

FORUM

STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVES

Troubling Alliances and Emerging Threats



PLUS Uprooting Radical Thought



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ABOUT THE COVER:

Military professionals in the Asia Pacific need to be aware of dangerous alliances — such as the one between Iran and North Korea, represented in caricatures of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Kim Jong Il on the cover. Suppressing this alliance is critical. Yet it's equally important to be alert to violent extremist organizations lurking across the region.



FORUM ILLUSTRATION



Dear Readers,

Welcome to the second 2011 issue of *Asia Pacific Defense FORUM*. This issue takes a strategic look at a variety of important issues affecting the Asia Pacific and proposes comprehensive, innovative and, where possible, multilateral approaches to tackle the immense array of traditional and asymmetric threats in this vast and unique region.

Terrorism, illicit activities and provocations by rogue states such as North Korea threaten to disturb the peace that our Allies and partners work so hard to secure. Therefore, U.S. Pacific Command embraces efforts to work side-by-side with our friends in the region. The articles in this issue focus on these challenges and discuss specific avenues to mitigate the threats.

One of the most destabilizing threats to the region addressed in this edition is violent extremist organizations, or VEOs. As VEOs continue to propagate their radical ideologies, responsible nations must band together to mitigate the effects of their flawed values throughout the Asia Pacific. A comprehensive strategy at the national level and between national partners will allow us to better anticipate VEO activities, to marginalize their influence and to adapt to evolving adversarial strategies.

We hope this magazine is enlightening and thought-provoking. As always, please contact us at contact-apdf@apdforum.com with your comments and insights.

All the best,

Robert F. Willard

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THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MATTERS *of* **DEFENSE**

South Korean honor guards performed for military officers from Asia-Pacific countries to kick off the Chiefs of Defense meeting in Seoul, South Korea, in October 2010.

In the keynote speech, Defense Minister Kim Tae-young addressed North Korea's "unreasonable" goals for nuclear and long-range missile programs. "I and other ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] defense chiefs shared the view about looming challenges and conflicts in the region," he said.

The five-day meeting, attended by defense chiefs from 27 nations in the Asia Pacific, covered regional security including military cooperation, joint exercises and exchanges. Among those in attendance were Gen. Ryoichi Oriki, chief of the joint Self-Defense Force in Japan, and Adm. Robert F. Willard, U.S. Pacific Command commander. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

New Billionaires Minted

Tycoon Mukesh Ambani kept his title as India's richest man as the fast-growing economy minted 17 new billionaires in 2010, driving the total to a record 69, according to the *Forbes* rich list released in September 2010.

Ambani, chairman of India's biggest private-sector firm Reliance Industries, was named the wealthiest Indian for a third consecutive year with a net worth of U.S. \$27 billion (about 1,215 billion rupees), *Forbes India* magazine said. He was followed by London-based steel magnate Lakshmi Mittal, worth U.S. \$26.1 billion.

The record number of billionaires "is yet another clear signal the center of gravity will increasingly shift to India and China over the next decade," said Indrajit Gupta, editor of *Forbes India*.

In late 2010, Ambani, his wife and three children moved into their newly built 27-story residence, named Antilia after a mythical island in the Atlantic. The home, pictured, features three helicopter pads and underground parking for 160 cars.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

{water}WOES

Asia is facing a worsening water crisis that threatens to curtail food production and take an increasing toll on the region's economies, the Asian Development Bank, or ADB, said in October 2010.

Governments, industries and people around the region need to stop wasting the precious resource to limit the shortage, ADB infrastructure advisor Arjun Thapan said.

"The water footprint in our towns and cities, in our irrigation systems, our energy production systems and in industry in general is extravagant," Thapan said at a water crisis conference hosted by the Manila-based lender.

In a report, the ADB faulted weak enforcement of laws for the degradation of Asian water quality, with 80 to 89 percent of all untreated wastewater leaching into freshwater in East and South Asia, respectively. It also highlighted that although irrigated agriculture uses up to 80 percent of the region's freshwater, there have been minimal improvements in irrigation efficiencies since 1990.

If trends continue, this would lead to a 40 percent gap between water demand and supply in Asia by 2030.

