual trade and facilities for its navy](#)

*The Yemen Times* – 18 October

A Russian delegation chaired by President of the Russian Senate Sergie Mironov left Sana'a last Thursday after a 22-hour visit during which it met with President Ali Abdullah Saleh, Prime Minister Ali Mohammed Mujawar, Shoura Council Chairman Abdulaziz Abdulghani and other Yemeni government officials.

Speaking about military and strategic cooperation between Russia and Yemen, Mironov affirmed during a news conference in Sana'a that "Yemen agreed to allow Russian ships to use its ports for reaching strategic objectives, not as a station for them." This information was confirmed by Russian official Novocity News Agency. "Yemen should approve the mooring of Russian ships along its shores in a gradual manner," he added, confirming the possibility of taking such a decision, most notably amid new moves contained in Russia's defense and foreign policies. The Russian delegation's visit coincided with the 80th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between both states and the signing of the Friendship and Cooperation Agreement between the two states on 1 November 1928.

Regarding trade relations, Mr. Mironov stressed the necessity of exerting serious efforts to enhance trade and economic cooperation between both states, pointing out that the mutual trade volume, estimated at USD 178 million, is not good, nor does it fit the high level of political relations between Yemen and Russia.

Asked about progress in the field of education, the Russian official applauded cooperation between Russia and Yemen in higher education, and added that the Russian government would increase scholarships for Yemeni students, currently estimated at 50 scholarships per annum. He praised the level of scientific acquisition demonstrated by Yemeni students in Russian universities.

During the news conference, Mironov reviewed the latest developments in the Qoqaz region, clarifying his government's position about the war that broke out in the area as a result of a war announced by Georgia against Southern Republic of Ossetia, as well as the

motives of why his state recognized the independence of Southern Ossetia and Abkhazia.

The Russian Senate President expressed his happiness about visiting Yemen, praising the strong move of cooperation between both countries over the past two years, which according to him, is symptomatic of the generous support shown by political leaderships of both friendly nations. In the meantime, he confirmed that his state is determined to promote mutual cooperation with Yemen in the various areas and applauded the balanced positions demonstrated by Yemen on Russian issues.

From his side, Yemeni Shoura Council Chairman Abdulaziz Abdulghani described Yemeni-Russian relations as “strong and intimate”, adding that these relations have gained in strength since both states signed the Friendship and Cooperation Agreement eighty years ago. Abdulghani co-chaired the official discussions held on Thursday between Yemen’s Shoura Council and the Russian Senate with Mironov. Both sides noted they were satisfied with cooperation between both official institutions, mainly after they signed cooperation protocols, due to function as a general frame for fruitful cooperation in the future.

Various news agencies have confirmed that Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh will conduct an official visit to Moscow in the near future as part of an effort to prevent a potential American-European plan to internationalize the Red Sea, Bab Al-Mandab Strait and nearby islands under the pretext of increasing piracy in the area. These developments coincided with a declaration by European Union states to send troops to the region while ships from various states are heading toward Yemeni and Somali shores to drive pirates out and protect commercial ships sailing through the Bab Al-Mandab Strait. The ships, currently present in Yemeni and Somali territorial waters, are from the U.S., France, Spain, Italy, Britain, India, the Netherlands, Germany and Malaysia, in addition to a Russian warship that arrived at Aden Harbor last week. Such steps were taken in response to over 55 piracy operations in the area since the beginning of 2008.

With regard to Saleh's prospective visit to Moscow, Yemeni observers and officials, who request anonymity, said that the visit comes as a response to an invitation from his Russian counterpart Dimitri Medvedev, and expect that the main purpose of the presidential visit is to import Russian arms to Yemen. As evidence in support of the visit's purpose, these observers and officials stated that a Yemeni military delegation, headed by Defense Minister Mohammed Nasser Ahmad, had already made a visit to the Russian capital Moscow during which they discussed military and technical cooperation between both states with Russian military officials.

Moscow-based sources mentioned that the visiting Yemeni team discussed the subject of utilizing Russian experiences in developing Yemen's armed forces, adding that the MiG Corporation would work in this context in order to update the MiG aircrafts possessed by the Yemeni army. According to the same sources, both sides would have discussed the possibility of equipping Yemen's armed forces with Cornet-1 model anti-craft systems and sophisticated K-52 model helicopters, plus the possibility of Yemen getting Su-35 model long-range fighter jets.

The sources confirm that most of Yemeni officials' visits to Moscow were related to talks on military cooperation and weapon deals, adding that Yemen has good relations with Russia in this regard. They indicated that both states have signed big deals on weapon import over the past ten years. According to international media reports, Yemen stands fourth on the list of Russian weapon importers worldwide, while Libya is the biggest Russian weapon importer in the Arab world. Yemen is estimated to have imported Russian arms worth about USD 12 billion from the 1994 Civil War until the past year.

Media sources disclosed that Yemen annulled a weapon deal including MiG-29 aircrafts and armored cruisers with Moscow earlier this year, as the final arrangements were being made for Yemen to pay Russia. As to why the deal was annulled remains unclear, but the sources attributed it to budget deficits. According to American sources, Yemen imported light and heavy arms from Russia between 1996 and 2003 for a total cost of USD 200 million, plus other arms worth USD 50 million from the U.S. between 2000 and 2003.

In addition, Yemen signed a deal with China to buy USD 100 million worth of Chinese arms. The country has also imported USD 50 million worth of weapons from some west European states such as France, the United Kingdom, Germany and Italy. It also imported other weapons worth USD 200 million from other European states within the same time period.

The Yemeni government currently faces local and international criticism over imbalanced spending on arms import at the expense of development. According to a previous analytical study by Dr. Nasser Al-Awlaqi, Professor of Agricultural Economy at Sana'a University, Yemen is the third-largest military spender and its population the second poorest in the Arab world. According to reports on imbalanced spending on armament, Yemen is one of the largest weapon importers although it is one of the poorest Arab states. The reports state that Yemen's military budget has increased three-fold between 1998 and 2003 while the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) estimated Yemen's military spending at nearly USD 885.5 million.

In late 2005, the Yemeni government announced a ban on purchasing arms via brokers and tradesmen, warning all local tradesmen against importing arms to the country. This procedure came after the U.S. government and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) suspended three deals, which arm tradesmen were about to finalize in the Yemeni government's name to import arms from European states. According to the sources, sellers clarified to Yemen that there are no international or regional legal risks related with purchasing arms, but the European and American oversight bodies had convinced countries of origin that Yemen is notorious for transferring imported arms to a third party, which may be an intermediary, adding that Yemen lacks a good storage system for its imported arms.

