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Articles from subscriber only sites are available on request. *Révolutionnaire* is edited by Ho Shu Huang, Kalyan M. Kemburi, and 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

### [US commends Sri Lanka's war against LTTE](#)

*Thaindian News* – November 6

A top US military official Wednesday commended the Sri Lankan military for its recent successes against the Tamil Tigers, whom Washington has designated as a terrorist group. "We are hopeful that the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) would be a decreasingly important factor of much less reach than they are and have been in the past," Admiral Timothy Keating, Commander of US Pacific Joint Command, told foreign correspondents in New York.

As head of the US Pacific Command, with its headquarters in Hawaii, Keating is responsible for the US military operation ranging from Australia and New Zealand to China, Taiwan and Japan to India and Sri Lanka.

Sri Lankan Army chief Sarath Fonseka said early this week in Colombo that LTTE's "80 percent" of the fighting capabilities have been eliminated. He also claimed that the Sri Lankan troops were just seven kilometers away from the Kilaly lagoon, which links northern Jaffna peninsula to the Wannai mainland along the western coast.

"We are very pleased the Sri Lankan Navy has been able to wage an increasingly effective campaign against the LTTE," Keating said.

"We are assured and gratified by the progress that the Sri Lankan military is making, and I think, the Sri Lankan military would be the first to admit that there is work to be done."

At the same time, Keating observed that the Sri Lankan military needed more capability and capacity to be successful in its endeavour to defeat the LTTE.

"I am confident the Sri Lankan military has very best intentions in the world (to defeat LTTE). Surely, they would like to have greater capability and capacity, but the progress they are making is commendable," he said.

### [Hamas boycotts Palestinian talks](#)

*BBC News* – November 8

The Palestinian militant group Hamas says it will boycott reconciliation talks with its Fatah rivals in Cairo.

Hamas accused the Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas of arresting hundreds of its members in the Fatah-controlled West Bank.

Egypt has been trying to broker talks between the two factions and has proposed they form a "national consensus government".

The factions have been deeply divided since Hamas seized Gaza last year.

The talks, due to have started on Sunday, would have been the first official meeting between the two main Palestinian factions since the Gaza takeover.

### **'Huge differences'**

Hamas official Moussa Abu Marzouk said Fatah had gone back on a pledge to release Hamas prisoners, Associated Press news agency reported.

Mr Abbas's forces have embarked on a security drive recently, trying to extend their authority across the whole of the West Bank.

Hamas says it wants what it calls political prisoners belonging to it released, but Fatah says any detainees are not political but have committed crimes.

The boycott of the talks - before they had even begun - highlights the huge differences between Fatah and Hamas, says the BBC's Aleem Maqbool in Ramallah.

A meeting would have been a massive first step by the two sides towards forming a joint government, reforming their security services and discussing a date for presidential and legislative elections, our correspondent says.

The division of the Palestinians has been hindering efforts at pursuing a peace process with Israel.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is in the region trying to push forward the process but conceded on Thursday that a Middle East peace deal will not be reached by the end of the year.

US President George W Bush said a year ago that he wanted a peace deal signed before he left office in January 2009.

### [Sri Lanka rejects latest Tiger truce offer](#)

*Reuters* – November 10

Sri Lanka's government rejected the latest Tamil Tiger truce offer out of hand on Monday, again demanding the separatist rebels surrender or be destroyed by a military offensive rapidly gaining ground.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) at the weekend reiterated what they say is a long-standing desire for a truce in the 25-year-old war, one of Asia's

longest insurgencies. The government has previously called such offers disingenuous.

The military said troops on Monday captured the northwestern Kiranchi area and were crossing the marshes surrounding Pooneryn, a strategic spit of land from where LTTE artillery fires to stop troops from coming south from the Jaffna peninsula.

The seizure of Kiranchi came after a day of heavy clashes that the military said was leading toward taking control of an important road and opening up a land route to Jaffna for the first time in two decades. No casualty figures were available.

In parliament, Agriculture Minister Maithripala Sirisena repeated President Mahinda Rajapaksa's stance, which has been in place since the government scrapped a 2002 ceasefire in January after accusing the LTTE of using the truce to rearm.

"The government will not go for a ceasefire with the LTTE. We will not have any form of discussion with the LTTE. We have already told them to lay down arms and there is no change in our stand," Sirisena told the legislature on Monday.

Sirisena is the latest government official targeted by a Tamil Tiger suicide bomber. He escaped unhurt from an Oct. 9 blast that hit his convoy in Colombo, killing one and wounding five including his deputy.

#### NO INCENTIVE TO STOP

Diplomats and analysts say the government has little incentive to negotiate now because their military offensive since January appears to have put the rebels on their heels as it nears the LTTE's headquarters town of Kilinochchi.

"Why would the government want to stop riding this wave now? It is making progress in terms of territory gains," said John Drake, an analyst with the AKE Group risk consultancy.

He said the government and Sri Lankan public are "very much aware that the LTTE is not a trustworthy organization that would lay down its arms and honour agreements".

The war has energised Rajapaksa's political base among the Sinhalese majority, who make up about 75 percent of the island nation's 21 million people.

It has also resuscitated talk Rajapaksa would use the morale surge a military victory would give as grounds to call a new election to further entrench his government, although he ruled that out as recently as September.

The Tigers have less diplomatic traction in the post-Sept. 11 world since they are on U.S., E.U. and Indian terrorism lists after carrying out suicide bombings and assassinations for years, a point Sri Lanka has increasingly made in its foreign relations.

The Tigers say they are fighting to establish a separate homeland for Sri Lanka's Tamil minority, which has complained of marginalisation by successive governments led by the Sinhalese majority since independence from Britain in 1948.

[Cambodia and Thailand agree on border outline plan](#)

*Channel News Asia* – November 13

Thailand and Cambodia agreed in principle on Wednesday to reduce troops and use a century-old survey map to help resolve a long-running border dispute.

The agreement between Cambodian Foreign Minister Hor Namhong and his Thai counterpart Sompong Amornviwat was the result of three days of negotiations.

They said they would make a priority of delineating the border area around the 11th century Preah Vihear temple, where troops have been in a standoff since July, and will use a 1907 French colonial survey map to do so.

However the Thai foreign minister said his country's parliament would first need to approve both actions, which could help defuse tension and resolve competing territorial claims.

"Only two small issues remain, but I need a decision from (the) Thai parliament," Sompong told reporters in a press conference at the conclusion of talks between the two countries in the Cambodian tourist hub Siem Reap.

Cambodia's Hor Namhong said: "This is a clear and quick step forward. The delineation of the border at Preah Vihear will start from mid-December."

Another round of negotiations will take place in January, the foreign ministers added, but the two countries will also form a border task force that will stay in constant contact to avoid more conflict.

Shortly after similar talks between the foreign ministers failed last month, troops from the two countries clashed on October 15 on disputed land near the ancient Khmer temple, killing one Thai and three Cambodians.

The Cambodian-Thai border has never been fully demarcated, in part because it is littered with landmines left over from decades of war in Cambodia.

The most recent tensions began in July when the Khmer temple was awarded

United Nations World Heritage status, rekindling a long-running disagreement over ownership of the surrounding land.

[Kabul moves to win over insurgents](#)

*Financial Times* – November 16

Afghanistan is drawing up plans for a renewed bid to persuade insurgents to give up their battle against the US-backed government of President Hamid Karzai after months of international frustration at the slow pace of attempts to sow divisions in the Taliban movement.

A new organisation will be put in charge of identifying fighters who might reconcile themselves with the government and giving them incentives such as official jobs and retraining to help them switch sides.

The plan is being co-ordinated by the independent directorate of local governance (IDLG), an increasingly powerful arm of the Afghan government. It will also involve key ministries, including the Ministry of the Interior, whose new head, Hanif Atmar, is also creating optimism in foreign embassies with a push to clean up endemic corruption among police and officials in his department.

It will replace the Peace and Reconciliation Commission which has been widely criticised for having only a limited effect on draining support for Taliban rebels.

The initiative has come as a relief to Afghanistan's international backers who have grown frustrated at the slow progress made in persuading low-level commanders and fighters, who are often not motivated by ideology, to abandon the fight.

While the new initiative will focus on low-level Taliban fighters, Mr Karzai has repeatedly made clear that he is willing to do business with top members of the former regime that was ousted in 2001.

On Sunday, at a press conference in the presidential palace, he said he would "go to any length" to guarantee the safety of Mullah Omar, the Taliban leader, if he wanted to talk peace.

"If I hear from him that he is willing to come to Afghanistan or to negotiate for peace . . . I, as the president of Afghanistan, will go to any length providing protection," Mr Karzai said. "If I say I want protection for Mullah Omar, the international community has two choices: remove me or leave if they disagree," he said.

However, efforts to bring fighters in from the cold remain extremely politically sensitive.

Last winter a UK-led initiative in Helmand, which has striking similarities to the plans being drawn up by the directorate, led to the expulsion of two foreign diplomats who were accused of talking to Taliban fighters without the permission of the Afghan government.

Diplomats involved said plans to set up retraining camps in Helmand for reconciled fighters was done with the knowledge of all the key ministries, but not, crucially, Mr Karzai himself.

The IDLG declined to talk about the new plan, which it hopes to publish next month.

But Jelani Popal, the directorate's head, has talked in the past about the need to focus on low-level fighters and commanders – the so-called tier one and tier two insurgents who are motivated more by local grievances or simply because the Taliban can offer them employment and cash.

#### [Government still seeks peace with MILF](#)

*Business Mirror* – 16 November

THE government will continue to work with the leadership of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in efforts to bring peace to Mindanao.

Presidential Peace Adviser Hermogenes Esperon Jr. gave this assurance to Kristian Herbolzheimer, a Spanish expert on peace process, following their meeting at the weekend.

Esperon invited Herbolzheimer to give a briefing on his experience in previous and ongoing peace process programs in Europe, many of which had resulted in the signing of peace agreements that included disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), the new shift adopted by the government in dealing with rebel groups.

Herbolzheimer said the DDR was successfully implemented in countries with internal conflict such as El Salvador, Northern Ireland and the most recent, in Aceh, Indonesia.

According to him, disarmament is “the collection, documentation, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives and light and heavy weapons of combatants and often also of the civilian population.”

He defined demobilization as “the formal and controlled discharge of active combatants from armed forces or other armed groups [while] reintegration is the process by which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income.”

Esperon echoed the need for a DDR in order to attain a genuine and lasting peace in Mindanao.

The peace process between the government and the MILF was disrupted after fighting broke out between soldiers and rogue MILF members on August 18.

The fighting was initiated by three of the 19 MILF commanders who resented the aborted signing of the controversial memorandum of agreement on ancestral domain between the government and the MILF in Malaysia in August this year.

Esperon said the government "cannot give up on peace because I know the importance of peace. I've seen how ugly war is," he added.

The military has launched police action against the three wayward MILF commanders who had attacked civilian communities in North Cotabato, Lanao Norte and Sarangani provinces.

Esperon said the skirmishes have subsided considerably and the cease-fire between the military and the MILF was holding

#### [Sadr Hardliners Fail To Torpedo Security Pact](#)

*Agence France-Presse* – November 17

MPs loyal to anti-U.S. Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr failed to halt the first reading in parliament on Nov. 17 of a security deal between Baghdad and Washington on the presence of U.S. troops in Iraq.

When parliament convened to discuss the pact, the 30 Sadrist deputies demanded that the body instead examine another draft law on treaties and conventions, an AFP reporter present in the chamber said.

"We want the law on treaties and conventions to be the only thing discussed today, not the accord with the United States," shouted Aqil Abdel Hussein, head of the Sadr group.

Mahmud Mashhadani, the speaker of parliament, compromised and ruled that both texts would be read successively.

On Nov. 16 Ahmed Masaudi, spokesman for the Sadr parliamentary bloc, said the movement would submit a bill that would require a two-thirds majority for parliamentary approval, replacing the current requirement of a simple majority.

The wide-ranging agreement between Baghdad and Washington would replace a U.N. mandate that expires at the end of the year and allow U.S. forces to remain in the country until the end of 2011.

[DR Congo: Ban welcomes rebel pullback and increased aid access in east](#)

*UN News Centre* – November 19

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today welcomed the announcement of a military pullback by a rebel militia and the opening of humanitarian corridors to allow unfettered access to vulnerable people in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where recent conflict has uprooted a quarter of a million people.

In a [statement](#) issued by his spokesperson, Mr. Ban welcomed yesterday's announcement made by the National Congress in Defense of the People (CNDP), led by renegade general Laurent Nkunda, which has been fighting with Congolese forces, known as FARDC, in North Kivu province.

The UN peacekeeping mission in the country, known by its French acronym [MONUC](#), reported today that after declaring a unilateral retreat, the CNDP has begun redeploying in the Kanyabayonga-Nyanzale and the Kabasha-Rutshuru areas.

The Secretary-General “calls on the parties to observe the cessation of hostilities and to guarantee safe passage of humanitarian assistance as they continue with the efforts to find a political solution to the crisis.”

He expressed his appreciation of the work of his Special Envoy, former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, who has held talks in the past week with Mr. Nkunda and regional leaders, including Presidents Joseph Kabila of the DRC and José Eduardo dos Santos of Angola.

Yesterday, Mr. Obasanjo – accompanied by co-facilitator and former Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa and the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Conference, Ambassador Liberata Mulamula – met Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni in Kampala.

The top UN envoy to the vast African nation today said that MONUC has stepped up its military presence in North Kivu, with troops being reconfigured to reinforce the roughly 6,000 forces already on the ground.

Alan Doss, the Secretary-General's Special Representative and head of MONUC, said the mission has bolstered its security operations in the provincial capital Goma and is ensuring the safety of local officials. He also expressed MONUC's support for Mr. Obasanjo's “difficult mission.”

Yesterday, the Special Representative voiced hope that the Security Council will shortly approve a request for 3,000 additional troops.

The Council's authorization for extra forces would “enable us to reinforce our presence, particularly in North Kivu, which is really needed given the pressures

on us from many directions,” he told reporters in New York via video link from the DRC.

[Sri Lanka army 'takes rebel area'](#)

*BBC News* – November 20

Sri Lankan soldiers have captured the first line of defence of Tamil Tiger rebels on the northern Jaffna peninsula, the army has said.

A military spokesman said 50 rebels and about 10 soldiers had been killed during several days of heavy fighting.

The Sri Lankan army overran a 5-mile (8km) embankment dotted with fortified bunkers, he said.

The rebels are said to have three more defensive lines on the land dividing their territory from the government's.

