

NAPSNET Week in Review 27 April, 2002

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United States

1. Russia-US Arms Control

Russian and US arms negotiators failed on April 24 to bridge differences over an accord on strategic nuclear arms cuts, wrapping up talks a day early with a presidential summit only a month away. Russia's foreign minister Georgy Mamedov played down the abrupt departure of top US arms control negotiator US Undersecretary of State John Bolton from negotiations in Moscow, and said that complex talks were still under way. Bolton left Russia on Wednesday morning after one day of talks instead of the scheduled two. The US Embassy said it had no information about why he left when he did, though Russian news reports said he would return this weekend for more discussions. Bolton's Russian counterpart, Deputy Foreign Minister Georgy Mamedov, said after the departure that doubts remained about whether the sides can reach an agreement on nuclear arms cuts before a presidential summit next month.

"Russia-US Arms Control" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 25, US) /APR25.html#item1 "US-

Russia Arms Control" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 24, US)

"Russia-US Arms Nuclear Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 23, US)

2. Philippines-US Anti-terror War

About 2,700 US troops and their Philippine counterparts launched joint exercises this week. The two-week exercises in the northern island of Luzon were launched by Philippine Vice-President Teofisto Guingona and US ambassador Francis Ricciardone at the military headquarters in Manila. US military advisers may join Filipino troops on combat patrols in the southern Philippines island of Basilan if their respective governments approve a plan now under discussion. The proposal, which calls for embedding US special operations forces with Filipino troops at the company level, was raised with Manila last week by Admiral Dennis Blair, the commander of US forces in the Pacific, US defense officials said Wednesday.

"That's being contemplated," said Air Force General John Rosa, deputy director of operations of the Joint Staff. "That's one of the areas they talked about when he was out there last week."

"Philippines-US Anti-terror War" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 25, US)

"Philippines-US Wargames" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 23, US)

3. CIA Assessment of PRC Cyber-attack Capability

A CIA analysis says that the PRC government may have the goal of using cyber attacks to disrupt Taiwanese and US military systems, but it does not currently have the capability, a US official said on Thursday. "The view is that they don't have that capability -- being able to disrupt Taiwan's infrastructure, US military systems -- but you have to be mindful of it and concerned that it may be their goal," the official told Reuters on condition of anonymity. "The mission of Chinese special forces includes physical sabotage" of vulnerable systems. "The People's Liberation Army does not yet have the capability to carry out its intended goal of disrupting Taiwanese military and civilian infrastructures or US military logistics using computer virus attacks," the CIA analysis said. The brief analysis was distributed to policymakers as part of a broader national security report during the past week.

"CIA Assessment of PRC Cyber-attack Capability" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 25, US)

Korean Peninsula

1. FSAM-X Project

The Ministry of National Defense and ROK Air Force have decided to delay the W2 trillion SAM-X project scheduled for this year until 2004, due to a budgetary deficit because of the FX project. A high-ranking ministry source said since the F-15K was selected for ROK's next generation fighter and is more expensive than its competitors, the ROKAF will have to cover the W1.8 trillion extra by canceling or delaying other projects. The source continued that the ministry was also considering halving the number of "Patriot" SAM systems it was to have bought from 48 to 24 for introduction in 2004, bringing the cost down to W1.3 trillion.

"FSAM-X Project" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 26, ROK)

2. DPRK on ROK Fighter Jet Deal

The DPRK criticized the ROK military on April 24 for deciding to buy 40 US-made F-15 fighter jets, saying the arms purchase ran counter to a recent thaw in inter-Korean ties. The DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency called the long-anticipated arms purchase "an action going against the positive trend towards warming up the temporarily frozen inter-Korean relations," said the report. But the agency's criticism of the ROK's decision last week to award a US\$4-billion fighter contract to US aviation giant Boeing Co carried no threat to reverse renewed efforts at inter-Korean rapprochement gathering steam this month, it said.