[Russia Is Striving to Modernize Its Military](#)

*New York Times* – 20 October

As they tracked Russian military maneuvers in recent days, the American government's career Kremlin-watchers might have been forgiven for wondering if they were seeing recycled newsreels from the worst of the bad old days. A huge exercise, called Stability 2008, spread tens of thousands of troops, thousands of vehicles and scores of combat aircraft across nearly all 11 time zones of Russian territory in the largest war game since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

There was no specified enemy, but the Russian forces appeared to be enacting a nationwide effort to quell unrest along Russia's southern border — and to repulse an American-led attack by NATO forces, according to experts in Moscow and here. In a grim finale, commanders launched three intercontinental ballistic missiles, the type that can carry multiple nuclear warheads. It was a clear signal of the drastic endgame the Kremlin might consider should its conventional forces not hold. One of the missiles flew more than 7,100 miles, allowing Russian officials to claim they had set a distance record. If these images of Russian power projection appeared drawn from the dark decades of Dr. Strangelove, the response from Washington was anything but.

When asked to assess what seemed to be a Russian resurgence, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates and Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, have provided the same sanguine response, echoed down through the ranks of government analysts who have spent years reading obscure Russian military journals and scrutinizing classified satellite photographs.

The Russian military fell to third world standards from neglect and budget cuts in the turbulent years when Boris N. Yeltsin was president, they say. The new Kremlin leadership is working to create a force that can actually defend the nation's interests. The military has embarked on a program to buy modern weapons, improve training and health care for troops, trim a bloated officer corps and create the first professional class of sergeant-level, small-unit leaders since World War II.

Which is not to say that the United States will stop judging Russian behavior in light of what it considers a clumsy, ill-advised and unnecessary invasion of the former Soviet republic of Georgia. Yet policymakers also say the Kremlin's efforts at military modernization should not prevent cooperation on mutual concerns, including countering terrorism and halting nuclear proliferation. Even a high-profile speech three weeks ago by President Dmitri A. Medvedev, ordering a military modernization program and the largest increases in defense spending since the death of the old Soviet Union, was viewed here as short on substance and designed more for a domestic political agenda.

Mr. Medvedev declared that by 2020, Russia would construct new types of warships and an unspecified air and space defense system. Military spending, he said, will leap by 26 percent next year, bringing it to 1.3 trillion rubles (about \$50 billion), its highest level since the collapse of the Soviet Union — but still a small fraction of American military

spending. Mr. Medvedev pledged that Russia would shore up its nuclear deterrence and upgrade its conventional forces to a state of “permanent combat-readiness.”

American experts were unimpressed. “Russia is prone to make fairly grandiose announcements about its military,” said a Defense Department official who discussed government analyses on condition of anonymity. “These programs have long been in the works. They are not new plans. They are not new programs.” Even so, veteran analysts of Russian military affairs acknowledge that a military renaissance would allow the Moscow leadership to increase political pressure on former Soviet republics, now independent, as well as former Warsaw Pact allies that embraced NATO after the collapse of communism.

“What the Russian leadership has discovered is proof of an old maxim: that a foreign policy without a credible military is no foreign policy,” said Dale R. Herspring, a scholar on Russian military affairs at Kansas State University. Eugene B. Rumer, of the National Defense University here, said events of recent weeks were “not a sign, really, of the Russian military being reborn, but more of a Russia being able to flex what relatively little muscle it has on the global scale, and to show that it actually matters.”

One example is how Russia’s navy is seeking to display global reach. A flotilla of warships, including the nuclear battle cruiser Peter the Great, is under sail for exercises next month with Venezuela. Russia has also announced more than \$1 billion in new arms deals with the Venezuelan president, Hugo Chávez. “This Venezuela adventure is basically Russia’s payback for what they consider the humiliation of American ships’ operating in the Black Sea during the war in Georgia,” said Mikhail Tsyarkin, of the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif. “This is to annoy the United States.” Some of the steps undertaken to wrench the Russian military out of mediocrity resemble changes in the American military over several decades.

Russia plans for its ground forces to move to a system designed for the deployment of brigades, rather than bulkier division or corps headquarters — nearly copying the United States Army’s approach. The Russian military also plans to offer pay and housing incentives to attract noncommissioned officers — the valuable class of sergeants — to make a long-term career of military service. While not as drastic as the move by the post-Vietnam American military to switch from the draft to an all-volunteer force, the plan would shift Russia further from reliance on one-year conscripts, who are not in uniform long enough to master even basic skills.

Just last week, the Russian military leadership announced it would further reduce the number of people in uniform, to about 1 million from the current 1.1 million, far below the 4 million-strong military at the end of the cold war. Most significant, according to American government officials, is a four-year plan to reduce to 150,000 a Russian officer corps that now numbers 400,000, a shrinking that is certain to produce significant opposition within the senior ranks. The Russian General Staff will be trimmed, and the number of generals is planned to fall to 900 from the current 1,100. But in an

acknowledgment that the general officer corps can slow the pace of change throughout the military, most of those reductions will occur through retirement.

The Kremlin knows that its military bureaucracy is riddled with corruption, Pentagon officials say. Experts here say that audits ordered after Vladimir V. Putin took over from Mr. Yeltsin in 2000 found that 40 percent of the budget for some weapons programs and salaries was lost to theft and waste. The new defense minister, Anatoly E. Serdyukov, was a surprise choice, given that he had no military background but was an expert in finance and taxes. As he moved to clean house across the military-industrial complex, the reason for his selection became clear.

Analysts of Kremlin affairs note that a central risk to Russian military reform might not be foreign armies, but the current economic collapse, which has sent oil prices plummeting, robbing Russia of profits earmarked for upgrading the armed forces. An irony is emerging. One central cause of the Soviet Union's collapse was that its centrally planned, calcified economy simply could not support the Kremlin's superpower military ambitions. If oil prices continue to drop, Mr. Medvedev and Mr. Putin may be faced with the same economic limits on their military plans.

### [Russia wants presence at Czech missile defense sites – Lavrov](#)

*RIA Novosti* – 20 October

Russia's foreign minister said on Monday that the country will only lift its objections to a U.S. anti-missile radar in the Czech Republic if Russian observers are permanently posted at the facilities. "A one-off visit would not change anything, but only increase our suspicions," Sergei Lavrov told journalists.

The agreement to station a U.S. tracking radar in the Czech Republic was signed on July 8 by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Czech Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg. On September 19, Defense Minister Vlasta Parkanova and U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates signed the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). The pact governs the deployment of U.S. military personnel at the radar station.

The radar is part of a planned missile shield system which would also include the deployment of 10 interceptor missiles in Poland. The U.S. says it needs the Central European shield to protect against attacks by "rogue states" such as Iran.

The plans are fiercely opposed by Russia, which sees the missile shield as a threat to its national security and the international system of nuclear deterrence. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has vowed to "respond appropriately" to the deployment of the missile shield.

[Russia to set up military bases in Abkhazia, S.Ossetia in 2009](#)

*RIA Novosti* – 21 October

Russia will complete the setting up of military bases in South Ossetia and Abkhazia in 2009, the chief of the Russian General Staff said Tuesday.

