

NAPSNET Week in Review 5 April, 2002

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United States

1. US Violations of International Treaties

The US is increasingly violating and undermining major international security treaties in a slide away from rule of law toward the rule of power, according to a new study released on Thursday. According to the study, the trend began under former US President Bill Clinton but has accelerated under President Bush threatening the security of the US as well as the larger international community. Sponsored by two nonprofit groups, the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research and the Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy, the 188-page report analyzes the US response to eight major international agreements, including the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. "The United States has violated, compromised or acted to undermine in some crucial way every treaty that we have studied in detail," said Nicole Deller, principal editor and co-author of the report, entitled "Rule of Power or Rule of Law." The study determined that the United States "not only refuses to participate in newly created international legal mechanisms, it fails to live up to obligations undertaken in treaties that it has ratified." "US Violations of International Treaties" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 4, US)

2. US Nuclear Posture

The US came under fire from experts at a disarmament conference in Beijing on Thursday over a Pentagon nuclear policy review. But a US official said the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), reported to describe US contingency plans to aim nuclear weapons at the PRC and other countries, has been misconstrued and US commitment to arms control was solid. "The NPR opens up a new vision of darkness I think for the 21st century in terms of nuclear disarmament," Ron McCoy, chair of a Malaysian non-governmental organisation lobbying for the prevention of nuclear war expressed. Some delegates also criticised the US for its reluctance to adopt a new global covenant aimed at preventing an outer space arms race. "US Nuclear Posture" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 4, US)

3. Russia-US Arms Summit

Russia's Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov said Friday that there were no insurmountable disagreements that could prevent the US and Russian negotiators from working out a nuclear arms deal by the time President Bush visits Russia in May. "There are no differences on the essence of the legally binding document on nuclear weapons reductions," the Interfax-Military News Agency quoted Ivanov as saying during a trip to Greece. Ivanov also said Friday that Russia might follow the US approach and put some weapons in reserve instead of dismantling all of them. "There is some logic in this," Ivanov said. "I understand the Americans and do not rule out the possibility that this would serve our interests, too."

"Russia-US Arms Summit" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 5, US)

"Russia-US Nuclear Disarmament" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 4, US)

"Bush-Putin Nuclear Arms, NATO Discussion" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 2, US)

4. Philippines-US Anti-terror War

The Philippines is expecting more US military aid in the Southeast Asian phase on the global war on terrorism now taking place in the south, officials said Tuesday. President Gloria Arroyo is to receive later Tuesday US senators Daniel Inouye and Ted Steven to brief them on the progress of joint US-Philippine military training on Mindanao island. "They (the US senators) will be playing a key role in the evaluation and approval of all the projects and programs of military assistance pertaining to the Philippines, and we're not only talking about this year, but in the years to come," Golez said.

"Philippines-US Anti-terror War" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 2, US)

Republic of Korea

1. ROK Envoy in DPRK

DPRK leader Kim Jong-Il met with ROK presidential envoy Lim Dong-won over dinner on Friday. ROK Unification Ministry spokesman Kim Hong-Jae stated, "The envoy delivered a letter from President Kim, which called for peace on the Korean peninsula and inter-Korean reconciliation and cooperation." The meeting followed low-level contacts on Thursday. "Both sides are near agreement on several issues, including family reunions and economic cooperation," said Kim Hong-je, a spokesman for the ROK's Unification Ministry. Lim extended his stay in Pyongyang by one day and planned to return to the ROK with his delegation on Saturday.

"ROK Envoy in DPRK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 5, US)

"DPRK-ROK Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 5, PRC)

"ROK Envoy in DPRK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 4, US)

"ROK Special Envoy to DPRK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 4, ROK)

"DPRK-ROK Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 4, RF)

"ROK Envoy in DPRK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 3, US)

"ROK-DPRK-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 1, US)

"DPRK Intention" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 1, ROK)

2. DPRK-US KEDO Negotiations

The DPRK confirmed on Wednesday recent contacts with the US and said that it would follow US suggestions and resume talks with the international consortium, the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO). Quoting an unidentified Foreign Ministry spokesman, the KCNA said the DPRK "carefully examined the US side's position and decided to resume the negotiations, taking its request into consideration." The KCNA also quoted a DPRK Foreign Ministry spokesperson as saying the DPRK's envoy to the United Nations had met a US official twice last month in New York.