"DPRK on ROK Fighter Jet Deal" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 24, US)

"ROK-DPRK Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 25, PRC)

3. DPRK-US Relations

Thomas C. Hubbard, US ambassador to ROK said the US intends to provide "numerous opportunities" to test the DPRK's sincerity in resuming the talks for next few weeks in his speech Thursday. "We are pleased that the ROK and the DPRK are once again in contact, and have agreed upon the resumption of reunions of divided families and other steps," Hubbard said in his speech at the Freedom forum presided by the Korea Freedom League. "The United States, for our part will continue to stand by South Korea. The coming days and weeks will offer numerous opportunities to test the DPRK's sincerity at the table," he said.

"DPRK-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 25, ROK)

4. DPRK's Response to Japan

The DPRK's Foreign Ministry released a statement Tuesday, condemning Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's homage to the war dead as "a blatant challenge to the peace-loving people in Asia and the rest of the world standing against Japan's militarization." The spokesman stressed, "Any visit to the Yasukuni shrine by an incumbent prime minister of Japan can never be pardoned regardless of its timing and form, as it is little short of the Japanese government's action to justify the past crimes of Japan."

"DPRK's Response to Japan" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 25, ROK)

5. DPRK Refugees

A DPRK refugee who scaled the wall of the German embassy in Beijing and claimed asylum will be allowed to leave for the ROK via the Philippines, officials said. Philippine foreign ministry spokesman Victoriano Lecaros said that as "a humanitarian gesture," the man, 23-year-old Hae Jon, would be allowed to transit through Manila. According to a German doctor who has campaigned on behalf of DPRK refugees, and has said he was involved in organizing the Spanish embassy asylum bid, "More North Korean refugees are on their way," Norbert Vollertsen said in a statement.

"DPRK Refugees" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 26, US)

6. ROK Presidential Candidate

Roh Moo-hyun, 55-year-old human rights campaigner and self-taught lawyer, is almost certain to be picked Saturday by the ruling party as its candidate for this year's presidential election. Roh says he is part of a new political wave rising across the ROK. Opinion polls have consistently put him ahead as the likely successor to incumbent President Kim Dae-jung, whose single five-year term ends February. Roh says he used to demand an end to the US military presence in the ROK, because he believed the US supported past successive military dictators. Now he says he's changed those views, and supports its presence. But he wants the ROK's foreign policy to be more independent of the US.

"ROK Presidential Candidate" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 26, US)

7. Korean family reunion details agreed

On April 28, 100 ROK citizens will meet for two nights and three days with 186 family members living in DPRK, Lee Byung-woong, special aide to the ROK Red Cross chief, said April 24. Then, on April 25, another group of 470 ROK citizens will meet their 100 DPRK relatives at the mountain, Lee said. There will be 6 meeting sessions, each lasting 12 hours, for each group. Lee said the sides had agreed upon the reunion agenda through talks arranged by the Red Cross. This is the first time, however, that the ROK and the DPRK will allow the family members to take a brief excursion together. They will make a three-hour tour of Haegeumgang, a mountain and beach resort on DPRK's east coast.

"Korean family reunion details agreed" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 26, ROK)

8. DPRK-Japan Relations

Red Cross officials of the DPRK and Japan will meet on April 29 in Beijing to work out an agreement to allow Japanese-born spouses living in DPRK to visit their homes in Japan. Calls for a new investigation into missing Japanese citizens suspected to be in DPRK will also be made in the meeting. DPRK and Japan had agreed, during the preparatory negotiations in 1997 for establishing diplomatic ties that Japanese spouses would be allowed to visit their homes. Three rounds of visits followed, but they were phased out in September 2000.

"DPRK-Japan Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 26, ROK)

9. US Army in Seoul

General Richard Myers, the chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Thursday that he understands the concerns on transportation and environmental problems caused by the US military base in Yongsan, downtown Seoul. Speaking at a press briefing, General Myers said he would discuss relocation of the garrison in his visit to Seoul next week. General Myers will begin a tour of ROK, Japan and the Philippines next week.