Government forces are seeking to crush the Tigers and end their fight for a separate state for the ethnic Tamil minority.

**'Major offensive'**

The first line of Tamil Tiger defences at Muhamalai fell after several days of heavy fighting, Sri Lanka's military spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said.

The Tigers are believed to have three more defensive lines on the narrow isthmus of land that divides rebel territory from the government-controlled Jaffna in the far north, he said.

The Tigers have not commented on the military's claims and the government strictly controls access by journalists to the area where the fighting is taking place.

The BBC's Roland Buerk in Colombo says Sri Lanka's military is on a major offensive against the rebels and troops have been advancing rapidly.

But there is concern over the fate of hundreds of thousands of civilians who have fled their homes and are now trapped in the diminishing rebel territory, our correspondent says.

Amnesty International has said the government is incapable of providing for their basic needs, such as shelters, sanitation and safe drinking water.

The human rights organisation has also accused the Tigers of not allowing civilians to move to safer places and of using them as a human shield against the military's onslaught.

Earlier this week, Sri Lankan troops captured a strategically important town used by the Tigers as a key supply route to the island's north, the army said.

It was the first time in recent fighting that the army had captured parts of the A9 highway leading from the centre of the island to the Jaffna peninsula, correspondents said.

Brig Nanayakkara said the army had taken control of Mankulam town, near the A9, on Monday.

He said that in capturing the town, in rebel hands since 1999, the army had cut off rebel supply routes.

On Sunday, the army said it had entered the Tamil Tiger stronghold of Pooneryn and now controlled the entire western coast.

The rebels have been fighting for a separate homeland for Tamils in the north and east since 1983 and about 70,000 people have been killed in the violence.

## **TERRORISM & COUNTER-TERRORISM**

### [Pakistan releases Taleban in swap](#)

*BBC News* – November 7

Pakistan has set free three Taleban militants, including an important Taleban commander, who were arrested in July, officials said.

Among the freed militants is Commander Maulvi Rafiuddin, a close associate of militant leader, Baitullah Mehsud.

The release was part of a prisoner swap on Wednesday night in which Taleban released 10 Pakistani soldiers, officials said.

The swap took place in the violence-hit Hangu district in the north west.

The district mayor of Hangu, Khan Afzal, told the BBC that the released soldiers included seven personnel of the army and three personnel of the paramilitary Frontier Corps.

He said the swap was negotiated by a tribal council of elders.

### **'Prized catch'**

Maulvi Rafiuddin and his three companions were arrested by the police in early July in Doaba area of Hangu district.

Hundreds of Taleban surrounded Doaba police station soon afterwards to secure their release, but the authorities shifted the prisoners to a safer place.

Taleban kidnapped over a dozen officials in retaliation, and beheaded three of them when their demand for Maulvi Rafiuddin's release was not met.

The incident sparked military action in Doaba region in which at least 13 soldiers and several Taleban militants were killed.

A senior official, Rehman Malik, told reporters in July that Maulvi Rafiuddin was a "prized catch" and the question of his release did not arise.

Police officials in Hangu say nearly 20 kidnapped officials, most of them civilian, are still being held by Baitullah Mehsud's followers.

Mr Mehsud, who leads an alliance of pro-Taleban groups, is accused of masterminding the killing of former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. He denied involvement in the attack.

### ['US strike' on Pakistan militants](#)

*BBC News – November 7*

A suspected US missile strike in north-west Pakistan has killed at least 11 people, Pakistani officials say.

The attack by a US drone targeted Taleban militants in the tribal region of North Waziristan, close to the Afghan border, they said.

Local people say the house of fighters loyal to a Taleban commander, Hafiz Gul Bahadur, was hit.

The US has not confirmed the attack. It has carried out many attacks along Pakistan's border areas recently.

### **Sovereignty issue**

The attack was in a remote village in the area of Razmak. Details are sketchy, but locals say a house of a local tribesman was hit.

The identity of those killed in the attack is not yet clear. Hafiz Gul Bahadur is believed to be responsible for many attacks on US and Nato forces in neighbouring Afghanistan.

He comes from the Ahmedzai Wazir tribe and used to be second in command to Pakistan's most feared militant, Baitullah Mehsud, the BBC's Syed Shoaib Hasan in Islamabad reports.

Hafiz Gul Bahadur later broke away from Baitullah Mehsud.

North Waziristan is a haven for Taleban and al-Qaeda fighters who enter Afghanistan to fight US and Nato forces.

There are believed to have been 18 strikes by CIA-operated predator drones in Pakistan's tribal border areas since August.

The US says it acts only when it has clear intelligence on the whereabouts of a known militant and that its targeting of al-Qaeda leaders is helping prevent terrorist attacks on the west.

But Pakistanis complain that civilians are often killed and that the attacks are a violation of their sovereignty.

Earlier this week Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari warned the new head of US Central Command, Gen David Petraeus, that missile attacks on Pakistani territory were counter-productive.

Mr Zardari said such strikes were detrimental to America's war on terror.

He said they make it harder for the Pakistani authorities to persuade the Pashtun tribes living along the Afghan frontier to join them in the fight against the extremists.

### [Indonesia executes Bali bombers](#)

*BBC News – November 8*

Three Indonesian Islamic militants condemned to death for the 2002 Bali bombings that killed 202 people have been executed by firing squad.

Imam Samudra, Amrozi Nurhasyim and Ali Ghufron (Mukhlas) were shot at the island prison of Nusakambangan at 0015 (1715 GMT on Saturday), officials said.

They were found guilty of planning twin attacks on nightclubs at the resort of Kuta, popular with Western tourists.

Security forces are on alert across the country amid fears of reprisal attacks.

Members of radical groups have already gathered to show their respect in the men's villages, where their bodies will be buried.

The BBC's Lucy Williamson, in Cilacap, near the prison, says the execution took place in the darkness surrounded by forest and a handful of witnesses.

Later, a spokesman for the attorney-general's office confirmed that the three men had been shot.

"The autopsy results show that all three are dead," Jasman Panjaitan told a news conference.

"The family members are now bathing the bodies," he added.

### **High alert**

The deaths will not evoke much sympathy in Indonesia and many people believe the executions should have been carried out much sooner, our correspondent says.

Officials had said the three would be shot in early November but no date had been announced in advance.

A brother of two of the bombers is at the prison to help prepare the bodies before they are flown back to their home villages.

The dead men had apparently requested no autopsy and they had asked not to be buried in state shrouds, but in material brought specially from their family homes.

The bombings were blamed on the militant group Jemaah Islamiah, widely regarded as a regional affiliate of the al-Qaeda network.

Since they were sentenced the bombers made several appeals for leniency.

However, they also said they were keen to be "martyrs" for their dream of creating a South East Asian caliphate.

A last-minute appeal by relatives of the bombers was rejected by a Supreme Court judge earlier this week.

[Expert says terrorists' executions won't end ideology behind Bali attacks](#)

*Channel NewsAsia* – November 9

Sidney Jones, an expert on Indonesian terrorism, has said the executions of the Bali bombers will not end the ideology that caused the 2002 terrorist attack.

But during a talk at Singapore's S Rajaratnam School of International Studies at the Nanyang Technological University, she also said the Jemaah Islamiyah terrorist organisation is weaker than it was.

Imam Samudra, Ali Ghufron and Amrozi were killed with shots to the heart near their prison on Nusakambangan island off southern Java on Saturday.

The three were responsible for the two explosions on Bali's Kuta strip on October 12, 2002 that killed 202 people including 88 Australians and 38 Indonesians.

Their executions came five years after the three first heard the court order their death sentences. Years of delay followed, filled with appeals and religious considerations.

The executions are a significant moment in Indonesia's fight against terrorism. It is the first time terrorists there have paid the highest price for their crimes.

But will it change the terrorism situation in Indonesia?

"I don't really think that the execution will make much difference," said Ms Jones, a senior adviser at the Brussels-based International Crisis Group.

"I think it won't end the ideology, it won't end the problem of terrorism, and there are lots of other people that can continue on that same path," she added.

The expert on terrorism went on to say: "I also don't think there's a very high likelihood of retaliatory action for the executions although you can't rule it out.

"If there was, it would be directed against the Indonesian government and not against foreigners, I suspect.

"But I really don't think it's very likely. I don't think that they will somehow be transformed into a new impetus for jihad in Indonesia."

Imam Samudra and Ali Ghufron were in the top ranks of the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI).

Other JI leaders - Abu Dujana, Zarkasih and Hambali - have been arrested in recent times.

Another leading figure, Azahari Husin, was killed in a police raid in November 2005.

All these have taken a number of key figures out of the picture.

Ms Jones said: "I think JI is much, much weaker as an organisation than it was two or three years ago.

"I think it has lost leadership...it is not clear who is the amir or commander. I think it is finding it difficult to replace leaders who are arrested.

"I think there are many divisions and fissures within the organisation."

Ms Jones also said the immediate threat is not from the JI.

"I think it is from smaller splinter groups that might include one or two JI members, and particularly some of the fugitives who've been JI members once and who've been on the run for a while. And I think that's a very important group," she said.

One such splinter group was the target of a raid on a house in Indonesia last month.

Members of the group were seized and explosives stored inside the house are said to have been intended to bomb Indonesia's main oil depot.

Yet with more splinter groups crowding the landscape, Ms Jones said she does not think terrorism threat in Indonesia is increasing.

"My sense is that the terrorism threat continues to decline in Indonesia," she said.

She added that "the terrorism threat is likely to be coming not from the JI but from smaller groups influenced by one of the people in the 'nothing to lose category', who are the fugitives with experience in bomb-making and in planning operations, who can recruit younger people around them."

"Even then, I think the capacity of those groups is weak," she said.

Still, there are many experienced fugitives still hiding in Indonesia.

Key JI figure Noor Din Mohd Top and former operations chief Zulkarnaen are still on the loose. So are bomb-makers trained by the now-dead chief JI bomb-maker Azahari Husin.

So more bomb plots remain a possibility. Official and public vigilance is the best chance of ensuring they are foiled.

[Abu Sayyaf now into narco-terrorism - Navy official](#)

*GMA News* – November 19

The dreaded Abu Sayyaf bandit group has now ventured into “narco-terrorism” to raise money for their activities, a ranking Navy official said Wednesday.

Navy spokesman Lt. Col. Edgard Arevalo said they have received information that members of the Abu Sayyaf have entered into the illegal business of planting marijuana in the southern Philippine province of Sulu.

“Members of the Abu Sayyaf are also into the so-called narco-terrorism. Narco-terrorism refers to those acts whereby the money obtained from narcotics are being used to finance their activities,” Arevalo said.

Arevalo said that since last May, Marine soldiers, in coordination with the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), have raided at least three marijuana plantations by the Abu Sayyaf, the latest of which was in Maimbung town last November 8.

Two other marijuana plantations believed to be maintained by Abu Sayyaf members were also raided last May and June, the first also in Maimbung while the second one was in Talipao, Arevalo said.

The operations led to the destruction of at least P7 million worth of fully-grown marijuana plants.

Arevalo said the areas where the marijuana plantations were discovered were known Abu Sayyaf lairs.

“This is another indication that they are in dire need of funds,” he said, noting an earlier pronouncement by Armed Forces public affairs chief Lt. Col. Ernesto Torres that the Abu Sayyaf have also resorted to kidnapping ordinary people to raise funds.

The Abu Sayyaf, which has links to Osama bin Laden’s al-Qaida terrorist network, was behind a number of high-profile kidnapping and bombings in the Mindanao

## **DIPLOMACY & DEFENCE STRATEGY**

[Lavrov Expresses His Worries over Asian Missile Programs](#)

*The Moscow Times* – November 6

Moscow is closely monitoring the development and deployment of missiles in Asia, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Wednesday, adding that such moves create a confrontational atmosphere and should not be pursued.

Lavrov did not single out any specific country, but his remarks come as Japan is developing its ballistic missile defenses in coordination with the United States. Russia has strongly criticized similar efforts in Europe.

"We in Russia follow closely the development of missiles in the region," Lavrov told a gathering of businessmen and diplomats in Tokyo.

"It is mandatory to do away with confrontational attitudes," he said. "One cannot ensure one's own security by threatening the security of others."

Russia has strongly opposed U.S. plans for a missile-defense system based in Poland and the Czech Republic, former Soviet satellites that are now members of NATO. President Dmitry Medvedev said in his state-of-the-nation address Wednesday that Russia would deploy missiles in the Baltic exclave of Kaliningrad, near Poland, in response to the U.S. missile-defense plans. He did not say whether the short-range Iskander missiles would be fitted with nuclear warheads.

The prime ministers of Poland and the Czech Republic said Wednesday that they expected the incoming U.S. administration of Barack Obama to go ahead with the missile-defense shield.

Japan, meanwhile, has moved ahead with plans to develop a missile shield to protect its capital from attack and has backed the deployment of Patriot missiles at a U.S. military base on the southern island of Okinawa.

Japan has stepped up its missile-defense plans because of concerns that the country and the roughly 50,000 U.S. troops deployed throughout the islands are well within range of North Korean missiles.

[China's new missile deployment being monitored: defense minister](#)  
*Central News Agency* – November 8

Minister of National Defense Chen Chao-min said Monday that whatever new types of missiles or weaponry China is deploying along its coastlines opposite Taiwan, they are all a military threat to the island.

"The Ministry of National Defense is gaining a better understanding of the latest report on China's deployment of cutting-edge YJ-62A guided missiles along its southeast coasts, and we will take necessary measures to deal with this," Chen said at the Legislative Yuan.

The Mandarin-language United Daily News on Monday quoted "reliable military intelligence sources" as indicating that China's deployment of YJ-62A guided missiles along its southeast coastlines will be completed soon, with the entire Taiwan area and its maritime territory within firing range.

The YJ-62A, a Chinese subsonic anti-ship missile that debuted at the end of 2006, can also be used as a land attack cruise missile and has a maximum range in excess of 400 km, according to the daily.

When asked whether the YJ-62A deployment will affect the hard-earned recent advances in relations across the Taiwan Strait achieved since President Ma Ying-jeou took office in May this year, Chen said that the Chinese military may have started research and development of the advanced weapon systems long before.

"I believe they have always worked to develop their weapons systems. The Defense Ministry will not relent in its efforts to monitor the situation," Chen said.

[Pentagon board says cuts essential](#)

*Boston.com* – November 10

A senior Pentagon advisory group, in a series of bluntly worded briefings, is warning President-elect Barack Obama that the Defense Department's current budget is "not sustainable," and he must scale back or eliminate some of the military's most prized weapons programs.