The ADB estimated that India would have a water deficit of 50 percent by 2030, while China would have a shortage of 25 percent.

China, India, Pakistan, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Nepal, Uzbekistan and Cambodia are currently feeling the heaviest impacts of the water shortage in terms of food and energy production as well as ecological damage, the ADB said.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



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women clear LANDMINES

Valmathi Jegadas is a different sort of mine clearer to the macho explosives specialists portrayed in Hollywood films.

A farmer's widow in northern Sri Lanka, Jegadas, 37, earns U.S. \$200 a month risking her life, and she admits being scared each time she steps into the minefields.

"This is the best-paying job in my village," the mother of three said, adding that her mother and husband were both killed in 2007 by artillery attacks. She works along former defense lines of the separatist Tamil Tigers, the rebel guerrilla force that fought the government for decades before being defeated in May 2009.

"Women carry the burden after the war in most homes. They want the money, and they don't take short-cuts when clearing mines," said Nigel Peacock, a technical advisor for the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action, in Mannar. The Sri Lankan military, which runs the largest demining operation, estimates more than a million unexploded devices now threaten civilians returning to their villages.

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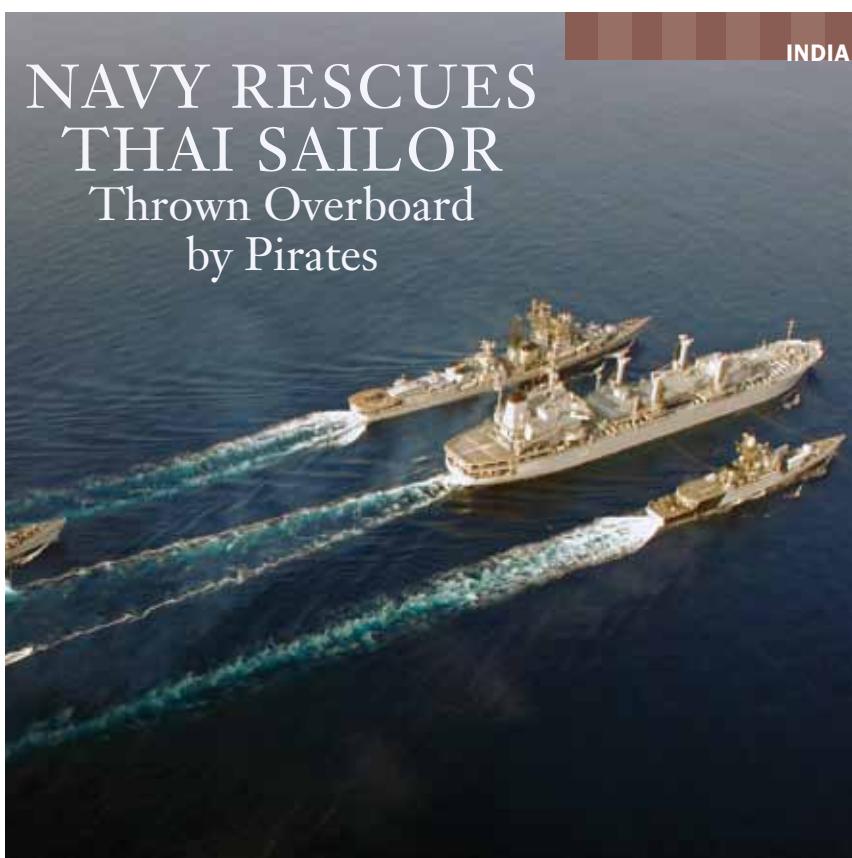
SRI LANKA



AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

NAVY RESCUES THAI SAILOR Thrown Overboard by Pirates

INDIA



AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

An Indian warship rescued a Thai crew member that Somali pirates tossed into the sea after they hijacked his vessel in October 2010, according to a Navy spokesperson.

India's INS Krishna was following the hijacked ship, Prantalay 12, about 648 kilometers off Minicoy Island in the Lakshadweep Island chain, according to the Indian Navy website. The pirates were using the cargo ship as a mother ship to launch attacks on other merchant vessels. Indian Sailors observed the Thai national being thrown overboard and rescued him December 4, 2010, the spokesperson said.