"US Army in Seoul" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 26, ROK)

10. DPRK Army Day

DPRK leader Kim Jong-il made a rare public appearance on April 25 to mark army day. The DPRK celebrated the 70th anniversary of its 1.2-million-strong army as one of the most important festivals in honoring the achievements of state founder Kim Il-sung, father of leader and supreme army commander Kim Jong-il. Kim walked slowly along the raised dais, smiling and raising both hands above his head to wave at tens of thousands of assembled troops. The huge crowd roared their approval, shouting: "May our comrade General Kim Jong-il live 10,000 years."

"DPRK Army Day" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 25, US)

11. ROK-DPRK Fertilizer Shipments

A cargo ship left for the DPRK on Thursday with 15,000 tons of fertilizer, the first of 200,000 tons the ROK has promised to donate. The ROK ship, which departed the southern port of Yosu, was to arrive at the DPRK port of Nampo on Friday, said ROK's National Red Cross. The ROK plans to finish the shipment of all 200,000 tons by the end of next month, in time for the rice-planting season in the DPRK that begins in mid-May.

"ROK-DPRK Fertilizer Shipments" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 25, US)

12. US Chairman's posture on DPRK

General Richard Myers, chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Wednesday that there are four main US concerns involving the DPRK that could destabilize the Korean Peninsula. In a press conference to announce his plans to visit ROK, Japan and the Philippines April 25-May 3, Myers said the US is concerned about the DPRK's missile threat, it's suspected development weapons of mass destruction, it's export of missile technology, and it's heavy deployment of its conventional troops alongside the borderline.

"US Chairman's posture on DPRK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 25, ROK)

13. Inter Korean Relations

The ROK government will provide equipment and material for the DPRK to complete its part of a project to relink the Gyeongui Railroad line before October, Unification Minister Jeong Se-hyun said Monday. The offer is a bid to expedite the stalled inter-Korean railroad project. President Kim Dae-jung said that the ROK's military authorities are reviewing a plan to help the DPRK remove mines near the border with some high-tech equipment. The ROK also plans to restore 27 kilometers of the Donghae Railroad line to connect Gangwon province in eastern ROK to Onjeong-ri in the DPRK.

"Inter Korean Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 23, US)

14. DPRK-KEDO Relations

Talks between the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization and DPRK officials will resume on April 30 in Hyangsan, North Pyeongan province, government officials said Monday. "The discussions will cover the construction issues such as the establishment of a communications network between the Korea Electric Power Corporation in Seoul and the construction site in Sinpo in the North to the training of nuclear experts," a government official said. The DPRK and KEDO will open negotiations in early May on an agreement concerning nuclear liability.

"DPRK-KEDO Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 23, US)

15. IMF Delegation to ROK

A three-person delegation from the International Monetary Fund will arrive in Seoul, Wednesday, to meet with local government officials to discuss the nation's current economic conditions. According to the Ministry of Finance and Economy Monday the delegation led by David Coe, the director of the IMF's Korea Division plans to stay in the country until next Tuesday and visit key economy-and-finance related government agencies including the Finance and Economy Ministry, the Fair Trade Commission, the Financial Supervisory Commission and the Bank of Korea. The IMF delegation's weeklong visit is part of its annual review of the nation's economy.

"IMF Delegation to ROK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 23, US)

People's Republic of China

1. Hu Jintao Tour

PRC Vice President Hu Jintao arrived in Singapore today. The PRC's heir apparent began his overnight visit by meeting Singapore's Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, to be followed by talks with President S. R. Nathan, Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew and Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong. Hu will fly to the US afterwards, where he will meet President George W. Bush and other top US officials in his most significant appearance on the international stage so far. Hu is also scheduled to meet with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and World Bank president James Wolfensohn.