The briefings were prepared by the Defense Business Board, an internal management oversight body. It contends that the nation's recent financial crisis makes it imperative that the Pentagon and Congress slash some of the nation's most costly and troubled weapons to ensure they can finance the military's most pressing priorities.

Those include rebuilding ground forces battered by multiple tours to Iraq and Afghanistan and expanding the ranks to wage the war on terrorism.

"Business as usual is no longer an option," according to one of the internal briefings prepared in late October for the presidential transition, copies of which were provided to the Globe. "The current and future fiscal environments facing the department demand bold action."

The briefings do not specify which programs should be cut, but defense analysts say that prime targets would probably include the new F-35 fighter jet, a series of Navy ship programs, and a massive Army project to build a new generation of ground combat vehicles, all of which have been skyrocketing in cost and suffering long development delays.

Such cuts would affect the New England economy. General Dynamics builds warships and submarines in Maine and Connecticut, while Raytheon, Massachusetts' largest employer, is involved in numerous weapons programs from ships to missile defenses and satellites.

Pentagon insiders and defense budget specialists say the Pentagon has been on a largely unchecked spending spree since 2001 that will prove politically difficult to curtail but nevertheless must be reined in.

"The forces arrayed against terminating defense programs are today so powerful that if you try to do that it will be like the British Army at the Somme in World War I," said Winslow Wheeler, director of the Straus Military Reform Project at the liberal Center for Defense Information in Washington. "You will just get mowed down by the defense industry and military services' machine guns."

Since the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, funding has grown for both the annual defense budget and emergency spending for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The latest Pentagon budget, for the fiscal year that began Oct. 1, is an estimated \$512 billion, not including more than \$800 billion in additional war spending that has been allotted since 2001.

But a series of forces are now at play that make such large expenditures untenable, according to the Defense Business Board, the Pentagon oversight group, which includes about 20 private sector executives appointed by the secretary of defense.

The board, which meets at least four times a year, has a full-time staff and is an official government body. Because the board's report has not been made public, a Pentagon spokesman would not comment on it.

One factor is historical. Since the end of World War II there have been four periods of significant increases in US defense spending and all were followed by significant decreases in funding from Congress, the group says.

Added pressure on the Pentagon budget comes from what the briefing calls "fiscal constraint in a tough economy" that is saddled with rising deficits and growing political support for increased government spending in other areas.

"We are all acutely aware there is a financial crisis going on," said a senior defense official closely involved in the transition process.

Exacerbating the problem, according to the advisory group, are the rising costs of military personnel, their healthcare, and overhead. The documents estimate that more than half the annual defense budget now goes to "people costs," including \$60 billion a year for the healthcare of service members and retirees.

They will almost certainly grow, even with a reduction in US troops in Iraq, given that the Pentagon has said it will increase ground forces by more than 70,000 troops over the next few years.

That leaves dozens of weapons systems and other equipment under development as prime areas for cost-savings, according to Steven Kosiak, vice president of budget studies at the nonpartisan Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments in Washington.

"The areas most likely to get cut are acquisition and procurement," Kosiak said. "As long as the administration is committed to increasing troop strength you have to pay those people costs, and there is not a lot of flexibility when it comes to benefits."

A recent analysis by the Government Accountability Office, the investigative arm of Congress, assessed the Pentagon's 95 largest weapons programs and found that as of March 2008 they had collectively increased in cost by nearly \$300 billion over initial estimates.

"None had proceeded through development while meeting the best-practice standards for mature technologies, stable design, and mature production processes all prerequisites for achieving planned cost and schedule outcomes," the GAO said in documents published last week to help guide the presidential transition.

It added: "Over the next five years, [the Defense Department] expects to invest more than \$357 billion on major defense acquisition programs. Much of this investment will be used to address cost overruns rooted in poor planning, execution, and oversight."

All the branches of the military are in a similar situation. The Army plans to invest an estimated \$160 billion in the coming years on a set of new combat vehicles collectively known as the Future Combat System. But their capabilities "are still early in development and have not yet been demonstrated," according to GAO.

The Navy, meanwhile, has continued to bust its budget for shipbuilding. The service's six most recent new ship designs have experienced cumulative cost growth of \$2.4 billion over original estimates, according to GAO. Their delivery has also been delayed, on average, by 97 months.

The Air Force's portfolio for new equipment, meanwhile, "will demand unprecedented levels of funding," according to GAO's transition materials. Its development costs have increased nearly 50 percent above original estimates and eight separate programs have had to report cost breaches to Congress.

The F-35 Joint Strike Fighter - designed for the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps and the most costly aircraft procurement effort in history - "faces considerable risks stemming from its decision to reduce test assets and the flight-test program to pay for development and manufacturing cost increases," according to the GAO.

Other programs suffering from big cost increases and delays include space systems such as satellites and the national missile defense system, the largest research and development program on the Pentagon's books.

Together these programs constitute a military crisis in their own right, according to the internal Pentagon documents.

The Pentagon, one document states, "cannot reset the current force, modernize and transform in all portfolios at the same time. Choices must be made across capabilities and within systems to deliver capability at known prices within a specific period of time."

And a few cuts here or there won't do the trick, they add. "Taking cuts at the margin won't work this time, nor will pushing things off to later years."

[Chinese military vessel Zhenghe makes first visit to Thailand](#)

*People's Daily Online* – November 10

Chinese navy ship (CNS) Zhenghe entered the Bangkok Port on Monday morning, starting its four-day official visit to the capital of Thailand.

While docking here, this ocean-going training vessel with 411 crew members will be open for the public on Nov. 11 and 12. Its staff will hold volleyball and push-and-pull matches with the Thai navy troops based at Bangkok, said Captain of the ship Fan Kuiju.

On the reception ceremony, Thai officials welcomed all the crew on Zhenghe and said the visit will definitely deepening the understanding between the people of China and Thailand.

CNS Zhenghe was put into service in 1987 and had visited the United States, Thailand, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India and Russia.

[India signs defence, security pacts with Qatar](#)

*Rediff News* – November 10

Giving strategic depth to India-Qatar relations, the two countries have signed landmark defence and security agreements paving the way for joint maritime security and sharing of intelligence on threats posed by terrorists.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who arrived in Doha from Muscat on Sunday evening on the second leg of his three-day maiden visit to the energy-rich Gulf region, held wide-ranging delegation level talks with Prime Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabor al Thani.

The talks resulted in two agreements on defence cooperation and security as well as law enforcement matters.

The defence pact lays out a structure for joint maritime security and training as well as exchange of visits, officials said.

The security agreement would lay out the framework for sharing of information and data base on threats posed by extremists and other security and legal matters.

Prime Minister Singh will meet Qatar's Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al Thani on Monday afternoon to hold wide-ranging discussions.

[EU Notes: Offsets, Military Projects, Ukrainian Troops](#)

*Defense News* – November 11

The 26 EU countries that take part in the European Defence Agency (EDA) agreed Oct. 24 to a voluntary code of conduct on offsets under which they will neither require nor accept offsets exceeding the value of the procurement contract. The agreement, which will take effect July 1, applies to compensation practices required as a condition of purchase or resulting from a purchase of defense goods or defense services.

EDA countries may opt out by informing the agency before May 1, but that would also lock them out of the electronic bulletin boards where they can post and find out about tenders.

"Offsets distort the market, do not lead to the most effective industrial structure in Europe and are an obstacle to bringing the best value for money equipment," said Ulf Hammarström, the EDA's industry-and-markets director. "It is not about abolishing offsets but being more transparent and making them more sustainable and efficient as well as limiting them to a 100 percent ceiling."

The application of the 100-percent ceiling, under which they will neither require nor accept offsets exceeding the value of the procurement contract, has been deferred until October 2010.

The EDA is developing a monitoring and reporting process in detail, to be agreed before the code comes into operation. The agency already has information on various countries' offset policies. The information is not public but is for member states to ensure transparency between them so that they can trust each other. The idea is that offsets are only used in support of the European Union's defense technological and industrial base, which is about maintaining key industrial capabilities in Europe, developing small and medium-sized firms and creating centers of excellence.

## **Aircraft Carrier Group Mulled**

In an Oct. 29 meeting here, EU members' military-interoperability chiefs talked about EU French presidency projects, including a Franco-British proposal to improve European aircraft carrier group interoperability.

The aircraft carrier effort has drawn interest from Italy and Spain, which operate aircraft carriers, and Germany, which does not, said Gen. Henri Bentégeat, the president of the EU Military Committee. Countries that operate frigates, submarines and refueling tankers may be invited to join as well. Concrete measures are expected to be proposed at a Nov. 10 EU foreign affairs ministers' and defense ministers' meeting.

"There is no intention to create new structures. It is about facilitating common training between all the navies," Bentégeat said.

The interoperability chiefs also talked about an Erasmus-like training program that could allow cadets enrolled in EU members' military academies to study at other member states' academies.

## **Ukrainians in EU Battle-groups?**

Sergiy Kirichenko, who heads Ukraine's military, told EU defense chiefs on Oct. 29 that Ukraine is looking at joining one or two EU battlegroups, the multinational groups of combat and support units. Ukraine released a list of assets that they might be willing to incorporate into the battlegroups, including an engineer battalion, an air mobile battalion, a marine battalion, landing ships, strategic airlift capabilities, transport aircraft and a combat divers team.

"Norway and Turkey are already involved in the battlegroups," Bentégeat said. "We would welcome their [Ukraine's] participation."

## [China fears India-Japan space alliance](#)

*Asia Times* – November 12

India and Japan's agreement in October to expand cooperation between the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), in the field of disaster management, has raised the ire of a China fearful that the US is masterminding a powerful space alliance between its allies in the region.

All of Asia wants to see improved regional disaster management capabilities, but the growing ties between ISRO and JAXA come just as India and Japan are devising an action plan to advance security cooperation.

"China is concerned about the general effort of the US during the Bush

Administration to form a Japanese-Indian alliance to contain

China," said Dr Gregory Kulacki, senior analyst and China project manager at the Massachusetts-based Union of Concerned Scientists.

"They are more concerned about what this implies about US intentions rather than what it implies about the intentions of the Japanese or the Indians, particularly as it concerns space."

Brian Weeden, a technical consultant at the Colorado-based Secure World Foundation, hesitates to agree that India and Japan's efforts to pursue closer ties in space are part of a deliberate US master plan for the region, but he does not see the US taking any steps to discourage them.

"The US sees India as primarily a counterbalance to China in the region, but at the same time it does not see India as a full ally in the same sense as Britain or Japan. I do not think the US looks unfavorably on this relationship, but I am certain it will be examining it very closely and if the US does have concerns, they will be quietly expressed to the Japanese," said Weeden.

Whereas Japan benefits greatly from the steady deployment in the Pacific Ocean of US AEGIS ballistic missile defense (BMD) technology - it will soon be aboard all four of Japan's Kongo-class destroyers - this sea-based BMD system will probably not appear soon on any of India's warships, for example.

Weeden also points to the most recent 'Red Flag' exercise at Nellis Air force Base in Nevada. "The Russian-built Indian fighters participating had their radars in test mode so as not to give away their full capabilities to the Americans. Likewise, the US didn't let the F-22 participate for the same reasons."

The agreement is a concern for China, as it would be for any nation when their traditional regional adversaries talk about cooperation, adds Weeden. "Most countries still see the national security angle of space as a unilateral effort and are unlikely to collaborate in that area. They will, however collaborate in scientific or civilian areas."

There is considerable turmoil in Japan concerning the future of JAXA and how much money the Japanese government should be spending on it. The situation is made more complicated by Japan's recently enacted Space Basic Law, which for the first time permits Japan to consider deployment of national security space assets, which the Japanese had denied themselves until now.

"The government of Japan, particularly the Ministry of Defense, is still sorting this out," said Aerospace consultant Lance Gatling, head of Tokyo-based Gatling Associates, which closely monitors JAXA and the Japanese space program.

Japan has been using its weather satellites to provide free weather data to countries throughout Asia for many years without any hint of controversy, but this is quite different from deploying a new generation of surveillance satellites to monitor disasters.

Virtually all existing satellite-based multinational disaster management initiatives such as the "International Charter, Space and Major Disasters" depend upon the ability of the signatories to engage in the rapid tasking of their respective surveillance satellites. In other words, quickly altering the flight patterns of the surveillance satellites in question so they zoom right over a disaster zone is essential to the success of the mission at hand.

"This could be seen by some as a sensitive undertaking with obvious dual use possibilities which Japan will attempt to handle with great care. And that degree of sensitivity clearly permeates anything that ISRO and JAXA have been given the green light to develop in this instance, even though JAXA has no national security mission," said Gatling.

When, in early November, the Japanese press revealed that Japan has begun to explore the possible future launch of an early warning satellite which can detect the launch of enemy ballistic missiles, according to a draft plan obtained by The Yomiuri Shimbun, the joint declaration was not even mentioned.

Among other things, this draft plan promotes the use of rockets and satellites for defense purposes and endorses the need to examine the feasibility of deploying a new satellite which can perform BMD-oriented security and crisis management or disaster monitoring roles simultaneously.

The draft plan is scheduled for a final review in late November, and while it may not neatly address whatever ISRO and JAXA have elected to pursue, Beijing will be hard pressed to dismiss what could easily become a convenient addendum to the Joint Declaration.

India, on the other hand, simply wants to increase satellite surveillance of all Chinese military activities, particularly along the Chinese border with India.

On November 1, for example, the Times of India reported that during the most recent Indian Army commanders' conference, "one of the main agenda items" included a discussion of the need to dig tunnels in forward areas including along the Chinese border with "fooling enemy satellites from gauging the exact troop positions and their strength in forward areas" identified as one of the key objectives.

"China has resorted to tunneling on a large-scale along the LAC [Line of Actual Control] especially in the Tibetan Autonomous Region," one senior officer at the conference told the Times.

Proponents of increased Japanese government budgetary support look to exploit every opportunity to stress the commercial and strategic importance of the Japanese space program, and in this case, China's manned spaceflight program - not tunnels - serves an important purpose.

"The rapid advances in space by China - and India - clearly caught the attention of the Japanese who saw themselves as the leader in space in the region a decade ago," said Gatling.

Dr Joan Johnson-Freese, chair of the Department of National Security Studies at the US Naval War College, does not believe the Japan-India space relationship is picking up steam. "The consensus-driven decision making process used in Japan means that pretty much everything moves at a glacial pace," said Johnson-Freese.

She prefers to take the language in the Joint Declaration at face value.