"DPRK-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 3, US)

3. Japan-DPRK Sunken Mystery Ship

An underwater probe located the corpses of crew members inside a suspected DPRK spy ship that sank after a gunfight with Japan's Coast Guard, officials said Monday. Last month's five-day search with an underwater camera found "several bodies," said Coast Guard spokesperson Yutaka Oshita. Oshita refused to provide other details. Japan has retrieved 500 pieces of flotsam from the area where the vessel sank. Japanese government officials have said they want to raise the vessel in order to identify the boat's nationality. Japan also has said that the PRC will be consulted before any attempt is made to lift the hulk from the East China Sea. Only two bodies were recovered after the incident, although all 15 people on board are believed to have died.

"Japan-DPRK Sunken Mystery Ship" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 1, US)

"DPRK-Japan-PRC Sunken Mystery Boat" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 3, US)

4. ROK Air Force Project

Dassault Aviation representatives in Seoul denied a report published in France that the aircraft company is giving up on the ROK's next generation fighter jet project. According to a report from ROK's Yonhap News Agency, the French daily La Tribune reported Tuesday that Dassault is turning its eyes to markets in Singapore, India and Brazil, giving up its bid for the US\$3.3 billion sales deal in ROK. The French warplane maker's hope diminished, the newspaper reported, when the ROK government decided last week to hold a playoff between Dassault and Boeing.

"ROK Air Force Project" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 4, ROK)

5. DPRK-US Relations

The DPRK said on Thursday that the US was its "most wicked sworn enemy" in a series of diatribes issued less than 24 hours after the DPRK dropped hints it might restart frozen dialogue with the US. "The U.S. is the most wicked sworn enemy of the Korean nation as it is not only hindering inter-Korean exchange and cooperation ... but also putting a stumbling block in the way of achieving Korea's reunification," the state media quoted the North's Asia-Pacific Peace Committee as saying. In the official Rodong Sinmun newspaper, demanded the withdrawal of US troops in the ROK saying, "it is imperative to put an end to the presence in South Korea by the U.S. imperialist aggression troops."

"DPRK-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 4, US)

6. DPRK-RF Relations

A high-ranking DPRK delegation arrived in the Russian Pacific port of Vladivostok on Thursday, kicking off an eight-day tour around the Russian Far East in search of closer economic relations. The delegation, headed by DPRK Deputy Prime Minister Cho Chan Dok, said in a statement that the DPRK was worried about the lack of progress in the project to link the Trans-Siberian Railroad with the railway across the Korean peninsula, which would provide a shorter and cheaper route for ROK exports to Europe. "The implementation of the project has lately experienced an incomprehensible pause," the statement said.

"DPRK-RF Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 4, US)

7. DPRK-RF Air Route

The DPRK began new air service linking its capital to the Russian Far East city of Khabarovsk on Friday. A DPRK Air Koryo plane will make a round trip to Khabarovsk every Monday and Friday. Currently, Koryo Air runs routes linking Pyongyang to Beijing, the eastern PRC city of Shenyang, Moscow, Berlin and Vladivostok, another Russian Far East city.

"DPRK-RF Air Route" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 5, US)

8. DPRK Economic Situations

The DPRK called for "readjusting the country's economic foundations" Wednesday, saying it will open the isolated, hunger-stricken country for joint ventures and cooperation with foreign countries and international organization. DPRK Premier Hong Song Nam said in the new policy statement the DPRK needs to improve trade and economic cooperation and widely conduct joint ventures and collaboration with different countries and international organizations.