"As part of concluded treaties, two bases, one in Abkhazia, the other in South Ossetia, with 3,700 personnel at each, are designed first of all to protect our interests and the interests of these republics," Army General Nikolai Makarov told journalists. "The bases have been created, but the process of setting them up will be completed in 2009," he said.

Russia launched a five-day military operation to "force Georgia to accept peace" after Georgian troops attacked breakaway South Ossetia on August 8, killing a number of Russian peacekeepers and hundreds of civilians. Russia's response to the Georgian attack was labeled disproportionate by a number of Western powers. On August 26, Russia recognized South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states.

The two republics broke away from Georgia following the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s amid armed conflicts that claimed thousands of lives. In accordance with an EU-brokered peace deal, Russia withdrew its forces from undisputed parts of Georgia ahead of an October 10 deadline. The peacekeepers were replaced by the EU monitoring mission in Georgia.

[Apples, onions cross frontier in disputed Kashmir](#)

*Reuters* – 21 October

Trucks loaded with apples, onions and nuts crossed the frontier in divided Kashmir for the first time in decades on Tuesday as nuclear-armed India and Pakistan opened a trade link aimed at easing tension. The decision, taken only last month, to allow limited trade across the front line in Kashmir symbolises attempts to solve a bitter dispute over the Himalayan region by creating "soft borders" allowing the free movement of goods and people.

"I'm quite confident that this beginning will lead us to proper and regular trade and commerce," Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, prime minister of Pakistani Kashmir, told reporters. But Khan cautioned against hopes the opening of trade across an old ceasefire line and the de facto border, known as the Line of Control (LOC), would lead to a quick solution of the more than 60-year dispute over Muslim-majority Kashmir. "All these steps, cross-LOC trade, communication, people-to-people contacts, talks, all these things slowly and gradually they are most generally contributing factors towards the ultimate resolution," Khan said. "But no high hopes should be attached, no wild wishes should be attached to only the one event of today. But this is a great success," he said.

Indian Kashmir's governor, N.N. Vohra, said the trade link was a major step in a slow-moving peace process: "Today is a historic day ... The trade volume will increase."

The South Asian neighbours, who claim Kashmir in full but rule in parts, have fought two wars over the region and were on the verge of a third in 2002 before pulling back from the brink.

On Tuesday, white doves of peace were released as 14 Pakistani trucks bedecked with the national flag crossed a bridge into Indian Kashmir carrying rice, onions and dried fruit. Schoolchildren chanted "Long Live Pakistan" and "Kashmir will become a part of Pakistan" as a brass band played patriotic music. Indian trucks garlanded with marigolds and banners reading "long live cross-border trade" set off the other way loaded with apples, honey and nuts.

"I'm delighted, it's a dream come true," said 35-year-old lorry driver Gulam Hassan Baba. It was the first time vehicles had been allowed across the ceasefire line and the newly constructed Aman Setu, or Peace Bridge, since a 1948 war. The opening of trade in Kashmir is the latest in a series of tentative peace moves that have done little to resolve their central territorial dispute, which has for decades hobbled regular trade across their international border further south. But it does go some way towards meeting one of the demands of separatist groups in Indian Kashmir, who have been leading months of anti-India protests, some of the biggest in years.

India has moved slowly on opening up Kashmir's borders, believing that they could boost separatist militant attacks on Indian forces from bases in Pakistan. Militants have been battling security forces in Indian Kashmir since 1989. A bus service connecting Srinagar, Indian Kashmir's summer capital, and Muzaffarabad, capital of Pakistani Kashmir, was launched in 2005, one of many confidence-building measures undertaken since the two sides began a peace process in 2004. But because of elaborate security checks, suffocating bureaucracy and mistrust, only 9,000 passengers have travelled between the two sides of Kashmir on the "peace bus" service.

For the time being, trade will take place just once a week, with a limited list of goods allowed. Khuwaja Farooq, head of the Muzaffarabad Chamber of Commerce, said he wanted free trade. "It should be a permanent feature ... but as of now, nothing seems permanent," he said.

### [Malaysia Has Spent More Than RM200 Million To Ensure Safety In The Straits Of Melaka](#)

*Bernama* – 21 October

Malaysia has spent more than RM200 million to install, maintain and upgrade various aids for navigation in the Straits of Melaka, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said on Tuesday. For a small country with limited resources, this was a significant amount, he said. "But it is a price that we are willing to pay to ensure and enhance safety of navigation in the Straits of Melaka," the deputy prime minister said in his keynote address at the launch of The Centre For The Straits of Melaka here.

Najib said that given the long-term financial implications, there was a limit to what

Malaysia could afford for this purpose. "In this context, I believe the key to building a comprehensive security environment in the Straits of Melaka is cooperation." Over the last few years, he said, there had been significant and unprecedented progress made in fostering cooperation between the littoral states and the users of the straits.

The parties had succeeded in moving forward from a very minimal cooperation to the establishment of a "cooperative mechanism" comprising dialogue process, a fund dedicated to maintaining aids to navigation in the straits and six projects aimed at enhancing safety of navigation, he said.

In this regard, the International Maritime Organisation had played a pivotal role in facilitating the much-needed cooperation, resulting in a number of systems such as the Traffic Separation Scheme being put to monitor the straits. "With these systems in place, the Straits of Melaka is well equipped with the latest information technology for safety of navigation as well as precision navigation and emergency response," he said.

Najib said other systems being planned included the proposed marine electronic highway which will lead to the integration of current maritime safety technologies with marine environment management and protection systems. "I hope the coastal states can benefit from the use of the marine electronic highway to protect and enhance preservation of the marine environment of the straits," he said.

He said China, South Korea, Japan and the United Arab Emirates had pledged contributions to the proposed navigation fund, a key element in the cooperative mechanism. Therefore, he encouraged the users of the straits to contribute to the fund to enable a truly equitable system to be developed. "Besides financial assistance, support in the form of capacity-building like training and technology transfer would also be welcomed," he said.

Najib said the cooperative mechanism complemented the cooperation which already existed among Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore in two major initiatives, the Melaka Straits Patrol and the Eye-in-the-Sky air surveillance program, apart from substantial intelligence sharing. Thailand recently indicated its readiness to participate in all these initiatives. These efforts had contributed to enhancing the confidence level of maritime powers in the capacity of the littoral states, he added.

Najib said statistic from the reports of the International Maritime Bureau had shown a significant drop in security-related incidents from a peak of 75 cases in 2000 to only four in 2007. "And for the first half of 2008, there is not a single reported case," he said, adding that there was a programme on economic capacity building in the straits for the coastal community under the comprehensive security development programme.

Najib said that despite the positive developments and improvements for navigational safety and protection of the marine environment, Malaysia believed that there was an ultimate "tipping point" for maritime traffic in the straits beyond which further increases would become not only risky, but also too dangerous and costly. "In other words, the

capacity of the straits to assimilate increasing vessel traffic is finite."