"Disaster management efforts in the Pacific Rim region have been under discussion for a long time, and this is part of the culmination of those talks. It is one of the few areas where everyone in the region agrees that concerted efforts are required," said Johnson-Freese, adding that she has not heard of any serious concerns from China over Japan-India working together on disaster management.

Kulacki also recalls the tone and spirit of the proceedings of the International Lunar Exploration Working Group (ILEWG) conference in Beijing in 2006, where the Group issued a declaration on cooperation called the ILEWG Beijing Declaration.

"All sides seemed cordial, well-acquainted and anxious to pursue joint projects. I do not sense any tension among the space professionals of these three countries, who understand and are anxious to reap the benefits of joint efforts," said Kulacki.

Johnson-Freese views things a bit differently, and labels the three parties as "cautiously prudent".

"They will pursue joint projects when it is win-win," said Johnson-Freese.

Here she adds weight, albeit indirectly, to the argument that India and Japan are very much on the same page, and probably agree that a merger of their space activities gradually over time may offers a distinct strategic edge.

Johnson-Freese and Kulacki also clearly disagree over China's leadership role in the Asian space race.

"China is not anxious to be seen as a leader and does not see itself as a leader. China feels it is far behind most advanced spacefaring nations," said Kulacki.

"They are also focused on their own objectives and their own needs. While they would welcome the opportunity to be a competitive commercial space player, especially in the international launch services market where they have a strong advantage, they are focused on longstanding goals first set back in the mid-1980s and revised only marginally since then."

"China very much wants to be seen as both the leader of space efforts in Asia, and for developing nations. They are using their manned program to reap all the prestige awards it renders - which are considerable, if only in perceptions created - including that it is beating the US," said Johnson-Freese.

"By virtue of their success in manned space - and the worldwide attention that it brings them - there is certainly the perception that China is the regional technology leader. While that is a function more of political will than technical capability, perception very quickly becomes the reality from which people base opinions and actions."

Interestingly, news of Japan's draft plan involving the possible launch of an early warning satellite coincided with the arrival in Tokyo of Russia's Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov. He warned Japan and the rest of Asia about the dangers of the rampant missile technology proliferation now underway in the region and an emerging "confrontational atmosphere" stemming from such things as Japan's AEGIS BMD deployment.

Of course, Lavrov said nothing about Russia's important role in support of South Korea's entry into the Asian space race or about how Russia has been a major backer of the Indian aerospace sector. In fact, the Russian space agency is actively engaged in ISRO's Chandrayaan-2 project, supplying ISRO with its lunar lander and jointly developing a lunar rover.

China's recent announcement that it would provide Pakistan with a new communications satellite early in the next decade - adding yet another space asset to the fast-growing Asian "dual use" roster - no doubt provides India with further justification for pursuing closer ties in space with Japan.

China, at the same time, must not enjoy the news that numerous NASA scientists are apparently eager and poised to join the ranks of ISRO, a timely shift in highly specialized talent that came to light in the days immediately following the successful launch of India's new moon probe, Chandrayaan-1.

"I doubt China is the only factor, but it is one factor in [any ongoing India-Japan joint space activity]. Other factors could be desires to increase regional relations

and influence. We are seeing more and more cooperation in space, sometimes along traditional relationships like US and Europe, and sometimes along nontraditional ones like Japan and India," said Weedon.

The success of the International Space Station program, and the fact that countries are looking for new ways to cope with the huge costs of operating in space during this steep global economic downturn, are making international cooperation a more attractive and more acceptable option, he said.

### [China Issues First White Paper on Latin America](#)

*Defense News* –November 13

China has issued its first policy white paper on Latin America, including sections on political, economic and military issues.

The government-run Xinhua News Agency released the full text of the policy paper on Nov. 5, just 10 days before Chinese President Hu Jintao's planned trip to the U.S. to attend the G-20 summit on the financial crisis.

After the summit, Hu will conduct state visits to Cuba, Costa Rica and Peru. Hu also will attend the 16th Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting from Nov. 22-23 in Lima, Peru.

Regarding defense and security, the paper looks at three issues: military exchanges and cooperation, cooperation on judicial and police affairs, and nontraditional security issues.

The paper said it would continue to "actively carry out military exchanges and defense dialogue and cooperation with Latin American and Caribbean countries," including mutual visits by defense and military officials. Personnel exchanges also would be increased. Exchanges will include military training, personnel training and peacekeeping.

"The Chinese side will, as its ability permits, continue to provide assistance for the development of the army in Latin American and Caribbean countries."

Regarding judicial and police issues, intelligence and technological exchanges will be strengthened, "with bilateral and multilateral exchange mechanisms put in place." Non-traditional security issues will include exchanges and cooperation on "combating terrorism, so as to jointly improve the capacity to respond to nontraditional security threats."

There have been concerns raised over China's interest in Latin America, thought mainly focused on energy resources such as oil, gas and coal. China has agreed to sell arms to Venezuela, whose leader, President Hugo Chávez, made his fifth visit to China in late September to make oil and arms deals.

During the visit, Chávez described himself as a "Maoist" and signed an agreement to procure 24 Hongdu K-8 trainers in 2009. There have been some discussions to procure Chinese-made Harbin Z-9 helicopters and Chengdu J-10 and FC-1 fighters. However, not everyone is convinced China's new policy paper or improved military relations with Latin America are a significant threat to the U.S.

"Nothing in the document should alarm or trouble the U.S., though it should be a wake-up call that Washington risks missing attractive opportunities in Latin America," said Michael Shifter, vice president for policy and director of the Andean program at the Washington-based Inter-American Dialogue.

"There is nothing surprising in the policy paper, and it does not contain many specifics, but it does set out in general terms a framework for what the Chinese government is doing and plans to do in the region," Shifter said. "It means they intend to be an important actor over the longer term, and not just on trade and investment, but on political and security questions."

#### [Chinese Warship to Make Vietnam Port Call](#)

*Agence France-Presse* –November 13

A Chinese warship will next week make a port call in central Vietnam as part of efforts to boost military ties between the communist nations, a government spokesman in Hanoi said Nov. 13.

News of the November 18-22 visit follows a meeting between both countries' premiers in Beijing last month at which both sides, despite a history of distrust and conflict, pledged closer bilateral cooperation.

"This visit will help promote the friendship and cooperation between the two ministries of defense," said foreign ministry spokesman Le Dung.

Dung said that the ship's commanders would meet leaders of the central city of Danang as well as Vietnamese senior naval and army officials, while the ship's crew would play a football match while on shore.

China and Vietnam are communist allies but have a history of animosity and fought their most recent border war in 1979. Last year a Chinese naval ship reportedly fired at a Vietnamese fishing vessel in disputed waters.

Both are among countries laying claim to the Spratly islands in the South China Sea, believed to be rich in oil and gas reserves, and both claim sovereignty over the Paracel islands, which are occupied by China.

At their October meeting, premiers Wen Jiabao of China and Nguyen Tan Dung of Vietnam agreed on a series of steps, including collaboration on oil exploration and information exchanges by the two armed forces.

Vietnam expert Carl Thayer said the Chinese port call next week would be the first to Vietnam since November 2001 when the People's Liberation Army's guided missile frigate Yulin docked in Ho Chi Minh City.

"It's highly significant because of the reported build-up of tension last year in the South China Sea and the attempts this year by the party chiefs and prime ministers to prevent incidents in the South China Sea from damaging bilateral relations," said Thayer of the Australian Defense Force Academy.

"They have had four or five joint naval patrols in the Gulf of Tonkin, and this is a continuation of steps to build trust between the two navies."

The visit comes one month after guided missile destroyer Mustin docked at Danang in the latest of a series of American port calls designed to boost relations between the former enemies.

#### [A Missile Race in Southeast Asia?](#)

*Asia Sentinel* –November 16

Russia's state-owned news agency RIA Novosti reported that Malaysia and Singapore, among other countries, may be sniffing around Russia's Iskander tactical missile systems, available from the state arms exporter, Rosoboronexport. although the Soviet arms dealer said it wasn't planning to export the missiles until Russia's own armed forces have been fully supplied with them.

A call to the Singapore Ministry of Defense elicited no answers, and some analysts said it sounded like the Russians were merely trying to talk up sales of a new weapon and irritate the United States rather than being able to make any real arms sales.

Nonetheless, Nikolai Dimidyuk, a senior Rosoboronexport official, told Novosti that a number of countries, including Syria, the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia and India had shown an interest in the missile system. Earlier, the agency said, Russia was reported to be interested in exporting the Iskander-E to Algeria, Kuwait, Singapore, Vietnam and South Korea.

According to the news agency, the Iskander-E is a tactical surface-to-surface missile complex designed to deliver high-precision strikes at a variety of ground targets at a range of up to 280 km (170 miles). It carries a single warhead with a payload of 400 kg to comply with the limits laid down by the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).

Southeast Asia has been a child's garden of delight for the world's gunrunners. According to the publication *Foreign Policy in Focus* in 2005, the region, which hasn't had an external war in decades but is rich enough to spend plenty on guns, was the world's second-largest arms market after the Middle East, representing about 20 percent of the world's purchases.

Although relations between Malaysia and Singapore have occasionally been tense, over the past several years there has never been enough of a problem to actually threaten a shooting war. Singapore famously is armed to the teeth and has more combat aircraft, and better ones, than Malaysia and Indonesia combined.

The island state is a formidable garrison that has adopted what the country's leaders call a "poisoned shrimp" defense posture – the two far bigger Muslim-Malay nations might be able to swallow up the Chinese island but, Singapore says, doing it would inflict unimaginable casualties on the aggressor.

According to a Singapore Air Force website, Singapore, less than 700 sq km in size, bristles with F-16Ds, AH-64D Apaches, CH-47SD Chinooks, Marchetti S-211s, Puma helicopters based in Australia and A-4 Super Skyhawks in France. It now has four AWACS over-the-horizon early warning aircraft. In 2003, it joined the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program, expected to be delivered in 2015. And early November, Boeing rolled out the first of 24 F-15 fighters ordered by Singapore as a replacement for some of its ageing jets. The F-15, designed 'SG' to mark its Singapore provenance, will give the country's air force a huge boost in capability by putting most of the region's capitals in striking range.

A huge flock of other aircraft, men and materiel are there to support the air wing. On the ground and in the water, Singapore is equally strong. Amazingly, in a country of 4.5 million, the country claims it can raise three fully equipped combat divisions.

Malaysia, on the other hand, fields a luckless military that has spent countless billions on ineffective weapons systems that often don't work or don't fit tactical requirements, with no coordination between systems, as generals and officials with the ministry of defence who are closely aligned with the United Malays National Organisation, fill their pockets with a vast amount of pelf.

If three separate contracts over the past several years are any yardstick, Najib Tun Razak, who became defense minister in 1999 and kept the portfolio when he became deputy prime minister, appears to have mastered the game far beyond the expectations of any previous defense leaders. Opposition figures say the three contracts, one for Russian Sukhoi jet fighters, a second for French submarines and a third for navy patrol boats, appear to have produced at least US\$300 million for UMNO cronies, Najib's friends and others.

Najib relinquished the defence portfolio to Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi in mid-September, taking on finance instead -- an interesting move as it moved Najib away from the allegations over his role in defence procurement corruption and gave Abdullah some leverage over the military, which has shown signs of becoming restive as the country's political crisis threatened national stability. It also left Najib facing Malaysia's economic problems just as they moved from 'serious' to 'intractable.'

Certainly, any move to install a guided missile system on either side of the Johor strait, the narrow body of water that separates the two nations, would be a radical development that probably would not only kick off a major arms race but would undoubtedly irritate the United States, Singapore's main defense supplier and ally.

The question is moot for the moment, because Rosonbornexport said that despite the fact that several countries have shown an interest in purchasing the advanced system, the Russian President Dimitry Medvedev, in a major bout of rocket-rattling for Russia itself, said his country would deploy the Iskanders in Kalingrad, between NATO members Lithuania and Poland, to "neutralize if necessary" the US missile defense system that the Bush Administration is trying to install in Central Europe, according to Novosti.

Although the Iskanders have been tested successfully, apparently deliveries of operational weapons have been delayed since 2005 and there aren't enough to go around.

Most of the countries named by Dimidyuk have been hit by the global downturn. Malaysia, for instance, reportedly has decided to cancel a contract to buy 12 Cougar Ec725 helicopters, called Eurocopters because of their production by the European Union, because of falling revenues from crude and palm oil and slowing economic growth for the next few years. The contract for the Eurocopter has been criticized by opposition leader Lim Kit Siang of the Democratic Action Party as opaque and questionable. It was signed under Najib.

#### [Beijing pressures US over Taiwan arms deal](#)

*Financial Times* – November 16

China's defence ministry is insisting that full military-to-military exchanges with the US cannot resume unless Washington scraps plans to sell more than \$6bn worth of advanced weapons to Taiwan and stops contacts with the democratic island's armed forces.

The strong line from Major General Qian Lihua, director of the ministry's foreign affairs office, suggests the Chinese military is determined to ensure that the US pays a price for a decision last month to sell Taipei arms, including Patriot air defence missiles, Apache helicopters and F-16 spare parts.

China cancelled a series of military exchanges with the Pentagon after the decision by the outgoing administration of George W. Bush to approve the long-delayed sale, setting back a fragile warming of relations between the US military and China's People's Liberation Army.

"The US government and military have used the Taiwan issue to . . . 'needle' China," Maj Gen Qian said.

"We demand the US change its ways, cancel its plans to sell weapons to Taiwan and stop its exchanges with the Taiwanese military. Only if they do so can the PLA and ministry of national defence resume normal relations with their US counterparts," he said.

China, which considers Taiwan part of its territory, argues that continuing large-scale US arms packages for the island are a breach of a 1982 promise by Washington to gradually reduce such sales.

However, US officials have insisted that any reduction of sales was always dependent on Chinese commitment to peaceful resolution of its differences with the now democratic island – and that the administration is anyway bound by domestic law to supply Taiwan with weapons for its self-defence.

Last month's package was much smaller than the original \$12bn (€9.5bn, £8bn) arms proposal, a change one senior US official said was intended to achieve a balance between boosting Taiwanese security and overly antagonising China.

During his campaign, John McCain, the Republican presidential candidate, called on the Bush administration to reconsider its decision not to sell new F-16 fighter jets to Taiwan, but President-elect Barack Obama has been more circumspect on the issue.

Maj Gen Qian said China had cancelled some mutual visits and other exchanges with US defence counterparts, but declined to give details of which events had been affected, citing a "tacit agreement" not to discuss them publicly.