"DPRK Economic Situations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 1, Japan)

9. Inter Korean Relations

A dam will be built to check persistent flooding problems on the Imjin river caused by an upstream dam in DPRK, the Ministry of Construction and Transportation announced Thursday. The dam, which will cost 128.3 billion won (US\$96 million), will be built in Yeoncheon-gun, Gyeonggi province, the ministry said. Construction is to begin in 2004, with completion expected in 2007. The dam will stand 27 meters high and 400 meters wide. Its holding capacity will be 70 million metric tons, and it will be able to control up to 43 million metric tons of floodwater. Ten water gates will be installed to control the water level when there is a natural flood or the DPRK's April 5 Dam discharges water, an official said.

"Inter Korean Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 4, ROK)

10. ROK-East Timor Relations

The ROK will be the first nation to open diplomatic ties with East Timor, which gains full independence May 20, a visiting East Timorese cabinet member said Wednesday. Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Jorge Teme said East Timor is scheduled to kick off diplomatic activities May 21, and that about 20 nations plan to recognize the new country.

"ROK-East Timor Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 4, ROK)

11. Japan-DPRK Relations

Japanese Health Minister Chikara Sakaguchi voiced irritation with his DPRK counterparts after they postponed talks scheduled for the weekend in Singapore. "Their attitude really lacks sincerity," Sakaguchi said Friday, adding he had confirmed through a phone call to DPRK representatives in Japan that the DPRK had requested a planned meeting with its Kim Su-Hak on Saturday be postponed. "This (sudden postponement) seems to be an everyday occurrence," Sakaguchi said. "I think it's very annoying."

"Japan-DPRK Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 3, US)

12. Trilateral Coordination Oversight Group Meeting

Senior officials from the US, Japan and South Korea are to meet next week to review their joint policy toward the DPRK, the US State Department said. The meeting in Tokyo of the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG) is set for April 9. The US delegation to the talks will be led by US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, James Kelly, deputy spokesman Philip Reeker told reporters.

"Trilateral Coordination Oversight Group Meeting" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 2, US)

13. US Military Bases in ROK

The US said they would reduce half of their military bases in ROK by 2010 under the recently signed US- ROK agreement. Altogether 28 bases and 3 test sites are to be closed," and ROK will get back half of the land now used by the US military. Yet the number of US troops stationed in ROK will remain the same.

"US Military Bases in ROK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 4, RF)

14. ROK US Force Spending

The ROK cabinet yesterday approved a proposal that the ROK contribute about US\$463 million to US Forces Korea (USFK) for upkeep this year, officials said yesterday. The government sent the cost-sharing accord, struck late last year between the two nations, to the National Assembly. Under the bill, the ROK will contribute US\$405 million in won plus US\$58.8 million in dollars this year. The two sides agreed to increase the ROK's payment in won from 62% to 88%, with the exchange rate set at 1,245 won per dollar, down from the previous rate of 1,300 won per dollar. The payment increase is due to take effect in March.

"ROK US Force Spending" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 3, US)

15. ROK Presidential Election

Park Geun Hye, daughter of former ROK President Park Chung Hee, is planning on running for president. The latest polls show that Park would come in a distant third, with no more than 15% of the vote, if she runs in the December 19 election. However, "She is the only political leader who can gather a crowd when she goes to deliver a speech," said Park Jai Chang, a political scientist at Sook Myong Women's University in Seoul, who is no relation.

"ROK Presidential Election" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 3, US)

16. Multilateral Submarine Drill

The ROK will team up with the US, Japan, Singapore and Australia from April 22 to May 2 in Japanese waters for Pacific Reach 2002, the biennial submarine rescue exercise held in the Pacific region, officials said yesterday. This year, Japan will host the exercise, which will be taking place off Sasebo, southwest of Japan's Kyushu Island. The 11-day drill is designed to promote communications and interoperability among the five countries for submarine rescue operations.