He said the vessel traffic in the straits has increased by almost 40 per cent from 43,965 in 1999 to 70,718 in 2007 and it was projected that by 2015, the number might increase to 120,000."A daunting prospect, indeed, for the littoral states and users of the straits in terms of safety of navigation," he said. Therefore, Malaysia believed that shipping carrying capacity in the straits of Malacca would have to be jointly determined and not exceeded.

He said it was important to appreciate that the sea which constituted the straits was not international waters, therefore the extent of Malaysia's maritime jurisdiction in the area was regulated by long-standing boundary treaties and national legislation."It is therefore necessary for me to reiterate that Malaysia regards its sovereignty in the straits as sacrosanct and this includes the right to exercise full and exclusive sovereignty over our territorial waters."

Najib said Malaysia also had a Continental Shelf and an Exclusive Economic Zone in the straits, and reserved all rights therein provided by the convention, including sovereign rights for exploring, exploiting, conserving and managing resources."Therefore, Malaysia's position on any outside involvement or interference in security or law enforcement in the straits is clear, that is, we do not condone such actions," he added.

## **DEFENCE ACQUISITION AND TECHNOLOGY**

### [France markets arms to Iraq after 2-decade lull](#)

AP – 10 October

France, which famously opposed the Iraq war, is in talks to resume sales of military equipment to Baghdad for the first time in nearly two decades, French and Iraqi officials say. This means that France, a major global arms vendor and once a key supplier to ex-Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, is maneuvering back into a lucrative military market that the United States has dominated since the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

The officials say French merchandise now on offer includes helicopters and spare parts for weaponry that France sold Iraq back in the 1980s. It's not about "replacing the Americans, or rejecting them," Jawad Bashara, spokesman for the Iraqi Embassy in France, said in an interview Friday. "Iraq needs to renew its military capacity, and needs to have several arms suppliers, not just one state." Bashara said a delegation headed by Iraq's air force chief is expected in France in the next two weeks to finalize a contract for 30 surveillance and rescue helicopters, with an option to buy 20 more. He would not specify the make of aircraft or put a value on the deal, saying only that it would be below list price for the equipment.

French and Iraqi officials are also discussing the possibility of French military training for Iraqis and sales of parts for French-made weapons systems, he said. Talks on combat aircraft or new weapons systems could come later. A French defense official confirmed

that talks have been under way for more than a year on renewing military ties with Iraq. The official said France had not sold military goods to Iraq since 1990, when the U.N. imposed a trade embargo following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. A French diplomat said France is ready to equip Iraq with military material as part of the French government's support for Iraq getting back more control from U.S. forces. Both the diplomat and the defense official spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about military matters.

Any eventual deal would take some time, and need to go through a web of Iraqi government approvals devised to prevent graft. The government has been particularly cautious since corruption charges were leveled against a former defense procurement chief, Ziad Cattan. One case investigated was a 2004 deal he engineered for Polish helicopters that fell through because the equipment turned out to be 28 years old. Most of Iraq's military equipment has been supplied by the United States or Britain in recent years, though Iraq's government has also bought combat helicopters from Russia.

Bashara said the French helicopter deal took shape during Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner's visit to Iraq in May. Kouchner has pushed to rebuild diplomatic ties with Iraq that were severed after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion, which was stiffly opposed by former President Jacques Chirac's government. Iraq studied helicopters from various countries but settled on France because of the two countries' past military ties, Bashara said.

Iraq's air force was nearly wiped out after the U.S. invasion, and still has no air-ready fixed-wing aircraft, military analysts say. Eurocopter, a branch of the French-German defense group EADS and the only company currently making helicopters in France, would not comment on the possible deal. Military analysts said the deal could involve equipment sold by Eurocopter or direct government-to-government sales of used French aircraft.

### [Russia to start production of new Ka-52 helicopters in October](#)

*RIA Novosti* – 13 October

The Progress aircraft maker, based in Russia's Far East, will start production of a new model of the Ka-52 Hokum-B attack/reconnaissance helicopter in October 2008, a company official said Monday.

The Ka-52 is a twin-seat derivative of the Ka-50 Hokum-A attack helicopter, and is designed primarily for reconnaissance and target designation purposes. It is similar to the U.S. AH-64 Apache attack helicopter.

"The Kamov design bureau has successfully completed testing of the Ka-52 Hokum-B attack/reconnaissance helicopter and it has been adopted for service with the Russian Air Force," Konstantin Parshin said. "The production of the helicopter will start in October at the Progress aircraft-manufacturing company," the official said.

Deliveries of the Ka-52 Hokum-B to the Russian Air Force will start in 2009. According to its commander, Col. Gen. Alexander Zelin, the Russian Air Force will receive more

than 100 new combat helicopters, including the Ka-52 and the Mi-28N Night Hunter, over a five-year period up to 2015. The Kamov design bureau has said it plans to supply Ka-50 and Ka-52 helicopters to foreign customers in the future.

### [China needs sharper eyes in space](#)

*Asia Times* – 16 October

If China wants to become a dominant space power, it must step up and take a leading role in providing new Earth observation satellite (EOSAT) technology. However, the field is crowded and becoming more so, making this a far more difficult task than previously thought.

China has been slow to make any significant headway in the global satellite communications market - see China lost in SE Asian space (*Asia Times Online*, October 10, 2008) - and sharing EOSAT technology was sitting at the top of the list when it outlined its regional "space cooperation" priorities in October 2005. That's when the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization (APSCO) Convention was signed in Beijing by China, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Iran, Mongolia, Pakistan, Peru, Thailand and later Turkey.

Just three years later, in early September this year, China launched a 510 kilogram research EOSAT into low Earth orbit, part of a joint project which involved Thailand, Iran, Pakistan, Mongolia, Bangladesh and South Korea. Besides enhancing disaster response capabilities in the region, this EOSAT will be used to monitor and assess natural resources and agricultural trends, among other things.

Almost immediately after, on October 1, Thailand's Geo-Informatics and Space Technology Development Agency (GISTDA) announced the successful launch of the Thailand Earth Observation Satellite (THEOS). This European-built, Russian-launched satellite has apparently already attracted offers from China, Japan and Sweden who want to distribute satellite imagery generated by THEOS.

The EOSAT business has changed quickly, becoming almost a long distance phone call-like system in the process, and EOSAT-generated imagery - apart from classified military surveillance data - is rapidly bought and sold in very high resolution across borders. Consumers can access it easily online at very low or no cost, thanks to ventures like Google Earth, for example.

For years, well before the emergence of APSCO, China had attempted to gain ground by expending considerable time and energy in its EOSAT technology outreach and training activities in Asia, under the auspices of the Asia-Pacific Multilateral Cooperation on Space Technology and Application (AP-MCSTA) pact.