While some analysts in the US have said that China has always been less enthusiastic than the US about military exchanges because of the PLA's strategy of keeping its capabilities secret, Maj Gen Qian insisted that Beijing was well aware of the value of contacts and co-operation in maintaining regional peace.

"However, such military-to-military exchanges have been subjected to frequent disruptions over the Taiwan issue," he said. "The Taiwan issue remains the biggest obstacle in both state-to-state and military-to-military relations between our two countries."

[Russia may use 'overkill' missiles to counter U.S. shield](#)

*RIA Novosti* – November 17

In addition to deploying tactical missiles near the Polish border, Russia could use precision-guided air-based weapons to counter U.S. missile defense plans, a Russian military expert said on Monday.

"Iskander [missile system] is not the most effective combat asset to be used against the ground targets that are now being deployed in some European states. We also have the Air Force, which has precision-guided weapons," said Gen. Pyotr Deinekin, former Air Force commander.

He said strategic aviation had, in particular, Kh-55 (AS-15 Kent) long-range cruise missiles capable of delivering a nuclear warhead, with an effective range of 4,500 kilometers.

He did not explain why such "overkill" missiles would be needed to engage targets in Central Europe.

U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates dismissed on Thursday Russia's proposal that the two countries abandon their plans to deploy missiles in Central Europe.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said in an interview with French daily *Le Figaro* published on Thursday that Russia would be willing to abandon its plans to deploy short-range missiles near Poland if the U.S. agrees not to set up a missile shield in Central Europe.

Gates said Medvedev's recent threat to deploy Iskander missiles in the Baltic exclave of Kaliningrad was "hardly the welcome a new American administration deserves," and that "such provocative remarks are unnecessary and misguided."

Washington earlier said it had provided new proposals to ease Russia's concerns over the planned deployment of 10 U.S. interceptor missiles in Poland and a tracking radar in the Czech Republic, which the Bush administration has said are needed to counter possible attacks from Iran's long-range missiles.

Russia views the missile defense system as a threat to its national security, and has said that a security agreement based on respect for common interests would remove the need for a missile shield.

[Egypt for more strategic partnership with India](#)

*Express India* – November 17

Egypt urged India to develop a strategic partnership between the two countries with a view to boost bilateral trade and investments covering important fields like ICT, energy and industry.

The visiting Egyptian President, Mohammed Hosny Mubarak while addressing industry conclave organized by three leading apex bodies – FICCI, CII and Assocham – in New Delhi on Monday said: "We have all what it takes to give a renewed momentum to our strategic partnership and all what it takes to bring our trade and investments to new horizons, especially in the important fields of ICT, energy and industry."

He said that trade between India and Egypt had tripled in the last 4 years reaching about \$3.5 billion in 2007. "We have managed to diversify our trade to cover a wide range of goods and I am sure there is room for further expansion", he said adding that Indian direct investments in Egypt stood at around \$800 million in more than 200 Egyptian companies.

"The potential is for these investments to reach \$2 billion in the coming few years.

Such Indian investments cover a wide range of areas in industry, services, ICT, construction, financing, agriculture, oil and gas as well as tourism", the Egyptian President said.

He emphasized that Egypt had witnessed a remarkable economic transformation process. "The reforms we have pursued have reflected positively in our macro-economic indicators. Egypt has emerged as one of the leading economies in Africa and Middle East and is ranked as the most attractive destination for foreign direct investments in its region", said Mubarak.

He allured the Indian investors by saying that Egypt had become a hub in West Asia and the Arab world. Through trade agreements with the European Union and COMESA, Egypt had become an important gateway to the vast European and African markets and an attractive destination for foreign direct investment.

Speaking on the occasion, the Indian minister for commerce and industry, Kamal Nath also emphasized the need for closer trade and economic ties between India and Egypt since the two countries equally share the pride of ancient civilizations. India prefers Egypt and gets similar treatment from it not only on trade front but also in areas of business and economic relations. Therefore, the two countries should strive harder to achieve the two-way trade as per their potential.

Nath identified possible areas for cooperation like in steel, construction, tractors and agricultural equipment, pumps and diesel engines, pharmaceuticals, tourism, auto components, information technology, phosphatic and nitrogen fertilizers, hotel management, textiles, biotechnology and use of natural gas in cars.. He further added that Egypt had traditionally been one of India's most important trading partners in the African continent and Egypt alone accounted for almost 40% of India's trade with northern Africa.

He welcomed the Egyptian proposal for establishing an Indian Industrial Zone in Egypt exclusively for Indian companies. He further added that Egypt's strategic location would be India's gateway to the 20-member Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the 27-nation European Union and the Arab Free Trade Area.

"Companies like Ranbaxy, Kiroloskar, Dabur, Ashok Leyland, and Essel already have an investment presence in Egypt. I am sure that with these investments, India could well emerge among the top ten foreign investors in Egypt", Nath said.

During 2007-08, India's exports to Egypt have been to the tune of \$1396.23 million as compared to \$760.41 million during the year 2006-07. Imports (including oil imports) during the same period were \$1982.77 million as compared to \$1741.65 million during the year 2006-07. The top Indian export items included frozen meat, cotton yarn and synthetic yarn, rice, diesel, tobacco, electrical machinery, soybean, chemicals, automobiles and components, sugar, pharmaceuticals and tea. Nearly 95% of Egypt's exports to India comprised of oil and gas. Coking coal, raw cotton, rock phosphate, and marble made up the balance 5%.

Speaking on the occasion, immediate past president of Assocham, Anil K Agarwal hoped that the two-way trade between India and Egypt would gallop and exceed more than the projected \$2 billion in next few years. According to him, apart from communication, technology, industry, India and Egypt needs to intensify their trade relations in the field of agriculture and allied sectors.

In his address, the past president of CII, N Kumar, said that both India and Egypt had highly developed textile and garment industry. Egypt imports a large part of the requirement of man-made fibres for its textile and garment industries from India. Such imports have significant potential to expand, given the rapid growth of the garment industry in Egypt.

In his observation, the past president of FICCI, Onkar S Kanwar also hoped that by 2010, India and Egypt should achieve \$5 billion trade target which should further go up to \$10 billion by 2014.

### [Russia Expands Its Military Presence In Central Asia](#)

*Radio Free Europe* – November 18

The secretary-general of the CIS Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), Nikolai Bordyuzha, recently announced the planned formation of an international force in Central Asia that "should be prepared to repel any threat."

On November 9, after Russian President Dmitry Medvedev submitted an agreement on the expected 5,000-strong force to the State Duma for approval, Bordyuzha said that the force is to be formed immediately upon the agreement's

ratification by all participating states.

On November 11, he began a working visit to Kazakhstan to discuss the security situation in the CSTO's zone of responsibility. The CSTO comprises Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

But experts argue that, as Moscow touts its efforts to strengthen military cooperation under the umbrella of the CIS and the CSTO, Russia is really pursuing its own goal of expanding its military presence and influence in Central Asia.

Under the working title "Creeping Expansion Of Mysterious And Unpredictable China" on one side, and "Concerns About the Aggressive Policies of the United States in the Region" on the other, Russia is strengthening its cooperation in the military-political and military-technical spheres in the framework of such alliances as the CIS and CSTO, especially with the countries of Central Asia.

Bordyuzha said on September 12 that five members of the CSTO -- Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan -- have agreed to dramatically increase the military capabilities of the bloc.

According to Bordyuzha, an international force would be created in Central Asia that "should be capable of repelling any threat from outside." Units of the unified special rapid-reaction force would be part of such a force. It would be composed of 10 battalions, with added protection of the unified air-defense system. The new structure would be financed by all the participants on an equal basis, but Russia would provide weapons under agreeable conditions.

Following this big announcement, there was a meeting on October 15 of CSTO defense ministers in St. Petersburg, where they discussed questions pertaining to the common air-defense system.

Besides this, in recent years the members of the CSTO have held a number of joint military exercises for their forces. Just this September and October there were two joint military exercises: one in Russia, "Center-2008," and another in Kazakhstan, "Aldaspan-2008." A third exercise, "Shield-2008," is to be held in western Kazakhstan in the coming weeks.

### **'Russia Never Left'**

According to General Alibek Kasymov, a former Kazakh defense minister and chief of staff, Russia is pursuing a concrete goal -- to pull its allies closer and give a signal to the West that military cooperation among CIS states is continuing.

But in the opinion of other experts, all these measures are a clear indication of Russia's aspirations to expand its military presence and influence in a

strategically vital region.

In the first years after the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia preserved its position in Central Asia. In particular, it had a large military unit in Turkmenistan (in Mary), in accordance with an agreement between Moscow and Ashgabat under which Russian citizens were serving in the Turkmen Army, and Russian border guards kept watch along the border of Tajikistan and Afghanistan.

During the years of civil war in Tajikistan, several Russian units were based in the country. An elite paratrooper commando unit was stationed in Tajikistan to support the CIS Collective Peacekeeping Force (which included troops from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan).

Moscow-based military expert Vladimir Mukhin says Russia has lost much of its position in Central Asia since then.

But Russia still has troops and bases in Central Asia in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and in Kazakhstan, where Russian troops are based at the Baikonur Cosmodrome (Russia's space forces) and at the Saryshagan military firing range.

Mukhin believes that for Russia it is expedient to strengthen its military presence in several countries of the region.

"First, it was expedient for Russia to stake out its presence at first in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. The Khanabad base in Uzbekistan, where earlier strategic bombers were stationed that could reach India, was good air base, a "springboard," and was for us a very important base," Mukhin says.

"One problem was Tajikistan where we did not have a large infrastructure and where it was necessary to practically build everything from scratch. It is a different matter when the base is prepared, the Americans fixed it [the Khanabad base] up very well," he adds. "Secondly, Russia could use, as it did previously, the military base at Mary. A large part of the air defense was deployed there as large air force units."

### **Fighting For Influence In Central Asia**

Russia wants to regain its previous position in this region on the basis of bilateral agreements, Mukhin says, but the countries of Central Asia are not hurrying to allow the Russian military back in. "Some kinds of agreements exist," he says. "But as is known, the Uzbeks do not want to host Russian military units. We also cannot deploy anything in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan."

According to Peter Felstead, a military and defense expert from the London-based "Jane's Defense Weekly," the energy resources of Central Asia are also attractive to Russia and Moscow will continue to try to make advances into the

region.

"I think the one thing you can say is that what happened in Georgia fits a pattern, so it's all part of a resurgent Russia that believe that they have been sort of wronged on the world stage and want to come back to a position of major-power status," Felstead says.

"What I would say is that Russia a lot of time has tried to use energy to try and wield its way and extend its influence with its neighbors and certain neighboring countries are almost in a stranglehold from Russia because of their reliance on Russian energy," he adds. "Where their energy comes from Central Asia, then I think that you will find that they will be moving to secure that because that is what they are using to fuel their resurgence."

On the other hand, Tajik analyst Marat Mamadshoev says that merely strengthening its military presence in Central Asia doesn't necessarily mean Russia's influence there will rise.

"Recently we see the politics of China also, which does not have a military base but which is gradually and persistently advancing its influence in this region and in many other regions," Mamadshoev says. "Using this example, it seems to me that the use of economic means is the best way to get a foothold in the region."

All the same, Kasym Bekmukhammad, another independent expert from Dushanbe, says that after the Russia-Georgia conflict in the Caucasus, Russia has found the grounds to expand its presence in Central Asia and strengthen its position in the region. During the existence of the CIS, Russia has strongly warned against the presence of external threats in the Central Asian states.

Bekmukhammad says that so far no one has seen the clear threats Moscow has been warning about, widely read as cross-border terrorism coming from Afghanistan or other regional hot spots, and that Russia is simply pursuing its geopolitical goals in an important region like Central Asia.

Besides that, Bekmukhammad notes that the experience of the Russian military does not show that Russian troops have played the expected role in resolving internal crises in the countries where they are based. "Russia always takes a passive position and we witnessed such a situation in Kyrgyzstan," he says.

Here the Tajik analyst is speaking about the passive position of Russia during the Tajik civil war in 1992-97, the Andijon bloodshed in May 2005 and the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan in March 2005, when the regime of Askar Akaev was overthrown.

[Kazakhstan to deepen ties with United States](#)

*International Herald Tribune* – November 19

Oil-rich Kazakhstan says it will strengthen its ties with the United States under the incoming administration of President-elect Barack Obama.

Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev says he discussed regional security and energy issues with Obama in a telephone conversation late Tuesday.

U.S. companies have invested billions of dollars in developing Kazakh energy resources in recent years.

Nazarbayev said at an official meeting Wednesday that Obama expressed gratitude to the Central Asian nation for its cooperation in nuclear disarmament initiatives and anti-terrorism activities.

Kazakhstan is to take a leading regional role in liaison with the West when it takes up chairmanship of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe in 2010.

[Russia urges UN to revise global arms export system](#)

*RIA Novosti* – November 19

Russia has called on the United Nations to revise the international system of arms exports in view of the August conflict with Georgia, Russia's envoy to the UN said on Wednesday.

Russia has accused Ukraine and the U.S. of delivering arms to Georgia prior to and during the five-day conflict over South Ossetia in August. Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin said on October 2 that he considered alleged arms supplies a criminal act.

"Illegal weapons, including small arms, fall into the hands of terrorists and irresponsible users. The Caucasus crisis in August this year showed that the current mechanisms of weapons transfers, including the Wassenaar Arrangement, are inadequate," Vitaly Churkin told a UN Security Council session on Wednesday.

The Wassenaar Arrangement, an arms export control regime with 40 participating states, was established in 1996 in the Dutch town of Wassenaar.

[US advisory panel warns of Chinese cyberspace espionage attacks](#)

*Chicago Tribune* – November 20

China has stepped up computer espionage attacks on the U.S. government, defense contractors and American businesses, a congressional advisory panel

said Thursday.

The U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission also said in its annual report to lawmakers that aggressive Chinese space programs are allowing Beijing to target U.S. military forces better.

"China is stealing vast amounts of sensitive information from U.S. computer networks," said Larry Wortzel, chairman of the commission set up by Congress in 2000 to advise, investigate and report on U.S.-China affairs.

The commission of six Democrats and six Republicans said in the unanimously approved report that China's massive military modernization and its "impressive but disturbing" space and computer warfare capabilities "suggest China is intent on expanding its sphere of control even at the expense of its Asian neighbors and the United States."

The commission recommended that lawmakers provide money for U.S. government programs that would monitor and protect computer networks.

Messages left with the Chinese Embassy in Washington were not immediately returned. Officials in Beijing have responded to past reports by saying China does not try to undermine other countries' interests and seeks healthy ties with the United States.