"Hu Jintao Tour" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 26, US)

"Hu Jintao Tour" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 23, US)

2. PRC-Japan Relations

The PRC has postponed a visit by Japan's defense chief and a port call in Japan of a PRC warship to protest Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visit to a controversial war shrine, a PRC Foreign Ministry official said on April 23. "The Japanese leader's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine has hurt the Chinese people's feelings and harmed Sino-Japanese relations," the official said. "China believes that at this time it is not appropriate to carry out these activities." A PRC trip by the head of the Japan Defense Agency, Gen Nakatani, was originally scheduled for late April, while a vessel of the People's Liberation Army Navy was set to have visited Japan in mid-May, he said.

"Japan-PRC Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 26, Japan)

"PRC-Japan Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 25, PRC)

3. US Response of PRC Missile Build-up

The US worried by the PRC's missile build-up opposite Taiwan, is pushing ahead with plans to boost its forces in the region, according to the Pentagon's top policymaker on East Asia. In previously undisclosed remarks to a conference last month, Peter Brookes, a deputy assistant secretary of defense, said that the US was seeking "contingency basing options" and more access in Asia, the Pacific and beyond to be able to respond more readily to a crisis. Brookes said that the US did not view the PRC as an adversary, "but we must be honest about our differences such as human rights, proliferation and Taiwan arms sales. We are concerned about China's continued deployment of offensive missiles near Taiwan, and its growing naval and air forces that seems focused on building capabilities that could inflict harm on Taiwan and undermine peace across the Taiwan Strait."

"US Response of PRC Missile Build-up" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 25, US)

4. Russia-PRC Relations

Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov said Thursday that President Vladimir Putin was planning to visit the PRC before the end of the year. Ivanov said after talks with his PRC counterpart, Tang Jiaxuan, "The date of the visit is being coordinated and will be announced later." Ivanov also stressed that "the leaders of Russia and China will meet several times this year." "The next meeting of Vladimir Putin and PRC President Jiang Zemin will take place within the June summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in St. Petersburg," he added.

"Russia-PRC Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 25, US)

5. PRC-US Relations

US Commander-in-Chief Admiral Dennis Cutler Blair on April 18 described the recent military cooperative activities between the US and the PRC as "very positive." Blair said that the US-Sino talks on the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement in Shanghai last week were "a very good set of talks," which focused on the way both sides cooperate in tracking the movements of ships and aircraft in this part of the world. "We need to have an understanding on both sides," Blair said.

"PRC-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 25, PRC)

6. PRC-Japan Relations

The PRC on April 18 voiced its concerns over Japan's move to expand its military role by endorsing three new bills, urging Japan to abide by its commitment not to be a military power. When answering a reporter's question that Japan's cabinet on April 16 endorsed the bills which were designed to give the Japanese government and the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) more power in the case of foreign attack, and submitted them to the Diet on April 17, PRC Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue said, "China is concerned about the act, so are other Asian countries." Zhang said that as a result of historical reasons, Japan should sincerely abide by its commitments to limit its defense power to its own territory and coastal waters, and not to seek to be a big military power. She urged Japan to stay on the track of peaceful development because "it is not only in the interests of Japan, but also vital to peace and stability in the region where it is located".

"PRC-Japan Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 25, PRC)

7. Cross-strait Relations

The Taiwan Affairs Office of the PRC State Council on April 24 urged Taiwan to reopen dialogue with the PRC on the basis of the "1992 consensus." Office spokesman Li Weiwei expressed the hope that Taiwan may work to break the political deadlock and improve cross-Straits relations on the basis of admitting the "1992 consensus." The PRC on April 24 also urged Taiwan authorities to allow its bankers, insurers, securities brokers as well as airlines and shipping firms to set up representative offices in Taiwan, the report said.

"Cross-strait Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 25, PRC)

8. China Air Crash

The pilot of a the Air China jetliner that crashed in the ROK with 166 people on board was well-trained and had over 6,000 hours of experience flying Boeing 767s, Chinese state media said Sunday. The 31-year-old pilot, Wu Xinlu, was among 38 people to survive the crash Monday near Busan, South Korea's second largest city. The defense of him in the PRC media follows suggestions from ROK officials that human error was to blame. ROK authorities have banned Wu from leaving the country pending investigation and have threatened to prosecute him if he is found responsible.