China's Beihang University, the AP-MCSTA secretariat, and the China National Space Administration (CNSA) have jointly sponsored a large number of graduate students over the past few years. Many from Thailand in particular have studied in China under its

Master Program on Space Technology and Applications, and the vast majority of these students focused on advanced EOSAT programs which they can now bring to fruition via THEOS.

In Laos, China plans to soon build a new ground station, and will be providing other equipment and technical training. This will vastly improve the ability of Laos to receive and process EOSAT data. Myanmar is another Southeast Asian country that China has provided with EOSAT technology in the past so Myanmar could better monitor opium cultivation within its borders, among other things.

One successful Chinese EOSAT initiative early on was the Feng Yun Satellite Data Broadcasting System, which was overseen by China's Central Meteorological Administration and is still being used by several Asian countries including Laos, Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia and Thailand as well as other South and Central Asian countries. Elsewhere, in Latin America for example, Brazil has emerged as China's biggest EOSAT partner. China will launch a new EOSAT for Venezuela - scheduled for 2013 - following Venezuela's failed attempt to buy into Israel's ImageSat project.

Despite all of this activity, China may now be compelled to rethink its EOSAT strategy, perhaps even shelving many plans altogether in the face of a global surge in EOSAT-related projects. In a report on EOSAT trends released this year, Paris-based Euroconsult estimated that nearly 200 new EOSATs are expected to be launched through 2017. While established government EOSAT programs overseen by the world's largest space agencies including NASA, the European Space Agency, France's CNES, and India's ISRO will maintain their dominant status, their share of total EOSATs will drop from a high of 77% from the period of 1997 to 2006 to only 36% over the coming decade.

What stands out is that private companies will be ordering an estimated 29 EOSATs over the next decade which will account for almost one-fifth of total EOSATs on order - almost six times the number of EOSATs ordered by the private sector in the prior decade. While these Euroconsult projections may be highly optimistic and subject to revision, they nevertheless point to an EOSAT market in transition.

Launch plans for upcoming space tourist flights may well include space available for low-cost, uninsured and low-weight EOSAT constellation payloads as a means to enhance their profitability. Here, the real issue facing China is timing, and whether or not Beijing will really gain any significant ground in a geopolitical sense by aggressively pursuing new joint ventures in the EOSAT realm. Any discussion of EOSATs in general has traditionally touched on the subject of "dual-use" technology, that is, the fact that any EOSAT project can be quickly and easily adapted for military surveillance purposes.

However, China's recent experiences, with a devastating earthquake in particular, suggest that its rapid upgrading of overall disaster preparedness, response and recovery capabilities has taken on an added sense of urgency. With this comes the recognition of the need for a closer integration of EOSAT technology into all disaster preparedness and emergency management operations. In other words, EOSATs today are really all about

achieving a "triple use" solution in terms of bonding together multiple civilian GIS (Geographic Information Systems) and environmental monitoring applications together with military surveillance and disaster response applications and networks - all on one satellite.

Despite their relatively low number of satellite launches to date, two other Asian space agencies, India's ISRO and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency or JAXA, loom large and have many new satellite programs including EOSATs already in motion. ISRO in particular is probably what compels Chinese officials to lie awake at night as they try to figure out how they might aggressively outmaneuver India and its relatively down-to-earth approach.

Besides having a coastal rocket launch facility already in operation - ISRO's Satish Dhawan Space Center is far closer to the equator than China's new facility on Hainan Island - India is making rapid inroads into Southeast Asia, Africa and other parts of the world, while inking several launch contracts and satellite deals with the Israelis and Europeans.

Not only is India's prowess in the EOSAT realm attracting considerable attention, but India has already undertaken ambitious satellite-based distance education and telemedicine projects covering vast rural areas. India is the first country to launch the dedicated distance learning satellites known as EDUSAT, and is demonstrating that it can be an effective integrator of terrestrial networks and satellite infrastructures after working its way through a somewhat painful learning curve.

Even if China figures out an effective way to neutralize or at least spoil India's efforts to woo new customers, China will have to keep pace with the European Space Agency's expansive plans for a new Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) system, a multi-EOSAT constellation with a price tag of well over \$3 billion, along with a long list of other EOSAT contenders like DigitalGlobe and GeoEye in the US, Canada's RadarSats and perhaps even Germany's SARLupes, to name a few.

The one wildcard in this mix, however, remains the 2008 Sichuan earthquake. Was this single event so powerful that it dismantled China's EOSAT strategy which was undergoing major modification as a result of all the EOSAT-related trends mentioned previously? Perhaps not, but doors that were already starting to open prior to the earthquake are now suddenly opening even wider at the Center for Earth Observation and Digital Earth of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. And China has recently joined with the US, Europeans and South Africans on the Group on Earth Observations' executive committee which is addressing new strategies for environmental monitoring and EOSAT deployments.

CNSA is a longstanding member of the International Charter of Space and Major Disasters which deploys EOSATs over disaster zones, and CNSA supports activities undertaken by the UN Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response or SPIDER, along with other organizations. The 2008

earthquake, which followed right after the devastating cyclone in Myanmar, simply gave China a better reason to see these and other related EOSAT-driven projects in a new light.

China has not abandoned its dreams for APSCO and it will never cease in its efforts to devise new small and even nano-satellite technologies. Nor will it ever be ready or willing to abandon military surveillance projects of all kinds. China's ongoing and hugely successful space technology espionage campaign in both the US and Europe has major military space ramifications, and it will persist. That said, the global EOSAT race is now different in character, and, China's priorities and aspirations in this regard will likely have to change over the coming decade.

### [US pushing for Pak F-16 upgrade](#)

*Times of India* – 16 October

The Bush administration is pressing the Democrat-controlled Senate to allow completion of an \$ 891 million upgrade of F-16 fighter jets for Pakistan even as the country is spiraling out of control economically and is reduced to begging for aid from donor countries.

Richard Boucher, a senior Bush administration official with oversight on Pakistan reportedly held a special briefing on Tuesday for senior Senate staffers to persuade their lawmakers bosses to help finance the F-16 upgrade completion, maintaining that the move would increase Pakistan's effectiveness in the war on terror.

Some experts have doubted the need or efficacy of the fighter jets in the scrap against al-Qaida. US government audits and other experts have also suggested that Pakistan is using American military aid to bulk up for offensive action against India on its eastern front rather than fight al-Qaida on its western borders.

The ongoing mid-life upgrade package for the 30-plus F-16s, including equipping them with night operations capability, is estimated to cost \$ 891 million with Pakistan forking for \$ 417 million and US providing \$ 474 million. Of the latter sum, Washington has already ponied up \$224 million but needs Congress's permission for the remaining \$250 million.

Some lawmakers have questioned the need for spending money on arms at such a parlous time for Pakistan. Last month, a Congressional panel scorned the administration's unrelenting push for F-16 upgrades for Pakistan, holding a hearing mockingly titled "Defeating al-Qaeda's Air Force: Pakistan's F-16 Program in the Fight Against Terrorism." But the Bush administration's has re-asserted its priorities even though the United States and the rest of the world is facing a massive financial crunch. Pakistan in particular is reported to be at the edge of an abyss -- an Islamist Zimbabwe armed with nuclear weapons.