The report comes two months before President-elect Barack Obama takes office. The Democratic Obama administration probably will continue the Republican Bush administration's efforts to work with and encourage China, a veto-holding member of the U.N. Security Council that the United States needs in nuclear confrontations with Iran and North Korea.

During the campaign for president, then-candidate Obama said that "China is rising, and it's not going away," adding that Beijing is "neither our enemy nor our friend; they're competitors."

In the commission's report, Chinese military strategist Wang Huacheng is quoted as calling U.S. dependence on space assets and information technology its "soft ribs."

China's space program is "steadily increasing the vulnerability of U.S. assets," the report said. For instance, improvements in satellite imagery allow China to locate U.S. carrier battle groups more accurately, faster and from farther away.

People's Liberation Army officer and author Cai Fengzhen is quoted as saying that the "area above ground, airspace and outer space are inseparable and integrated. They are the strategic commanding height of modern informationalized warfare."

"If this becomes Chinese policy," the report said, "it could set the stage for conflict with the United States and other nations that expect the right of passage for their spacecraft."

The commission also found fault with what it said was China's use of prison labor to produce export products and with Beijing's lax regulatory oversight of an estimated 4.5 million fish farms.

"Even more shocking is the lack of regulations and inspections within the United States," Commissioner Carolyn Bartholomew said.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration, she said, inspects less than 2 percent of all fish imports. The FDA plans this week to open several offices in China, she said, but "the challenge is immense. More than a billion pounds of Chinese seafood, valued at \$1.9 billion, was imported into the United States in 2006."

The commission also criticized China for violating commitments to avoid trade-distorting measures, adopting new laws that may restrict foreign access to China's markets and keeping its currency undervalued to get an export advantage.

It recommended that Congress enact legislation to respond to China's currency manipulation and create enforceable disclosure requirements on investments in the United States for foreign sovereign wealth funds and other foreign state-controlled companies.

#### [Greater military transparency for China?](#)

*Today Online* – November 20

Several Western maritime experts have urged China to show greater transparency in its military capabilities and intentions.

"The Chinese government needs to publish a lot more of what its military has ... to prevent people from imagining things," Dr Norman Friedman, a strategist and columnist on world and naval affairs in the United States, told a maritime conference here yesterday.

Dr Stanley Weeks, a senior naval advisor with Science Applications International Corporation in the US, also encouraged China to be more open. He added: "China and India should give priority to measures such as Incidents at Sea agreements and communication means that help avoid conflict through miscalculation or misunderstanding."

In response, China's People Liberation Army (PLA) Navy Senior Captain Zhang Junshe said "China wants to show as much as possible to the world", but there could only be "comparative transparency".

"There cannot be any absolute transparency from any country. China's defence strategy is transparent and we're doing our best to be more transparent," he added.

The deputy director of PLA Navy's Naval Institute of Military Science pointed out that the US has a policy of ambiguity as to whether it would intervene in cross-strait military conflict triggered by a Taiwan declaration of independence.

Assistant Professor Li Mingjiang of S Rajaratnam School of International Studies said despite the growing military exchanges between China and the US, there is still a profound lack of strategic trust between the two sides.

"It is probably only realistic to have modest expectations about near term progress both in military ties and broader relations," he said.

## **DEFENCE ACQUISITION AND TECHNOLOGY**

### [Chinese Show and Tell](#)

*The Wall Street Journal* – November 6

The most advanced Chinese fighter plane to date made its public debut at the biennial China Air Show here this week, and it was an impressive sight. The pilot wowed onlookers with a series of maneuvers reminiscent of "Top Gun," including sharp turns, a near-vertical climb and a 360-degree rotation. The plane, dubbed the J-10, is the centerpiece of Beijing's military aerospace program. The message is clear: China's military is arriving, and fast.

The biennial air show in this southern city is unique because it's the closest glimpse most people can get of China's secretive aerospace aspirations. Even then, it's an imperfect window. Some of the models displayed might be more aspirational than practical, and there's a strong likelihood the military holds back especially interesting material. U.S.-based defense analyst Richard D. Fisher likens the Zhuhai event to a "clear view through a key hole."

Still, it's instructive. More technology is on display this year than ever before. The J-10 -- China's answer to the F-16 -- is the star. The Pentagon notes the J-10's utility in "anti-access/area-denial," or keeping the enemy out of a particular patch of land, sea or air. Its body is modeled on Israel's Lavi fighter program of the 1980s (the similarities are obvious, though both sides deny it) and it has, for now at least, a Russian engine. The Chinese are developing their own Taihang turbofan engine for the J-10, and after more than a decade of trials, a model of the Taihang is also on display in Zhuhai this week.

The show also features various antiship missiles like the C-602 and C-705. The Chinese even displayed a sophisticated cockpit display system featuring the same kind of liquid-crystal technology in line with what the U.S. will put in its most advanced fighter, the F-35. As if to underscore that its ambitions stretch into space, China also displayed the recently returned Shenzhou-7 orbiter (from which a Chinese astronaut recently made the country's first space walk).

Another corner of the cavernous exhibition hall is devoted to future projects, such as models of unmanned aerial vehicles; an illustration on a wall sign shows that China's ambitions in this sphere match America's. While some of the models are clearly fanciful (one is an orange-colored saucer-shaped contraption resembling a children's toy), others like the Warrior Eagle are within China's technological grasp. If the unmanned program lives up to aspirations, it would one day be a powerful tool for fighting a naval war.

So what is all this weaponry for? Beijing never quite says. As the Pentagon noted in its annual report on China's military this year, the country "continues to promulgate incomplete defense expenditure figures, and engage in actions that appear inconsistent with its declaratory policies." Even at Zhuhai, China's big show of transparency, Chinese engineers are often cagey in discussing technologies they've put on display. Foreign analysts are left to make educated guesses by patching together statements from Chinese officers and strategists and tracking arms purchases and development.

One thing is clear: At the broadest level, China is intent on rivaling the U.S. as a military superpower. In part Beijing will achieve this by catching up to the U.S. in terms of China's own capabilities (see, for example, the J-10 program, the space mission, or those unmanned vehicles).

Taiwan appears to be one focus of military planning. The J-10 is a Chinese answer to the F-16, 150 of which America sold to Taiwan in 1992 and more of which Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou would like to buy. The antiship C-602 and C-705 missiles, with a range up to 280 kilometers, could be used to deter U.S. naval intervention in any cross-Strait conflict.

China could also use its newfound military power to project more influence in South Asia. China still has outstanding boundary disputes with India, and the J-10 is in a technological class with India's fleet of French-built Mirage 2000 fighters. Beijing's new firepower could also come in handy defending its interests along key trade routes -- for example in the South China Sea, where China has lately been more aggressively asserting its claims to disputed archipelagos.

Beyond allowing China to challenge enemies directly, owning this technology offers Beijing another valuable benefit -- the ability to sell it to shore up important relationships. China is already planning to sell a version of the J-10 to Pakistan; former President Pervez Musharraf reportedly sat in the cockpit of one at the

factory when he was president. There are also reports China has considered selling the J-10 to Iran or Syria, though Beijing has denied this. One potential constraint on such sales right now is Russia's effective veto, as the engine supplier, of sales it might not like. Introduction of the Taihang turbofan will remove this impediment. Chinese small arms are already very popular in certain corners of the world, and the air show at Zhuhai seems intended to send the message that higher-end equipment is available, too.

China is not yet a true military superpower. Zhuhai displays many highly competent copies of -- or Chinese twists on -- foreign technologies, but few if any are genuine technological leaps attributable to domestic research. China remains heavily dependent on technologies and techniques it has imported from Russia since the end of the Cold War. China's modernization program is so young it lacks the decades of institutional knowledge that are such an advantage to the West.

That's no excuse for complacency, however. China is on track to catch up with America. China's military rise doesn't need to be a threat to the U.S., particularly if a peaceful and transparent Chinese military works as a U.S. partner to guarantee stability in Asia. That's most likely to happen if the U.S. itself continues to invest in military research and development, working with China from a position of strength. President-elect Barack Obama and the newly elected Democratic Congress need to consider this as they set out their budgetary priorities. China certainly is.

[Military experts say 'new' Iranian missile is just an old one with a different name](#)  
*Times Online* – November 12

Washington denounced the claim by Tehran today that it had test-fired a new surface-to-surface missile with a range of 2,000 kilometres (1,200 miles), capable of reaching Israel and US bases in the Gulf.

Mostafa Mohammad Najjar, Iran's Defence Minister, said the new "Sejil missile" had "extremely high capabilities". He was quoted as saying that "it will only land on the heads of those enemies who want to commit aggression and invade the Islamic Republic".

Despite the claims of a new weapon system, Western experts said it was probably just another name given to the Shahab 3 missile which had been test-fired on previous occasions.

The timing of the latest launching was seen as a deliberate move by Tehran to try and deter either Israel or the US from taking military action against Iran over its suspected nuclear weapons programme before President Bush hands over to Barak Obama on January

Gordon Johndroe, White House spokesman, said: "Iran's development of ballistic missiles is contrary to United Nations Security Council resolutions and completely inconsistent with Iran's obligations to the world."

He said Iran should refrain from further missile tests "if they truly seek to gain the trust of the world".

Andrew Brookes of the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies said: "I think the Iranians just keeping on rejigging the same missile and putting a new logo on it. It's basically the Shahab 3 with a different name, and the purpose of the test firing is to tell the world, 'don't forget us', we have missiles that can reach 2,000 kilometres."

"However, the launching of these missiles is not that meaningful because the Iranians have not developed an advanced miniaturised warhead to fit into the front end, unless they are getting help from North Korea or Russia, and Moscow says it is not supporting Iran's missile programme. So the missiles are rather like the Second World War V2 bombs which scared people but didn't cause mass casualties," he said.

Duncan Lennox, editor of Jane's Strategic Weapons, said: "You can never be sure with the Iranians. From the photographs they have released the missile looks like the Ashoura which they launched a year ago. It is a solid propellant missile with a triconic nose shape, like the teat on a baby's bottle. The Shahab 3A also has the same nose shape."

He added: "What is not clear is whether the test firing took place today or whether it's a photograph taken out of the archives but from the pictures it looks like a two-stage missile with a range of 1,900-2,000 kilometres."

#### [Russia to halt Iskander missile exports](#)

*UPI* –November 12

Russia will halt foreign sales of its new Iskander tactical missile systems until its own needs for them are fulfilled, an official said Wednesday.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev announced this month that Russia would deploy Iskanders in Kaliningrad to counter moves by the United States to build an Eastern European missile defense system. Partly because of that, Russia's state arms exporter Rosoboronexport says it will halt exports for now, RIA Novosti reported Wednesday.

"There will be a break in Iskander supplies abroad until we have supplied the Russian armed forces with them," Nikolai Dimidyuk, a senior Rosoboronexport official, told the news agency, saying the companies producing them are not facing financial problems despite the global credit crunch.

One exception, Dimidyuk said, was Belarus, which he said would still be supplied with an Iskander-E system, a shorter-range export version of the Iskander-M, which he said is also a response to the proposed missile shield program in Poland and the Czech Republic.

[India successfully test fires 'Shaurya' missile](#)

*Express Indian* –November 12

India successfully test fired 'Shaurya', a medium-range surface-to-surface ballistic missile, to be used by its Army. With a 600-km range, the missile is capable of hitting targets deep inside Pakistan and China.

The indigenous missile was launched from an underground facility with an in-built canister at 11.25 am from Complex-3 of the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur, DRDO sources said in Balasore (Orissa).

The sleek missile, with a flight duration of 485 seconds, roared into the sky leaving behind a thick yellow and white smoke on a clear sunny day, they added.

The sophisticated tactical missile is capable of carrying conventional warheads with a payload of about one tonne. "With longer shelf-life, as it is stored in a canister just like the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile, the Shaurya is easily transportable and user-friendly. This is a technology development project," DRDO sources said in New Delhi.

Though there was speculation that the missile was a land version of the under development K-15 submarine launched ballistic missile, DRDO sources said the surface-to-surface missile had nothing to do with K-15 'Sagarika' project.

"The missile was test fired from a 30-40 feet deep pit with in-built canister specially designed for the purpose. There was no water in the pit," the sources said.

"The test was conducted to check some of the vital parameters of Shaurya missile," the DRDO sources said. The solid propellant, two-staged missile is little over 10 metres in length and about half-a-metre in width, they said.

During the test, the missile took off vertically and its entire trajectory was tracked through an integrated system of sophisticated radars, electro-optical tracking instruments, a chain of telemetry stations positioned in different points and two naval ships placed close to the impact point deep in the Bay of Bengal.

As a precautionary measure, the district administration of Balasore temporarily evacuated 364 families residing within two km radius of the launch site and took them to safety at a nearby shelter before the missile test.

The launch of Shaurya has come nearly nine months after India had successfully tested the 'Sagarika' missile under the K-15 project this February off the coast of Visakhapatnam from a pontoon simulating the conditions of a submarine.

[French Test-launch M51 Missile Underwater](#)

*Defense News* – November 13

France completed a first undersea test launch of an unarmed M51 submarine ballistic missile Nov. 13 from the Biscarosse range, the ministry of defense said.

The firing was the third test launch of the strategic weapon system but the first from underwater, the ministry said in a statement. The firing took place at a submerged launch point, which allowed verification of the underwater phase of the missile launch.

"The test was followed all through the flight cycle by the test resources of the Délégation Générale pour l'Armement (DGA) and the test and measurement ship Monge," the statement said.

The M51 is the new missile due to enter service in 2010 on Le Terrible, the last of four in the Triomphant class of nuclear ballistic missile submarines. The M51 has a range of 9,000 kilometers, half again as much as the M45 missile it replaces.

Defense Minister Hervé Morin congratulated teams from the DGA, EADS Astrium, G2P, the joint venture between Snecma Propulsion Solide and SNPE Materiaux Energétiques, subcontractors, the CEA French Atomic Energy Commission and the armed forces

[Russia to sell military jets to Indonesia](#)

*Intell Asia* – November 17

The Russian arms export group, Rosoboronexport, has agreed to sell six Su-30 Flanker-C jet fighters to Indonesia, an official has confirmed.

Nikolai Dimidyuk, Rosoboronexport special programmes director, said the Russian organisation reached an agreement with the Asian country to sell the jets along with 18 BMP-3 infantry fighting vehicles, the Indonesian news agency ANTARA reported Friday.

Dimidyuk said the agreement would allow Indonesia to purchase other Russian warplanes, including military helicopters.