"Multilateral Submarine Drill" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 3, US)

17. DPRK Canberra Embassy

The DPRK will open an embassy in the Australian capital of Canberra within weeks, a government spokesperson said Monday. Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer and DPRK Foreign Minister Paek Nam Sun agreed last year to open embassies in one another's capitals. Australia hopes to have an embassy open in Pyongyang by the middle of 2003.

"DPRK Canberra Embassy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 1, US)

People's Republic of China

1. PRC Coastal Missile Development

The PRC's buildup of short-range missiles near its southeastern coast is "threatening" to Taiwan and poses a danger to sea lanes and ports in the region, the Pentagon said yesterday. US intelligence officials disclosed to that the PRC in the past three weeks moved some 20 additional CSS-7 short-range ballistic missiles to a base at Yongan, within striking distance of Taiwan. The PRC missile force near Taiwan has increased from fewer than 50 in 1997 to more than 350 today. The Defense Intelligence Agency estimates that the missile force of both CSS-6s and CSS-7s will grow to as many as 650 by 2005.

"PRC Coastal Missile Development" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 5, US)

"PRC Coastal Missile Development" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 3, US)

"PRC Coastal Missile Deployment" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 2, US)

2. US View of Cross-Straits Relations

Peter Brookes, US deputy assistant secretary of defense for Asian and Pacific Affairs warned on Wednesday that in the context of the buildup of missiles by the PRC across the Taiwan Strait, a peaceful resolution to the impasse between Taiwan and the PRC cannot be taken for granted. Brookes expressed, "We (the US) take very seriously our responsibility under the Taiwan Relations Act. Of particular concern is the growing arsenal of tactical ballistic missiles facing Taiwan. Yet we do not view China as an enemy or an adversary."

"US View of Cross-Straits Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 5, US)

3. Taiwan Influence Fund

Under former Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui, Taiwan established a secret US\$100 million fund to buy influence with foreign governments, institutions and individuals, including some in the US. The fund was the source of multimillion-dollar payments to leaders in Nicaragua, South Africa and Panama, according to senior Taiwanese officials and government reports. It also provided financial support, legal under US law, for US think tanks and Washington lobbyists, they said. Several people now in senior positions in the Bush administration, as well as former Japanese prime minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, were beneficiaries, according to the officials and documents. The fund operated from 1994 until 2000 under the National Security Bureau, Taiwan's main intelligence agency, with no legislative oversight. Taiwan's new president, Chen Shui-bian, closed the fund following the disappearance of one of its senior accountant, Colonel Liu Kuan-chun, who allegedly embezzled US\$5.5 million.

"Taiwan Influence Fund" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 5, US)

4. PRC Position on Non-proliferation

PRC Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue said in Beijing at a regular briefing on April 2 that the PRC notified IAEA officially on March 28 that it had completed the legal procedures necessary for the entry into the Safeguards Agreement between the PRC and IAEA. The spokeswoman pointed out that the PRC is the first among the five nuclear states that has completed the necessary legal procedure, which fully demonstrates the PRC's firm stand on opposing nuclear proliferation, supporting IAEA in enhancing the existing safeguards regime and fulfilling its obligation in non- proliferation.

"PRC Position on Non-proliferation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 5, PRC)

5. PRC View of Outer Space Weapons

The PRC called for a global covenant to prevent an outer space arms race, state media said Wednesday. "The international community should adopt effective preventive measures and make a special international agreement to ban any weapons of destruction from outer space," the Xinhua news agency quoted Vice Foreign Minister Qiao Zonghuai as saying. "China is willing to join hands with the international community to exert every effort to come to such an agreement and to strive for peace in outer space," he was quoted as saying.

"PRC View of Outer Space Weapons" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 3, US)

6. PRC-Australia Relations

Australian Prime Minister John Howard is expected to make an official visit to the PRC next month, Industry Minister Ian Macfarlane said Friday. Australia and the PRC will commemorate this year the 30th anniversary of normalized relations. However, an embassy official told Dow Jones Newswires that details of the trip are still tentative and a formal announcement has yet to be made.