"China Air Crash" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 23, US)

"Air China Clash Accident" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 23, US)

Japan

1. Japanese Logistical Support for US

Two of the five Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) vessels deployed to the Arabian Sea to support the US-led military campaign in Afghanistan returned Thursday to Japan for maintenance. The Defense Agency is not planning to dispatch other MSDF ships to replace the two vessels. Supplying US and British warships with fuel and commodities will be undertaken for the time being by the three MSDF ships remaining in the area: a supply vessel and two destroyers, agency officials said earlier.

"Japanese Logistical Support for US" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 26, Japan)

2. Japan Yasukuni Shrine

Japan's government said that it saw no problem in ties with the PRC despite the PRC's postponement of a high-level Japanese visit in protest at Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's weekend visit to Yasukuni Shrine. Koizumi said he respected the PRC's decision. "China has its reasons. I want to respect them," Koizumi said Wednesday. The PRC also postponed a visit by head of the Japan Defense Agency Gen Nakatani and a port call in Japan of a PRC warship. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda said the PRC decision would not affect the bilateral relationship.

"Japan Yasukuni Shrine" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 23, US)

"Japan on PRC-Japan Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 24, US)

"Yasukuni Disputes" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 23, US)

3. Japan-US Relations

General Richard Myers, chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, urged Japan on Wednesday to be better prepared for possible terrorist attacks involving weapons of mass destruction.

"I'll leave it to Japan to decide what the right answer is, but I think you get the idea that I believe we need to fundamentally re-examine how we're organized and to deal with this threat," Myers said at a news conference before departing on April 25 for a tour of Japan, the ROK and the Philippines.

"Japan-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 26, Japan)

4. Japan-ROK Relations

Japan's Defense Agency Director-General Gen Nakatani visited Seoul over the weekend to explain legislation recently submitted to the Diet to prepare Japan for a military emergency. Nakatani met on Saturday with ROK Prime Minister Lee Han Dong and National Defense Minister Kim Dong Shin. Although a formal reaction from the ROK was put off until meetings scheduled in May between high-ranking bureaucrats from the two nations, Kim showed his understanding toward Nakatani's explanations on a set of Japanese bills on national emergencies.

"Japan-ROK Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 23, US)

5. Japan-US Relations

The US has informally asked Japan to help out with Aegis destroyers in the event of an attack on Iraq, a request that could be difficult for Japan to meet, government sources said Friday. The request came at a Japan-US working-level meeting on foreign and defense affairs. US representatives said they were counting on Japan to send Aegis warships and P3C anti-submarine patrol aircraft to the Arabian Sea to stand in for US forces that would be moved closer to the action in the Persian Gulf if an attack were imminent. However, Japanese government sources said this would be both politically and legally difficult under the constraints of recently adopted legislation allowing Japanese cooperation in the US-led fight against terrorism.

"Japan-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 23, US)

Nuclear Issues

1. Related News and Analysis

A report in the Daily Times finds secrecy surrounding India's efforts to build nuclear-powered submarines inexplicable. An Indian Parliamentary committee has called for the development of a missile defense shield for India. Writing for Asia Times, S.P. Udayakumar reports on the activists opposing the construction of nuclear power plants in Tamil Nadu. R. Rajaraman's essay in the daily Hindu argues that small nuclear weapons will destroy "the time-tested psychological barrier blocking the road to nuclear holocaust."

"Related News and Analysis" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #15)

Afghanistan

1. Current Situation

Pamphlets urging the Taliban to carry out suicide bombing against the international forces have reportedly been widely distributed near the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Afghanistan's former President Burhannudin Rabbani has stated that excluding former mujahideens from a future government will create "distrust and a new crisis." Najmuddin Shaikh's essay in the daily News argues that the former King Zahir Shah should be "fully involved in the entire proceedings" leading to the establishment of a new government in Afghanistan. Negar Azim's article in al-Ahram weekly suggests that dealing with a "past replete with injustice" would be an "enormous" challenge for any new government in Afghanistan.