Pakistan's credit rating has been reduced to near-default levels and its hard-currency

reserves are down to less than \$ 4 billion, barely enough for about a month's import of essential commodities such as food and oil. On Monday, the Pakistani government decided to keep reserves of petroleum products for 10 days instead of 21 to reduce the outflow of dollars. The Pakistani rupee has lost nearly 25 per cent of its value in the last months and police has had to provide protection to the Karachi Stock Exchange from angry investors decimated by the crisis. International airlines, embassies, and multinationals are ceasing operations in the country.

But the Bush administration has taken little note of the alarming reports within its own intelligence community, let alone the reporting in the US media. On Wednesday, an on-going US intelligence estimate was reported to have described the situation in Pakistan as being "on the edge." One official summarized the report about the state of Pakistan as follows: "No money, no energy, no government."

Pakistan's President Asif Ali Zardari is currently in Beijing on a four-day visit aimed mainly at getting an urgent financial bail-out from its long-time patron after he and his special envoys failed to enthrone the US and the country's Islamic allies in the Gulf to respond urgently to the crisis. While Washington has been cool to Pakistan's financial straits, it wants business as usual on the military supplies front.

### [Navy hunts for hi-tech submarines](#)

*Times of India – 20 October*

With the gigantic Rs 18,798-crore project to construct six French Scorpene killer submarines at Mazagon Docks in Mumbai finally gaining momentum, India's hunt for six new-generation submarines in a mammoth project worth well over Rs 30,000 crore is now well under way.

Interestingly, the Navy has clearly specified that under this second line of diesel-electric submarines, called Project-75A, all the six vessels will be equipped with air-independent propulsion (AIP) systems to significantly boost their operational capabilities. "They will also have high degree of stealth, land-attack capability and ability to incorporate futuristic technologies. Like the Scorpenes, they will be built in an Indian shipyard, public or private, with special emphasis on full transfer of technology," said a source.

"After we issued RFIs (request for information) to Russian (Rosoboronexport), French (Armaris) and German (HDW) firms, among others, two rounds of discussions have already taken place. Another round will be held soon before we issue the RFP (request for proposal) or global tender in late-2008 or early-2009," he added.

Conventional diesel-electric submarines have to surface or snorkel every few days to get oxygen to recharge their batteries. If equipped with AIP systems, they can stay submerged for much longer periods, narrowing the gap with nuclear-powered submarines which can operate silently underwater for virtually unlimited periods.

Pakistan, incidentally, commissioned its first Mesma AIP-equipped submarine PNS

Hamza last month, the third of the French Agosta-90B submarines it has inducted since 1999. China, of course, is leagues ahead. To China's 57 attack submarines, a dozen of them nuclear ones, India has only 16 diesel-electric submarines — 10 Russian Kilo-class, four German HDW and two virtually-obsolete Foxtrot submarines.

Unlike China, which is now also getting ready to induct the new Shang-class (Type-093) nuclear-powered attack submarines, the Indian Navy neither has nuclear submarines, nor SLBM (submarine-launched ballistic missile) capabilities at present, leaving a big hole in India's quest for "a nuclear weapon triad".

### [Russia has over \\$5 bln in foreign naval orders](#)

*RIA Novosti* – 21 October

Foreign orders for Russian naval hardware for the next three years exceed \$5 billion, a state arms export monopoly senior official said on Tuesday. "The portfolio of orders, namely contracts signed and in force, is estimated at over \$5 billion, with different deadlines up to 2011," said Ivan Goncharenko, first deputy general director of Rosoboronexport.

In 2007 the share of naval equipment in Rosoboronexport's portfolio of export orders was 9% or \$600 million, the official said, adding that India, China, Algeria, Vietnam and Indonesia remained key buyers of Russia's naval armaments. India and China have purchased submarines, frigates and destroyers. Vietnam has ordered Svetlyak-class fast attack boats and frigates, while Indonesia will receive corvettes built in Russia in cooperation with Spanish firms.

Speaking about the naval orders from Venezuela, Goncharenko said Russia had not signed any contracts with Caracas to supply submarines, as some media sources had speculated. "We discuss arms deals with many countries, but as of today Rosoboronexport has no submarine contracts signed with that country," he said. Venezuela's vice president, Ramon Carrizales was earlier quoted as saying that the Latin American state planned to buy Amur-class diesel submarines from Russia.

### [India bombing 'kills at least 17'](#)

*BBC* – 21 October

At least 17 people have been killed and 20 injured in a bombing in the north-east Indian city of Imphal, police say. A bomb in an auto rickshaw went off near a police base in the city, which is the capital of Manipur state. Police say most of the dead are civilians. No one has claimed responsibility for the attack.

It comes two days after a suspected militant grenade attack outside the chief minister's home. Correspondents say Manipur is home to about a dozen rebel groups. Some are fighting for the state's independence, others for autonomous tribal homelands.

The explosion ripped through a busy market area near an oil depot in central Imphal, where many people were eating in food stalls. "It was a gory sight... bodies spattered in blood," said local journalist Yumnun Rupachandra. Doctors say the death toll may rise as many of those injured are in a serious condition.

The blast went off not far from the residence of the Manipur Chief Minister, Okram Ibobi Singh, where an explosion occurred on Sunday in which no one was killed or injured. A separatist group, the People's Revolutionary Army of Kangleipak, claimed responsibility for that explosion.

Intelligence officials say they do not rule out the involvement of another Manipuri rebel group, the Kanglei Yana Kana Lup, which recently attacked "corrupt" officials and beat up students suspected of cheating in examinations. But they say the police commandos appeared to be the main target, as many of them eat in the local food stalls outside their headquarters.

## **NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY**

### [Royal Navy will tackle pirate scourge](#)

*The Times* – 15 October

The Royal Navy is to be given the power to seize and arrest suspected pirates in the Gulf of Aden under new emergency legislation, senior defence sources have disclosed. The the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is talking to the Government of Somalia about drawing up a memorandum of understanding to allow Royal Navy warships to enter Somali territorial waters in pursuit of pirates and hand over captured suspects to the Mogadishu authorities, according to the sources.

The new measures have been given added urgency by the increase in piracy off the Somali coast in the past 12 months. The defence sources said that in two years the amount of ransom paid out to pirates in the region had increased from \$3 million to \$18 million (£10 million), with some reports suggesting that it was as high as \$30 million. The Royal Navy, which has not engaged pirates for centuries, is restricted by international law. The sources said that the Royal Navy was empowered to take action to go to the aid of anyone under attack in international waters, provided there was an act of piracy under way, but was not authorised to arrest suspected pirates and hand them over to police in other countries.