"PRC-Australia Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 5, US)

7. PRC-ROK Relations

The PRC on March 28 reaffirmed its position of supporting the stability and national reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula. During his meeting with visiting Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the ROK Choi Sung-hong, PRC Premier Zhu Rongji said the PRC will continue to do all it can for the maintenance of peace and stability on the peninsula, adding there were no hidden agendas. But he also stressed the pivotal role of the ROK and the DPRK in efforts, expressing the hope that the two sides will exert joint efforts for peace and stability on the peninsula.

"PRC-ROK Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 5, PRC)

8. PRC-DPRK Bridge Construction

The PRC and the DPRK will build a new bridge over the Yalu river to join the sole span that now connects the two countries. PRC legislators made the proposal two years ago, but the DPRK gave its agreement only recently. The sides will pick a location together. The single Yalu bridge provides rail and vehicle links between the PRC city of Dandong and the DPRK's Sinuiju.

"PRC-DPRK Bridge Construction" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 2, US)

9. PRC Falun Gong Arrests

PRC police have arrested more than 20 members of the banned Falun Gong spiritual movement for hijacking a state television broadcast last month, state media and officials said on Tuesday. "There are around 20 of them now under arrest," police in PRC's northeastern city of Changchun stated. "I think most of the accomplices will receive lenient punishment, like re-education through labor," the Changchun police officer said.

"PRC Falun Gong Arrests" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 2, US)

10. PRC Domestic Immigration

Hong Kong officials said Monday night they are searching the streets for migrants from mainland PRC who lack residency rights, promising to kick them out. "Our plan is to repatriate them in batches," Deputy Security Secretary Michael Wong told a news conference. "We don't see the need to remove them en masse." On Monday night, about 800 parents had gathered outside an Immigration Department office, demanding that their children be allowed to stay here.

"PRC Domestic Immigration" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 1, US)

11. PRC-Japan Relations

the PRC's top legislator, Li Peng, kicked off a week-long visit to Japan on Tuesday by expressing hopes for a warmer relationship between the two countries at a reception in central Tokyo. Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and an audience of some 1,000 people were also present for the party to launch a cultural exchange program marking the 30th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic ties.

"PRC-Japan Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 5, PRC)

"PRC-Japan Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 2, US)

12. PRC Domestic Suicide Rates

PRC scientists have found that 25 percent more women in the PRC kill themselves than men, in stark contrast with other areas of the world, where men generally commit suicide more than women, state media said on Thursday. PRC researchers also found that women in rural areas were three times more likely to commit suicide than their urban counterparts, the China Daily reported. State media reported last October official figures showing that 250,000 Chinese committed suicide each year. That was 22 people out of every 100,000, more than in affluent Western states like the United States, Canada and Britain, but fewer than in places like Hungary and Lithuania, where the ratio was between 40 and 50 per 100,000.

"PRC Domestic Suicide Rates" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 4, US)

Japan

1. Japan Domestic Politics

According to the latest nationwide telephone poll by the Asahi Shimbun newspaper, support for the cabinet of Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has fallen to a new low of 40%. The approval rate fell from 44% recorded in the last nationwide telephone poll in March, while the disapproval rate rose to 44% from 40%. Some 86% of respondents said Koizumi had failed to show leadership in handling a series of scandals that led to two top Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) bigwigs leaving the ruling group recently. The survey targeted randomly picked households and had 2,080 respondents out of 3,676 called.

"Japan Domestic Politics" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 3, US)

2. Japan-PRC Diplomatic Relations

PRC No. 2 leader Li Peng met Japanese lawmakers Wednesday in an effort to stoke warming relations that were undermined last year by a series of quarrels between the Asian neighbors. "China is a very important player in Asia and increasingly so. We want to see a further warming of relations," Koizumi spokeswoman Misako Kaji said. Li's visit is the first from a high level PRC leader since the October 2000 visit by Prime Minister Zhu Rongji. PRC Vice Premier Wen Jiabao is also expected to visit Japan later this year.