"Current Situation" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #15)

2. Humanitarian Crisis

More than 300,000 Afghan refugees have returned home from Pakistan in the past seven weeks.

"Humanitarian Crisis" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #15)

India-Pakistan Tensions

1. News

According to a report in the daily News, at least 150 Indian soldiers have been killed in accidental landmine explosions since the beginning of India-Pakistan border face-off in December. Pakistan has expelled Indian High Commission staffer AK Khanna on charges of espionage. Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf believes that "Indians are definitely worried over the government in Pakistan getting stronger."

"News" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #15)

2. Kashmir

More people were killed in the continuing political unrest and violence in Jammu and Kashmir. There have been reports of differences within the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) over the last week's meeting in Sharjah between some Hurriyat leaders and a few leaders of Pakistan- controlled parts of Kashmir. According to a report in the daily Hindustan Times, the United Jihad Council (UJC), an umbrella organization of militant groups, has also criticized the Sharjah meeting.

"Internal Situation" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #15)

Pakistan and India

1. Pakistan: Domestic Situation

The Supreme Court of Pakistan has begun hearing petitions challenging the assumption of office of president by Pervez Musharraf and the planned holding of the referendum. President Musharraf has stated that he will honor the court's decision. President Musharraf has also said that he is not considering banning any political party. Meanwhile, the Pakistan government failed to prevent Jammāt-e-Islami from holding an anti-referendum rally.

"Pakistan: Domestic Situation" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #15)

2. US - Pakistan Relations

Mushahid Hussain's essay in Asia Times argues that Pakistan should limit its relations with the US and seek closer links with the European Union. Kahild Ahmed summarizes analysis of US-Pakistan relations appearing in Pakistan's Urdu press.

"US - Pakistan Relations" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #15)

3. India: Domestic Situation

Many people were killed in the continuing communal violence in Gujarat. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) has asked Muslims to stop eating beef and return the three disputed sites as a pre-condition for peaceful co- existence between the two communities. The six-day long deadlock over the Gujarat issue in the Lok Sabha was broken when a motion censuring the government over it's handling of the Gujarat violence was admitted to the House. A report by the National Human Rights Commission has criticized the Gujarat government for its failure to contain communal violence in the State. According to a report in the daily Hindu, the violence against Muslims in the rural areas of Gujarat was largely carried out by Adivasis.

"India: Domestic Situation" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #15)

4. China-India Relations

Writing for the Frontline magazine, John Cherian argues that India and China have taken some steps towards improved relations.

"China-India Relations" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #15)

Regional News

1. Sri Lanka

The Norwegian Deputy Foreign Minister has stated that the peace process in Sri Lanka is moving ahead rapidly. The Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) leader Rauf Hakeem has expressed satisfaction with his meeting with the head of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). According to a report in the daily Hindustan Times, India is taking a 'wait and watch' approach to the Sri Lankan peace process. Jehan Perera's essay in Eelam Nation argues that there are hidden dangers in a proposed amendment to the country's constitution that seeks to take away the president's power to arbitrarily dissolve parliament after one year.

"Sri Lanka" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #15)

2. Nepal

Violent confrontations between the Maoist rebels and the government forces continued in Nepal. The US administration has asked Congress for a \$20 million grant in military aid to support Nepal's war against the Maoists.

"Nepal" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #15)

3. Bangladesh

Rashiduzzaman's essay in the Daily Times argues that Bangladesh "is not a cocoon of (Islamic) terror and orthodoxy."

"Bangladesh" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #15)

4. Regional Interest

Chinese President Jiang Zemin has stated that "one of the primary issues for China is to protect developing countries from the pretensions of the United States." He was speaking at the conclusion of his two-week tour of Nigeria, Tunisia, Germany, Libya and Iran.

"Regional Interest" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #15)

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