"Indonesia is still very interested in Russian fixed-and rotary-winged aircraft," Dimidyuk said.

Indonesia is expected to receive a US\$1 billion loan from the Russian finance ministry as part of the transaction, ANTARA reported.

"We are sure that this loan will be used to buy arms," Dimidyuk said.

[Russian Navy to receive Severodvinsk nuclear submarine in 2010](#)

*RIA Novosti* – November 19

A new nuclear-powered attack submarine will be delivered to the Russian Navy in 2010, a Russian shipyard said on Wednesday.

Severodvinsk is the first Project 855 Yasen (Graney) series of the Severodvinsk class nuclear submarines, combining the ability to launch a variety of long-range cruise missiles (up to 3,100 miles) with nuclear warheads, and effectively engage hostile submarines and surface warships.

"There are no problems with the construction of the submarine, and financing is underway. The vessel will be delivered to the Navy in 2010," said Nikolai Kalistratov, general director of the Sevmash shipyard in northern Russia.

Work on the Severodvinsk started in 1992, and the vessel had been scheduled to be commissioned before 1998. However, the construction was significantly delayed for financial reasons, and work had been suspended until 2001.

In 2003 Sevmash reportedly received extra funding to accelerate the completion of the Severodvinsk. Since then, the construction cost of the submarine had to be adjusted, and in 2008 financing totaled 4 billion rubles (\$146 mln).

Kalistratov said that the remaining part of the construction is the fitting of electronics on board the submarine.

"It normally takes a long time to build the first vessel in the series," he said.

Russia's Navy commander, Adm. Vladimir Vysotsky, said in July that the construction of new-generation nuclear-powered ballistic missile and attack submarines is a top priority for the Russian Navy's development.

Under the Russian State Armaments Program for 2007-2015, the Navy will receive several dozen surface ships and submarines, including five Project 955 Borey nuclear-powered strategic ballistic missile submarines equipped with new Bulava ballistic missiles, two Project 885 Yasen nuclear-powered multipurpose submarines, six Project 677 Lada diesel-electric submarines, three Project 22350 frigates and five Project 20380 corvettes.

[China set to add aircraft carrier](#)  
*New York Times* –November 19

A high-ranking Chinese military official has hinted that China's fast-growing navy is seeking to acquire an aircraft carrier, a move that would surely stoke tensions with the US military and its allies in Asia.

In an interview published in the Financial Times of London on Monday, the official, Gen Quan Lihua did not say whether China was building a carrier. But the general, a senior official of the ministry of national defense, said having one was the dream of any great military power. He suggested that the US had nothing to fear should China acquire one for strictly defensive purposes.

"The question is not whether you have an aircraft carrier, but what you do with your aircraft carrier," he said in the interview. "Even if one day we have an aircraft carrier, unlike another country we will not use it to pursue global deployment or global reach."

In recent years, Pentagon officials have been following Beijing's naval buildup. Since 2000, China has constructed at least 60 warships.

Its fleet of 860 vessels includes about 60 submarines. Tensions between China and the US were heightened last month after the Pentagon announced the sale of \$6 billion in advanced weapons to Taiwan. China warned that the move could worsen relations between the countries. The deal includes Apache attack helicopters and an array of missiles, radars and anti-aircraft defense systems.

In the interview, the general insisted that China would not deploy a carrier with aggressive intent. "Navies of great powers with more than 10 aircraft carrier battle groups with strategic military objectives have a different purpose from countries with only one or two carriers used for offshore defense," he said.

Although he did not mention any country by name, his comments were clearly aimed at the United States, which has 11 aircraft carriers, including the George Washington, which was recently deployed to Japan. Of the handful of other nations that have aircraft carriers, including Britain, France, Italy and Russia, none have more than a few

[Japan Says Missile Defense Test Failed](#)  
*Defense News* – November 20

Japan said Nov. 20 that a test of a missile shield being developed with the United States to protect against possible attacks from North Korea had ended in failure.

A Japanese warship failed to shoot down a dummy missile during the test off Hawaii on Nov. 19 using the U.S.-developed Standard Missile 3 (SM-3), the defense ministry said in a statement.

Washington and Tokyo have been working jointly to install a shield against attacks from North Korea, which fired a missile over Japan's main island in 1998 and tested an atom bomb in 2006.

Officials said they were still investigating what went wrong in the test, which cost 6.2 billion yen (\$63 million), excluding the missile, the value of which is secret.

"According to officials from the test site, the SM-3 missile was on track until only a few seconds before it was due to hit," a ministry official told reporters.

"Because of some problem it missed the target. We still don't know what happened in those few seconds," the official said.

An earlier test of the SM-3 interceptor by Japan in December high above the Pacific Ocean off Hawaii was successful.

Officials said the latest test from the Chokai destroyer was more challenging because the vessel was not notified in advance when the dummy missile would be launched.

They said that U.S. forces had also conducted 15 similar tests, of which 12 were successful.

In September Japan successfully tested the new U.S.-developed Patriot Advanced Capability 3 (PAC-3), a surface-to-air missile that tracks and hits incoming targets.

Japan plans to complete its missile shield by early 2011, deploying the PAC-3 missiles at 11 bases and setting up SM-3 missiles on several warships.

Despite its pacifist constitution and heavily reliance on the U.S. military for protection, Japan has the world's fifth biggest military budget.

## **NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY**

[India 'sinks Somali pirate ship'](#)

*BBC News* – November 19

An Indian navy warship has destroyed a suspected Somali pirate vessel after it came under attack in the Gulf of Aden. INS Tabar sank the pirate "mother ship" after it failed to stop for investigation and opened fire instead, an Indian navy statement said.

There has been a surge in piracy incidents off the coast of Somalia.

The latest attack came days after the Saudi-owned Sirius Star supertanker and its 25 crew were seized by pirates and anchored off the Somali coast.

Vela International, operators of the Sirius Star, told the BBC no demands had yet been received from the pirates. The company also said all the crew were safe.

The biggest tanker ever hijacked, Sirius Star is carrying a cargo of two million barrels of oil - a quarter of Saudi Arabia's daily output - worth more than \$100m (£67m).

Analysts say the pattern of other hijackings suggests a ransom request is likely to follow. Given the value of the tanker and its cargo, that is expected to be a sizeable demand.

Two of the captive crew are British. The UK Foreign Secretary, David Miliband, said the Royal Navy was co-ordinating the European response to the incident.

"The problem of piracy around Somalia is a grave danger to the stability in the region," he told the BBC.

Somalia has not had a functioning national government since 1991 and has suffered continuing civil strife.

## **Explosions**

India is among several countries already patrolling the Gulf of Aden, one of the world's busiest shipping lanes which connects the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

The Indian navy said the Tabar spotted the pirate vessel while patrolling 285 nautical miles (528km) south-west of Salalah in Oman on Tuesday evening. The navy said the pirates on board were armed with guns and rocket propelled grenade launchers.

When it demanded the vessel stop for investigation, the pirate ship responded by threatening to "blow up the naval warship if it closed on her", the statement said.

Pirates then fired on the Tabar, and the Indians say they retaliated and that there was an explosion on the pirate vessel, which sank.

"Fire broke out on the vessel and explosions were heard, possibly due to exploding ammunition that was stored in the vessel," the Indian navy said.

Some of the pirates tried to escape on two speedboats. The Indian sailors gave chase but one boat was later found abandoned, while a second boat escaped.

INS Tabar has been patrolling the Gulf of Aden since 23 October, and has escorted 35 ships safely through the "pirate-infested waters", the statement said. Last week, helicopter-borne Indian marine commandos stopped pirates from boarding and hijacking an Indian merchant vessel.

## **Ransoms**

On Tuesday, a cargo ship and a fishing vessel became the latest to join more than 90 vessels attacked by the pirates this year. The first vessel, a 25-crew cargo vessel transporting wheat to Iran, was attacked in the Gulf of Aden, while contact was lost with the crew of 12 on the fishing boat.

Piracy off the coast of East Africa and the Gulf of Aden - an area of more than 1m sq miles (2.6m sq km) - is estimated to have cost up to \$30m in ransoms this year, a UK think tank has said. The hijackings account for one-third of all global piracy incidents this year and the situation is getting out of control, according to the International Maritime Board.

The pirates who seized the Sirius Star are a sophisticated group with contacts in Dubai and neighbouring countries, says the BBC Somali Service's Yusuf Garaad.

Much of their ransom money from previous hijackings has been used to buy new boats and weapons as well as develop a network across the Horn of Africa, he adds.

Shipping companies are now weighing up the risks of using the short-cut route to Europe via the Suez canal. However, travelling around South Africa's Cape of Good Hope would add several weeks to average journey times and substantially increase the cost of goods for consumers.

### [Warships protect sea route from pirates](#)

*CNN* – November 20

A multinational force of warships has carved out a narrow shipping corridor off the coast of Somalia that is helping protect merchant vessels from pirate attacks, the force's commander said Monday.

Ninety percent of ships transiting the perilous Gulf of Aden are using the guarded corridor and there have been no hijackings inside the zone since it was set up on August 22, said Danish Commodore Per Bigum Christensen.

In a telephone interview from his East African base in Djibouti, Christensen said coalition naval forces were also having success using planes, helicopters and drones to find and track suspect vessels until they can be boarded and searched.

Pirate attacks off the Somali coast have surged 75 percent this year, as bandits lured by million-dollar ransoms have pushed farther out to sea in search of bigger prey among the 20,000 oil tankers, freighters and merchant vessels transiting the Gulf of Aden each year.

There have been 81 attacks this year, and 32 ships have been hijacked, according to the International Maritime Bureau.

Eleven vessels -- most notably the Ukrainian freighter, [MV Faina](#) which is loaded with tanks and weapons, seized September 25 -- remain in the hands of pirates along with more than 200 crew.

The multinational force created the shipping channel to better focus its patrols in the vast area.

The zone is about 600 miles long and just three to six miles wide. It runs roughly north-south, allowing ships to safely bypass the Somali coast on their way to and from the Red Sea and the Suez Canal.

Most commercial ships enter the zone on their own, but others group together in convoys with a warship escort.

A few larger and faster ships less vulnerable to attack still move outside the zone, as do "some crazy yachters," Christensen said. Luxury yachts have been among the pirates' targets this year.

Aboard stolen fishing trawlers and other "mother ships" loaded with food, diesel and water, pirates can loiter several hundred miles offshore for days.

Hiding among clusters of fishing boats, the bandits launch armed skiffs with powerful outboard engines as attack craft when a target is spotted, often clambering aboard a ship by ladder or grappling equipment in a matter of minutes.

The [pirates](#) have already shifted their tactics in response to the patrols, positioning attack teams on the northern and southern ends of the shipping zone to stretch the already thin naval forces, Christensen said.

The naval forces have captured six pirate attack teams -- around 60 people -- since October, Christensen said. But after seizing their weapons and equipment, the sailors must release the bandits at sea to sail back to [Somalia](#) because no country has been willing to bring them to trial.

Somalia has no reliable central government to put them on trial or imprison them.

The naval task force that Christensen commands was initially set up under the U.S.-led war in Afghanistan to patrol the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea and parts of the Indian Ocean.

But earlier this year it was diverted to concentrate almost solely on fighting piracy. Known as Combined Task Force-150, it has anywhere from three to 15 ships on patrol at a time.

Besides Denmark, the nations that have been part of the task force are the United States, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Britain, Pakistan and Canada.

Separately, ships from the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet have been deployed to surround the Faina until a resolution to the standoff over the freighter is reached.

A NATO flotilla of seven vessels is also patrolling the area. European Union foreign ministers gave their final approval Monday to send four to six ships to replace the NATO force in December.

The use of military power, Christensen acknowledged, is limited in what it can do to stop a problem driven by lawlessness and poverty in Somalia, a nation at war with itself for most of the past 17 years.

"We can be there and suppress the piracy," Christensen said, "but the problem is on shore."

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

### [Taiwan Marines Flex Muscles](#)

*Defense News* –November 4

Taiwan's Marine Corps displayed amphibious beach assault capabilities and special warfare skills during a one-day exercise at Tsoying Naval Base, Kaohsiung, on Oct. 31. The exercise began with a demonstration by six new AAV-7A1 amphibious assault vehicles during a simulated beach assault.

Taiwan acquired 54 rebuilt AAV-7A1 RAM/RS (Reliability, Availability and Maintainability/Rebuild to Standard) amphibious assault vehicles in 2006 from the United States. The purchase included four AAVC-7A1 Command Vehicles and two AAVR-7A1 Recovery Vehicles. The AAV-7 vehicles now make up two companies in the 66th Marine Brigade in Linkou, northern Taiwan, and the 99th Marine Brigade at Tsoying Naval Base, southern Taiwan.

The Marines still operate four companies of 84 aging LVTP-5A1 vehicles acquired in the 1970s. At one time, Taiwan had 300 LVTP-5s in its arsenal.

United Defense LP Ground Systems won a \$156 million contract in 2003 to supply the AAV-7s to Taiwan. The company provided remanufactured hulls, material support and test equipment, appliqué armor kits and litter kits. Work was done at the U.S. Marine Corps Logistics Command Depot in Albany, Ga.

The second part of the exercise involved the Marine Corps' Amphibious Reconnaissance Battalion (ARB) at the Urban Simulation Center. The facility is made up of a variety of buildings for close quarter combat. In a simulated assault, three teams belonging to the ARB's Special Service Company (SSC) landed by rubber boats along the coast. The teams climbed a rock face and attacked several buildings.

ARB's 600 troops make up seven companies: four reconnaissance, one underwater demolition and two SSCs.

Over half of the ARB members are "aboriginals," one Marine official said. "They are just tougher than city recruits. They volunteer and are eager for a military career," the official said. Aboriginals come from mountainous areas and are "used to the rural life."

About 458,000 aboriginals make up 14 tribes in Taiwan. They are linked genetically and linguistically to the Austronesian peoples and are famous for their early tradition of head-hunting, now abolished.

The ARB also displayed a two-man sniper team that demonstrated camouflage techniques. They were armed with a Remington M-24 sniper rifle and a Colt M-4A1 Carbine assault rifle.

ARB was created in 1995 when several Marine special operations units, including the SSC, were placed under the ARB as part of an overall force restructuring effort.

### [S. Korean, U.S. Marines Hold Major Landing Exercise](#)

*Agence France-Presse* – November 6

Thousands of U.S. and South Korean Marines staged a major joint landing exercise Nov. 6, backed by scores of vessels and aircraft.