The proposed legislation, which is being studied by the Department of Transport, would authorise "UK enforcement officers to board, seize, detain and arrest suspected pirates". A Royal Navy warship already forms part of the Gulf of Aden Combined Task Force 150, an international fleet trying to confront the pirates.

As details of the new British measures emerged, commercial shipping companies said they were turning to private security companies to combat pirates off the coast of Somalia because of the present restrictions on foreign navies. Dozens of private security

companies, many with experience in Iraq and Afghanistan, are now employed to provide merchant vessels with intelligence on the whereabouts of pirates and armed protection on board the ships. One senior British defence source said merchant ships should consider having armed protection, although he ruled out crews of the vessels being given guns.

The source said the pirates were becoming so bold that they were seizing vessels as big as 60,000 tonnes and using them to launch raids on freighters. Martin Rudd, vice-president of the Olive Group, a company with security operations in about 20 countries, said that shipping groups were calling in security companies to tackle the pirates.

### [NATO warships arrive to deter Somali pirates](#)

*CNN* – 19 October

Somali Prime Minister Nur Hassan Hussein Sunday welcomed the arrival of seven NATO warships off the coast of his country to help in the battle against pirates in the region. "We are so delighted with the arrival of those NATO ships into our waters and they have our full consent to fight against the pirates," the prime minister said at a news conference. "NATO can carry out any acts including military actions in our waters against the pirates," he added.

Responding to a request from the United Nations, NATO defense ministers recently authorized the fleet of naval vessels to help protect U.N. World Food Program ships carrying relief supplies to Somalia. The WFP ships had been protected by Canadian military vessels under a temporary arrangement that expired this week. The NATO ships will also help "deter acts of piracy that continue to threaten the region," the alliance said. It is part of an international effort to curb a spate of Somali pirate hijackings in the past year in the Gulf of Aden, which partially borders Somalia.

More than 60 ships have been attacked by Somali pirates in the Gulf of Aden this year alone, compared with about half that in 2007, according to a report released earlier this month by Chatham House, a London-based institute that analyzes international affairs. The report found the \$18 million to \$30 million in ransoms already paid this year is helping to finance the war in Somalia.

One of the groups reportedly receiving ransom money is Al-Shabaab, an Islamic militant group that is waging a bloody battle for control of Somalia. Al-Shabaab has been labeled a terrorist organization by the United States.

Pirates are still holding a Ukrainian ship carrying Soviet-made tanks, artillery shells, grenade launchers and small arms off Somalia's coast and are demanding a \$20 million ransom. The MV Faina was seized in late September and is being monitored by nearby U.S. naval ships.

Last week, India sent a naval ship to escort Indian vessels traveling along the coast of Yemen and part of southern Oman. Hassan said the pirates are an "absolute risk" to Somalia and the rest of the world.

### [Somali pirates 'hard to defeat'](#)

BBC – 22 October

The commander of Nato's anti-piracy patrol due to start soon off Somalia says it will be difficult to defend ships from pirate attacks. "The time that a pirate unveils himself to the time that he's onboard ship is such a short period of time," Admiral Mark Fitzgerald told the BBC. Earlier, he said rules of engagement were still being debated by Nato.

More than 60 ships have been seized this year in the busy shipping lanes near Somalia and the Gulf of Aden. Nato is sending seven frigates to support US navy vessels already there, while India and several European countries have said they will also mount anti-piracy patrols.

Admiral Fitzgerald said Nato's mission was primarily to protect ships carrying UN aid to Somalia where more than 3m people - almost half of the population - are in need of food aid. But he hoped the Nato vessels would be able to protect other ships - around 20,000 vessels pass by Somalia each year.

However, given the amount of traffic, he said, it was difficult to spot who was a pirate. "From a military standpoint, we certainly are limited by what we can do," he told Reuters news agency. "How do you prove a guy's a pirate before he actually attacks a ship?" He also said that the North Atlantic Council was still drawing up the rules of engagement for pirates. "All we've been told is to prepare a plan to go down there. So [the rules] are going to have to be debated."

Piracy off the coast of Somalia is estimated to have cost up to \$30m (£17m) in ransoms so far this year, according to a recent report. Human Rights Watch says Somalia is the most ignored tragedy in the world. Somalia has lacked a functioning central government since 1991 and has been afflicted by continual civil strife.

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

### [Russia test-fires ballistic missile to mid-Pacific](#)

Reuters – 12 October

Russia test-launched a strategic missile to the equatorial part of the Pacific Ocean for the first time on Saturday, at a time when Moscow's growing assertiveness is fuelling tension with the West. President Dmitry Medvedev, who watched the launch from the aircraft carrier Admiral Kuznetsov, has said problems caused by global financial turmoil would not hurt Russian plans to revive its armed forces, a symbol for Moscow's resurgence. Russia's newest missile, the Sineva, was launched by the nuclear-powered submarine Tula from an underwater position in the Arctic Barents Sea, and hit an unspecified area near the equator in the Pacific Ocean, a navy spokesman said. "For the first time in the history of the Russian Navy the target of the missile was in an equatorial part of the Pacific Ocean rather than the Kura testing ground on the Kamchatka Peninsula," he said.

Russian television showed the missile emerging from the icy waters of the Arctic Barents sea for the 11,547 km (7,200 miles) journey to the Pacific. "Not one missile of this class has ever flown so far," Russian television showed Medvedev telling sailors. The spokesman did not specify the area where the missile landed. He said the area was closed for navigation and flights ahead of the test in accordance with international rules.

Medvedev's predecessor Vladimir Putin focused on reviving the armed forces, which were neglected for around 10 years after the fall of the Soviet Union. Russia's strategic bombers have restarted regular patrols over the Atlantic Ocean, irking NATO, and a group of the Northern Fleet ships is on its way to the Caribbean to take part in joint exercises with U.S. foe Venezuela. Two Russian warships and their support vessels docked in Tripoli ahead of making the transatlantic trip.

Russia's commitment to modernize its armed forces has grown as its ties with the West reached their lowest point since the Cold War after Russian troops crushed Georgia's attempt to retake a pro-Moscow separatist region. On Saturday, Medvedev said Russia would start building aircraft carriers, a type of vessel once derided by the Soviet military as an instrument of imperialism unbecoming of Moscow's defensive military posture. He said Russia should "not scrimp" on its armed forces and called for government spending to improve living conditions for its armed forces as well as new weapons systems.

Russia, which saw eight years of strong economic growth under Putin, has adopted the goal of becoming one of the world's leading economies by 2020. Medvedev says the economy has enough resources to survive the global turmoil and achieve its goals. Putin, now Russia's prime minister, has said the next year's budget will see another 30-percent growth in defense spending.

The Sineva missile, advertised by the Russian military as an element of a new generation of Russian strategic weapons capable of surpassing any missile defense system, was commissioned last year. The Russian military says the missiles of Sineva's class will be operational at least until 2030.