"PRC-Japan Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 3, US)

3. Japan-PRC Military Relations

Japan's Defense Agency Director General Gen Nakatani told a visiting PRC military official Wednesday he is looking forward to visiting PRC Defense Minister Chi Haotian in Beijing in late April. Nakatani would be a first defense agency chief to visit the PRC counterpart in Beijing since 1998. Nakatani and the PRC People's Liberation Army general agreed that the two countries should promote bilateral exchanges as Japan-PRC friendship is vital to the security environment of the region.

"Japan-PRC Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 1, Japan)

4. Japan-DPRK Relations

Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said Sunday that he would "persistently and repeatedly" try to establish diplomatic ties between his country and the DPRK. Koizumi said he would pursue his purpose through both official and unofficial channels. Koizumi added that the issue of the disappeared Japanese citizens suspected to have been abducted by DPRK agents would be dealt with separately, and that he would urge the DPRK to give its utmost cooperation.

"Japan-DPRK Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 1, ROK)

"Japan-DPRK Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 1, Japan)

5. Japan-RF Relations

The Japanese government should be flexible in its dealings with the RF so that a territorial dispute over four Russian-held islands off the coast of Hokkaido can be settled in an ideal manner, according to the head of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), Yukio Hatoyama. "We must create circumstances in which the last island (of the four) can be returned to Japan at the earliest possible date, and we should work out a flexible scenario (to achieve this)," DPJ chief Yukio Hatoyama said Saturday at a press conference.

"Japan-RF Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 2, Japan)

6. Japan-DPRK Kidnapping Allegations

Japan Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said Saturday he will keep up pressure on the DPRK regarding the issue of its alleged kidnapping of Japanese citizens. "We're working from various angles to get North Korea to understand the need for dialogue and negotiation," Koizumi said. "As we continue to apply the greatest effort possible to bring it to the negotiating table we will also raise the issue of the kidnappings." The DPRK has repeatedly denied the kidnapping charges, but has agreed to investigate the case.

"Japan-DPRK Kidnapping Allegations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 1, US)

7. Ehime Maru Settlement

The US Navy has tentatively agreed on a settlement to cover the loss of the Japanese fishing boat Ehime Maru, accidentally sunk last year in collision with a US attack submarine off Hawaii, a navy official said. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, would not comment on a report that the settlement was for US\$11 million because the agreement has not yet been signed. "We have tentatively reached an agreement but nothing official has been signed. We expect that to happen next week."

"Ehime Maru Settlement" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 5, US)

Nuclear Issues

1. Related News and Analysis

Commentators in Pakistani and Indian newspapers have sharply criticized the leaked Nuclear Posture Review as indicating "a new US belligerency" and undermining the Non -Proliferation Treaty. Iran and Pakistan have also stated that the US "risked triggering a new arms race if it went ahead with reported plans to develop new types of nuclear weapons."

"Related News and Analysis" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #12)

Afghanistan

1. Current Situation

Unconfirmed reports in the daily Frontier Post, Pakistan, indicate that al-Qaeda and Taliban fighter might be regrouping in Khost, a town in southeast Afghanistan. According to an Afghan Radio report, US-led coalition forces killed 50 al-Qaeda fighters in an assault in eastern Afghanistan. A report, quoting various humanitarian aid groups, suggests that militias of other ethnic groups are persecuting Paktuns in northern Afghanistan.

"Current Situation" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #12)

2. Reconstruction

The framework for a traditional Loya Jirga that will choose a transitional leader and government for Afghanistan has been agreed upon. Former king Mohammad Zahir Shah is scheduled to return to Afghanistan on April 16 to convene the Jirga in June. Meanwhile, 1,700 British troops are expected to be ready for deployment by mid-April. The presence of large number of land mines is reportedly hindering reconstruction work in the country.