The drill in the southeastern port of Pohang involved 6,000 South Korean Marines and 2,000 U.S. Marines from Okinawa in Japan, military officials said.

Also taking part were 27 naval ships, about 30 helicopters and 70 amphibious landing vehicles from both nations.

South Korea's navy mobilized a 14,000-ton amphibious assault ship capable of carrying a Marine landing battalion.

The landing began after a simulated attack from ships and attack helicopters. The exercise was watched by U.S. Army Gen. Walter Sharp, new commander of 28,500 U.S. troops in South Korea, an AFP photographer said.

North Korea has condemned the exercise as preparations for an invasion of the communist state.

South Korea has said the drill is aimed at enhancing the command capabilities of U.S.-South Korean combined forces.

The landing is part of a larger annual drill named the Hoguk Exercise, which began on October 30 and focuses on raising joint combat capabilities on land, sea and air.

The U.S. fought for the South during the 1950-53 war and has deployed troops in the country ever since.

[At least 20 die in accident on Russian nuclear sub](#)

*Reuters* – November 8

At least 20 people have died and 21 been injured in an accident on board a Russian nuclear-powered submarine in the Pacific Ocean, a Russian naval spokesman said on Sunday.

Radiation levels on board were normal, he said.

Russia's navy has suffered a string of fatal accidents, including the loss of the Kursk nuclear submarine in the Barents Sea in August 2000. All 118 sailors aboard died.

"More than 20 people were killed on a nuclear submarine in the Pacific Ocean during routine testing as a result of the unsanctioned functioning of the fire extinguishing systems," the navy spokesman, Igor Dygalo, said by telephone.

Dygalo did not give the name of the submarine or specify where it was located. There were 208 people on board at the time of Saturday's accident, some of them from a shipbuilding company, he added.

"The reactor section (of the submarine) is working properly," the spokesman said. "The radiation levels on the ship are normal."

A Russian destroyer, the Admiral Tributs, was providing assistance and taking some of the injured crew from the submarine to port, Dygalo said.

He did not say where the ships were but the Tributs is normally based at Vladivostok, Russia's main Far Eastern naval port, according to Russian media.

President Dmitry Medvedev has been informed about the accident, Russian news agencies reported.

The state-owned RIA news agency quoted a highly placed official in the Pacific Fleet as saying the accident happened in the bow of the submarine.

In August 2005, seven Russian sailors were freed with help from a British rescue crew after three days trapped inside an AS-28 mini-submarine 600 feet down in the Pacific with dwindling air supplies.

### [U.S. Marines' move to Guam likely to be delayed until after 2015](#)

*AZStartNet* –November 9

The completion of the transfer of 8,000 U.S. Marines in Okinawa Prefecture in Japan to Guam likely will be delayed from the initially scheduled 2014 to sometime after 2015, The Yomiuri Shimbun has learned.

The transfer, one of the core measures for the relocation of U.S. forces in Japan, also will cost more than initially expected, sources said.

According to the sources, the U.S. defense budget likely will be cut because of the financial crisis, making it difficult for the United States to allocate sufficient funds for fiscal 2010, which starts in October 2009, to complete the transfer as initially scheduled. The U.S. government has unofficially informed Japan of the circumstances, the sources said. Relocating the U.S. Marines is currently estimated to cost about \$10.27 billion.

The move was scheduled to be completed in 2014, along with the relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in Ginowan, Okinawa Prefecture, to Camp Schwab in Nago. However, Congress' Government Accountability Office has said the transfer schedule is too optimistic, and that additional costs may be required for the development of infrastructure in the relocation site in Guam. A possible delay to the U.S. Marines' transfer under such circumstances likely will affect the relocation schedule for Futenma Air Station, which is behind schedule because of delays on the Japanese side.

The sources also said the United States might ask Japan to shoulder additional costs for the transfer. Currently, Japan has agreed to pay about \$6.09 billion, or 60 percent, of the total transfer expense.

The U.S. government is drafting its fiscal 2010 budget requests, which will be made to the Congress in February.

Admiral Timothy Keating, commander of the U.S. Pacific Command, said at a press conference in New York on Wednesday that the transfer was facing budgetary constraints. "We won't be done by 2014, or maybe even 2015," Keating said. "It will cost us a little bit more money than we currently have budgeted."

[IAF's joint exercise with China on cards](#)

*Times of India* – November 17

A joint exercise of Indian Air Force (IAF) and its Chinese counterpart has been planned as part of building up strong ties with Republic of China, Air Chief Marshal Fali Homi Major, who recently paid a visit to the neighbouring country, said on Monday.

"My recent visit to China was successful one and had useful discussions with the counterpart there and we have planned a joint air force exercise in near future which will be first of such kind with China," Fali Homi Major told a press conference.

"Though no schedule has been drawn right now, it may take sooner or later," the he said, adding "the Chinese army is coming for joint army exercise in December in Belgaum. The 'Surya Kiran' aircraft team displayed an excellent aerobatic show there during the visit."

On acquisition of 126 fighter aircraft for IAF, he said the process is on and flight evaluation will take place shortly before final induction of these planes.

Admitting gaps in air defence system which has been pointed out by the CAG in its report, the Air Chief Marshal said the government was for strengthening our radar system and new systems are being acquired.

"Many such radars and missile systems are in the pipeline," he added.

## **NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION**

[North Korean Nuclear Sampling to be Delayed](#)

*Global Security Newswire* – November 19

The United States has reportedly agreed to delay a key component of the program to verify the scope of North Korea's nuclear operations, Kyodo News reported today (see [GSN](#), Nov. 18).

On oral agreement between Washington and Pyongyang calls for collection of nuclear samples during the third and final phase of North Korean denuclearization, a diplomatic source told the South Korean *Kyunghyang Shinmun* newspaper.

"Sample-taking will not take place in the current second phase," which involves disablement of facilities at the Yongbyon nuclear complex, the official said.

North Korean and U.S. officials last month reached an agreement on a verification protocol that Washington said would include inspections of nuclear

facilities and sample collection. The plan awaits approval from the nations participating in the six-party talks -- China, Japan, Russia, the United States and both Koreas.

This month, Pyongyang said that it did not accept sample-taking as a component of the verification plan. U.S. officials disputed that claim.

The two nations accept that verification will take an extended period of time and that collection of samples must be pushed back to the third phase, which involves actual dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear sector.

North Korea continues to oppose a written verification plan or discussion of sampling during this phase of denuclearization, the newspaper reported (Kyodo News/[Breitbart](#), Nov. 19).

The matter will continue into the administration of U.S. President-elect Barack Obama, who has said he would be open to meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong Il. Some observers believe that Obama would not wait long after taking office to send a representative to Pyongyang to pave the way for such a meeting, the Yonhap News Agency reported today.

"If America is willing to come to the table, the world will be more willing to rally behind American leadership to deal with challenges like confronting terrorism and Iran and North Korea's nuclear programs," according to the [Web site](#) for the Obama presidential transition team.

Former Secretary of State George Shultz told the *Washington Times* that the contretemps over nuclear sampling showed that diplomacy with Pyongyang would remain difficult.

"They are endless bargainers. There is no such thing as a firm agreement with them. You make an agreement, you make a compromise and then they immediately break it in some fashion," he said (Donald Lambro, [Washington Times](#), Nov. 18).

### [Obama Seeks Verifiable Ban on Nukes](#)

*The Korea Times* – November 19

U.S. President-elect Barack Obama has stated that his foreign policy will seek a verifiable global ban on the production of nuclear weapons material.

In the ``Obama-Biden Plan," Obama and Vice President-elect Joe Biden also vowed to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation treaty for countries like North Korea and Iran.

``Obama and Biden will secure all loose nuclear materials in the world within four

years. While working to secure existing stockpiles of nuclear material, Obama and Biden will negotiate a verifiable global ban on the production of new nuclear weapons material," the President-elect office said through its official Web site [www.change.gov](http://www.change.gov).

This will deny terrorists the ability to steal or buy loose nuclear materials, it added.

The plan also stipulates that Obama and Biden will crack down on nuclear proliferation so that North Korea and Iran will automatically face strong sanctions if they break the rules.

The platform renewing American diplomacy also said the United States will rebuild its alliances to confront the common challenges of the 21st century such as terrorism and nuclear weapons; climate change and poverty; genocide and disease.

Talking to U.S. foes and friends, the scheme said if America is willing to come to the table, the world will be more willing to rally behind American leadership to deal with the challenges of confronting terrorism and Iran and North Korea's nuclear programs.

Obama and Biden will forge a more effective framework in Asia that goes beyond bilateral agreements, occasional summits and ad hoc arrangements such as the six-party talks on North Korea, the Web site said.

"They will maintain strong ties with allies like Japan, South Korea and Australia; work to build an infrastructure with countries in East Asia that can promote stability and prosperity; and work to ensure that China plays by international rules," it said.

Meanwhile, North Korea has agreed to allow international inspectors to sample fissile material on its territory, according to the Kyungyang Shinmun newspaper Wednesday.

But Pyongyang said this will only happen after it enters the next phase of the denuclearization process, the report said.

The reclusive state refused to let the team in, claiming it had never agreed on the issue with the United States.

Washington and Pyongyang reportedly reached the verbal accord early last month when U.S. top nuclear envoy Christopher Hill visited Pyongyang to discuss verification of the North's declaration of its nuclear stockpile.

[Iran Could Fuel One Nuclear Bomb, Experts Say](#)  
*Global Security Newswire* – November 20

Analysts have concluded from an International Atomic Energy Agency report released yesterday that Iran has enough uranium to create a nuclear weapon if it were to continue enriching the material, the *New York Times* reported today (see [GSN](#), Nov. 19).

Iran had manufactured 1,390 pounds of low-enriched uranium by early this month -- a 330-pound increase since an earlier report -- according to the U.N. nuclear watchdog, which monitors the country's Natanz enrichment complex. The United States and other Western countries have long suspected that Iran ultimately intends to develop a nuclear-weapon capability, but Tehran insists its nuclear program is strictly civilian in nature.

Iran's enrichment progress "underscored that they are marching down the path to developing the nuclear weapons option," said Siegfried Hecker, a nuclear expert at Stanford University.

Still, experts noted that for Iran to produce a nuclear weapon, the country would have to withdraw from international nonproliferation protocols, refuse future IAEA inspections, run the uranium through a new enrichment centrifuge configuration over a few months and then place the weapon-grade fuel in a warhead.

"They clearly have enough material for a bomb," said nuclear physicist Richard Garwin. "They know how to do the enrichment. Whether they know how to design a bomb, well, that's another matter."

U.S. intelligence services have projected that Iran could build a nuclear weapon between 2009 and 2015. An assessment released last December indicated that the country had suspended its formal nuclear-weapon program in 2003, but the enrichment process is one of the most difficult steps toward developing a nuclear bomb, according to the *Times* (see [GSN](#), Dec. 3).

"They have a weapon's worth," said Thomas Cochran, a nuclear scientist at the Natural Resources Defense Council. "It's a virtual milestone," he added (Broad/Sanger, [New York Times](#), Nov. 20).

The Institute for Science and International Security, though, released a [report](#) yesterday stating that Iran would need several more months to acquire enough low-enriched uranium to use in a bomb.

The report also quotes an official familiar with IAEA operations as saying that Iran will probably begin operating 6,000 centrifuges by the end of 2008 (Diane Barnes, *Global Security Newswire*, Nov. 20).

The Bush administration yesterday expressed concern that the U.N. nuclear watchdog had again complained about Iran's refusal to cooperate fully with the agency's investigation into the nation's nuclear activities, Agence France-Presse reported.

"The Iranian government's failure to comply with the IAEA and U.N. is unfortunate and disappointing," said White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe (Agence France-Presse I/[Google News](#), Nov. 19).

The State Department stressed that Washington does not dispute Iran's right to civilian nuclear development and urged Tehran to halt uranium enrichment in exchange for incentives offered by the five permanent U.N. Security Council members and Germany, the Xinhua News Agency reported.

"We don't object to Iran possessing peaceful nuclear energy," spokesman Sean McCormack told reporters. "We do have objections, of course, along with the Security Council and the P-5-plus-1 to their possessing the full fuel cycle."

"There's already a potential process in place for the Iranians, should they choose to accept it. It's the P-5-plus-1 process. It has the backing of the Security Council," he added ([Xinhua News Agency](#), Nov. 19).

Iran said it was not required to provide additional support for the IAEA investigation into its nuclear ambitions, AFP reported yesterday.

"This report shows that Iran -- has fulfilled its legal obligation completely. Therefore having further expectation [of Iran] is illogical and cannot be carried out," said Ali Asghar Soltanieh, Iranian envoy to the U.N. nuclear agency. "The message of (IAEA chief Mohamed) ElBaradei is that inspections have completely returned to normal and are continuing without impediment" (Agence France-Presse II/[Spacewar.com](#), Nov. 19).

A high-level U.N. official said that the matter remains far from resolved: "We had gridlock before but then at least we were talking to each other. Now it's worse. There is no communication whatsoever, no progress regarding possible military dimensions in their program," the London *Telegraph* reported.

Iran "provided necessary access" for the U.N. nuclear watchdog as required by the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, said Iranian Atomic Energy Organization deputy chief Mohammad Saeedi,

"Naturally in the future also the agency's access and inspections within the same framework will continue," Saeedi said.

Iran gave the agency more than 200 pages of records last June, but IAEA officials said their worries remain.

"Our questions are there and they need to be addressed. There is no point in writing them again every week. We are just awaiting their response," said one high-level official. "But we have a long vacuum of communication now" (Tom Leonard, [London Telegraph](#), Nov. 20).

[Pakistan Will not rollback nuclear programme](#)

*Pakistan Times* – November 20

"Pakistan will not rollback or it has rolled back its nuclear programme", said Minister of State for Defence Qayyum Jatoi, talking to journalists in Multan Tuesday. He said "Our missile program, aimed at defence of the motherland, will also continue" he said adding that the country's defence production will increase to earn foreign exchange.

To a question the minister said although South Punjab was rich in agricultural resources it was kept deprived of basic necessities of life like quality education and quality health facilities. He was of the view that the only way to end its deprivations was to make it a province.

About local government system Abdul Qayyum Jatoi said that it had miserably failed to deliver. "It had ruined the administrative apparatus, so it must be abolished forthwith" he contended.

Commenting on current economic situation, he said the PPP government is capable to resolve the problems of price hike, unemployment, education, health, power shortage and inadequate communication facilities. "A change will be visible soon" he remarked. Replying to another question the minister said the PPP-PMLN partnership should continue in the overall national interest.