Medvedev's appearance with the Northern Fleet in Murmansk is his second major visit to navy installations in just two weeks and he will oversee exercises attended by 5,000 troops, eight warships and five submarines.

### [Japan concerned over Chinese submarines near maritime borders](#)

*RIA Novosti* – 17 October

Chinese submarines have recently increased their activity near Japan's maritime borders in the East China Sea, a Japanese military source said on Friday. According to the source, the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force detected the presence of a Chinese Han-class nuclear-powered submarine and a Song-class diesel attack submarine in the region as the U.S. George Washington nuclear aircraft carrier was heading to the South Korean port of

Pusan on a friendly visit. The USS George Washington is stationed at a U.S. naval base in Yokosuka, Japan.

The source said the Chinese submarines did not violate Japanese territorial waters, but described their activities as attempts "to gather data on noise signatures emitted by all automated systems of the U.S. aircraft carrier" and "some sort of intimidation." In response to the Chinese moves, Tokyo and Washington increased the number of patrol flights by Japan's P-3C Orion ASW aircraft and deployed additional U.S. reconnaissance satellite assets to monitor the area.

The Chinese Navy's submarine fleet includes at least two nuclear-powered attack submarines, and its 13 Song-class submarines are extremely quiet and difficult to detect when running on electric motors.

In October 2006, an undetected Chinese Song-class submarine popped up in the middle of a U.S. task force during an exercise in the Pacific at the distance of only 5 miles from the USS Kitty Hawk aircraft carrier. The Chinese vessel slipped past at least a dozen other American warships which were supposed to protect the carrier from hostile aircraft or submarines.

### [Chinese combat ships pass Tsugaru Strait](#)

*NHK* – 21 October

Japan's Defense Ministry says it located 4 Chinese combatant ships in the Tsugaru Strait in northern Japan on Sunday. This was the first time that Chinese Navy combatant vessels, including a state-of-the-art frigate, were confirmed to pass the international strait.

The Joint Staff Office of the Self-Defense Forces says the vessels were seen in the Sea of Japan, 37 kilometers west-southwest off Tappizaki in Aomori Prefecture at around 5 PM. A Maritime Self-Defense Force P3C patrol plane spotted the vessels.

The vessels were 2 frigates, including the most advanced frigate in the Chinese Navy, the Jiangkai II, and a destroyer and a supply ship. They passed through the Tsugaru Strait at around 10 PM into the Pacific Ocean. The Jiangkai II was spotted on Friday near the Tsushima Strait in western Japan. It is believed to have joined the other vessels after moving north in the Sea of Japan. The Defense Ministry is analyzing the purpose of the Chinese vessels' activity.

In 2000, a Chinese military vessel used for information gathering was confirmed to have passed the Tsugaru strait.

## NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

### [US and India sign nuclear accord](#)

BBC – 10 October

The United States and India have signed a civilian nuclear co-operation accord to end 34 years of US sanctions. US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee signed the deal in Washington after years of negotiations. India will gain access to US civilian nuclear technology and fuel in return for inspections of its civilian, but not military, nuclear facilities.

Critics say the deal sets a potentially dangerous precedent. They say it effectively allows India to expand its nuclear power industry without requiring it to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as other nations must. The US restricted nuclear co-operation with India after it tested a nuclear weapon in 1974.

"We look forward to working with the US companies on the commercial [steps] that will follow to implement this landmark agreement," Mr Mukherjee said just before signing. Ms Rice said: "Many thought this day would never come, but doubts have been silenced." US President George W Bush signed the accord into law earlier this week, after it had finally been approved by the US Congress.

The deal was first agreed three years ago and is regarded as a key foreign policy priority for both the Indian and US governments. Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said earlier that the deal would help India to liberate itself from "the constraints of technology denial of 34 years". Although India has said it retains the right to conduct nuclear tests, the US has said the deal will be cancelled in such an eventuality.

The Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) recently lifted a ban that had denied India access to the international nuclear market. India and France have also signed a major co-operation pact which paves the way for the sale of French nuclear reactors to Delhi. France is the world's second largest producer of nuclear energy after the United States. Russia has also been lobbying the Indian government hard on behalf of its firms.

### [Nuclear weapons debated in Sydney](#)

BBC – 20 October

The first meeting of the newly established International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament has been held in Sydney. It was set up by the Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd. He is aiming to reinvigorate the global debate ahead of a 2010 conference which will review the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). He launched the scheme in June after visiting Hiroshima in Japan, which was devastated by a nuclear bomb in 1945.

The commission is being co-chaired Australia's former foreign minister, Gareth Evans and Japan's former foreign minister, Yoriko Kawaguchi. Given a two-year mandate, the

new commission is intended to revive the global debate on the spread of nuclear weapons ahead of the 2010 conference, which will review the four decades old Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The new body includes commissioners drawn from five nuclear powers - the US, China, Russia, the UK and France - as well as countries including Indonesia, Germany, South Africa and Norway.

Most significant perhaps is the participation of two senior figures from India and Pakistan: a former Indian diplomat, Brajesh Mishra, and ex-army chief, Jehangir Karamat. Neither country has entered into international talks on non-proliferation since the treaty came into effect in 1970, and although the two men are not formally representing their governments, their inclusion is being widely interpreted as a sign of progress.

The co-chair Mr Evans has said that the world can never achieve nuclear disarmament unless countries which have refused to join the non-proliferation treaty - such as India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea - are brought into the new process.

### [N Korea wants Japan out of talks](#)

*BBC – 22 October 2008*

North Korea has suggested that Japan be removed from long-running six-party talks aimed at its nuclear disarmament. A commentary in a Pyongyang newspaper said Japan kept creating trouble and had "obstructed" the process. Japan has refused to grant North Korea the economic and energy aid it seeks as part of a negotiated agreement. Tokyo says Pyongyang has failed to properly investigate the fate of Japanese citizens it abducted in the 1970s and 1980s.

South Korea has said that an outside donor may need to be brought in to provide Japan's share of aid. However the US remained optimistic that the situation could be resolved. "I think there's a high degree of confidence among the five that we will meet our obligations," State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said.

The countries involved in the six-party process are North and South Korea, Russia, China, Japan and the US. The six nations reached an agreement in February 2007, in which North Korea agreed to halt all its nuclear activity in exchange for aid and other concessions. Pyongyang was to receive one million tonnes of energy aid from the five other countries in return for disabling its nuclear plants.

It began dismantling its main nuclear complex last November, and blew up the main cooling tower in a symbolic gesture of its commitment to the process. A row which threatened to derail the accord was narrowly averted last week, when the US announced it was removing Pyongyang from its list of state sponsors of terrorism.

Pyongyang wanted to be removed from the list in order to receive international aid and loans, and facilitate its diplomatic rehabilitation. But Japan criticised the move as

"extremely regrettable", saying it wanted North Korea to provide more information about Japanese abductees before Pyongyang was removed from the list.