"Reconstruction" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #12)

3. Humanitarian Crisis

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), over 100,000 Afghan refugees have returned from Pakistan to Afghanistan. It is now believed that about 2000 people were killed in recent earthquakes in northern Afghanistan. Both international peacekeepers and humanitarian agencies have been involved in relief work.

"Humanitarian Crisis" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #12)

India-Pakistan Tensions

1. News

In a wide-ranging interview with the daily Hindu, India, President Musharraf stated that Pakistan army is prepared to stay mobilized for five years. According to India's Defense Minister George Fernandes the possibility of war between the two countries cannot be ruled out. Meanwhile, three villagers were reportedly killed in cross-border shelling.

"India-Pakistan Tensions" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #12)

2. Analysis

Writing for the daily Dawn, Maqbool Ahmad Bhatti argues that "India's persistence in coercive diplomacy" is losing support among "thinking Indians." Farrukh Saleem's essay in the daily News, Pakistan, argues that Pakistan should demobilize its forces and focus on economic development. Pran Chopra's article in the daily Hindustan Times would urge Indian government to "readily respond to any opportunity for a safe scaling down of the mobilization."

"Analysis" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #12)

2. Pakistan: Domestic Situation

Pakistani law enforcement agencies, along with US personnel, conducted raids in various cities in an attempt to capture alleged al-Qaeda members. According to a report in the daily News, the raids have now been temporarily halted. 16 of the over fifty people arrested during the raid were later released. Pakistan has reportedly handed some of the people arrested over to the FBI for interrogation. Among those arrested is Abu-Zubayda, the highest-ranking al-Qaeda member arrested to date. President Pervez Musharraf has stated that there is "absolutely" no pressure on him to relinquish charge as the chief of army staff after the elections of October 2002. The Pakistani Federal Cabinet is expected to approve the holding of referendum to allow President Musharraf to stay in power for another five years.

"Pakistan: Domestic Situation" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #12)

3. India: Domestic Situation

Indian newspapers have reported sporadic communal violence. Indian opposition parties have been calling for the resignation of Gujarat's Chief Minister Narendra Modi. An article in the daily Hindu argues that the opposition parties should demand more than just the resignation of the Minister.

"India: Domestic Situation" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #12)

2. China-India Relations

The Indian External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh recently visited China. Articles in the daily Hindu and the Asia Times examine the state of China-India relations.

"China-India Relations" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #12)

Kashmir

1. Internal Situation

Indian and Pakistani newspapers reported continued political violence and unrest in Jammu and Kashmir. The Jammu and Kashmir police arrested, and later released, Javed Ahmad Mir, the acting chairman of the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF). There were reports of protests against the earlier arrest of JKLF chairman Yasin Malik. The senior All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) leader Abdul Gani Lone was reportedly assaulted by the Kashmir president of the Shiv Sena, Kalki Jimahara. The APHC has called upon Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to take a "new initiative" in Kashmir. Meanwhile, Lashkar--Toiba founder Hafeez Mohammad Saeed, recently released by a Pakistan court, has reportedly urged his men in the Kashmir Valley to launch new attacks.

"Internal Situation" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #12)

Regional News

1. Sri Lanka

The Sri Lankan government and the LTTE have decided to start negotiations within the next six-weeks without any preconditions.

"Sri Lanka" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #12)

2. Nepal

The conflict between Maoist guerrillas and the government's security forces has continued in Nepal.

"Nepal" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #12)

3. Bangladesh

Two reports in the Far Eastern Economic Review examine rising fundamentalism and religious intolerance in Bangladesh.

"Bangladesh" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #12)

4. Region

Iraq has pledged - in writing - never to invade Kuwait again. In an article for the daily News, Shireen Mazari writes that the "chasm" between the US and the Muslim world is "widening." John Cherian essay in Frontline magazine argues that the US military campaign in Afghanistan has "clearly fallen short" of its goals.

"Region" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #12)

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