"Navy and Coast Guard ships and aircraft continue to patrol the areas of reported pirate attacks in an effort to ensure safety of the sea lanes of communication," the Navy spokesperson said. The cooperative efforts cleared the Prantalay 12 and another suspected mother vessel, the MT Polar, in early December 2010 from the Eastern Arabia Sea, the website reported. *FORUM Staff*

Malaysia Extradites JI Terror Suspect



MARTIN ABBUGAO/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PHOTOS BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A top terrorist suspect who was captured in Malaysia in 2009 after escaping from a Singapore detention center in 2008 was handed back to the city-state and detained, officials said in October 2010.

Mas Selamat Kastari, the alleged head of the Singapore cell of Jemaah Islamiyah, or JI, which has links to al-Qaida, was captured in April 2009 in Malaysia's southern state of Johor after more than a year on the run.

Singapore's home affairs ministry said Mas Selamat had been handed over.

"He has been arrested under Singapore's Internal Security Act and is currently under investigation," the ministry said in a statement.

Mas Selamat was thought to have been hiding in Malaysia since February 2008, when he escaped from a high-security detention center in Singapore. He squeezed through a bathroom window and climbed over a fence. He reportedly used an improvised flotation device to cross the narrow strait that separates Singapore from Johor state.

JI, a Southeast Asian terror outfit,

Indonesian police officers escort terrorist **Mas Selamat Kastari** after his arrest in 2003 in Tanjung Pinang.

is thought to have ties to al-Qaida and is blamed for a string of attacks in the region, including the 2002 Bali bombings in which 202 people were killed, many of them foreign tourists.

Singapore officials alleged he was part of a plot to hijack an airliner in Bangkok and crash it into Changi airport — one of Asia's busiest — in 2001 after the September 11 attacks that year in the United States.

He had fled Singapore in December 2001 after a security operation against Jemaah Islamiyah but was arrested in Indonesia in 2006 and extradited.

His escape triggered a sweeping review of security measures in Singapore. Nine officers and guards were penalized for lapses that allowed Mas Selamat to escape. Two were sacked and three demoted, but the government ignored calls for a high-level shake-up.

Malaysian premier Najib Razak had said after Mas Selamat was recaptured that authorities needed to extract "more information" from him before he could be returned to Singapore.

"He is a threat to Malaysia's security, which is why he has been detained. Obviously he's a threat to Singapore and Malaysia," Najib said at the time.

Singapore has tough security measures, yet officials warn that the island republic, a regional financial center and host to thousands of multinational companies, is a prime target for terror attacks.



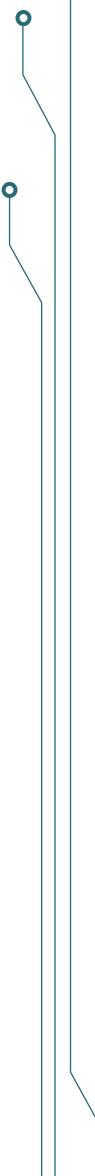
Singapore newspaper companies hung posters announcing Mas Selamat's capture in May 2009.

TECH-SAWY TERRORISTS

COUNTERING EXTREMISM ON THE INTERNET REQUIRES INNOVATION

BY JOHN BUMGARNER

FORUM ILLUSTRATION



On a bustling evening in late November 2008, automatic gunfire ripped apart Mumbai. When the shooting stopped, 175 people were killed and 308 were wounded. Terrorist attacks on Indian soil are nothing new, but this horrific event conducted by members of the Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (Army of the Righteous) had an important component that previous terrorist incidents lacked:

the use of 21st-century technology.

In the tragedy's aftermath, authorities discovered that the Mumbai terrorists had employed technology in all phases of their operation. During the planning phase, the attackers conducted virtual reconnaissance of their targets using Google Earth. The high-resolution images provided by Google allowed the terrorists to plot their suicide mission with great precision, even down to the entrances and exits to be used at the primary target locations. Google also provided the attackers with the geographic coordinates for their targets, which were programmed into GPS devices. Using this information, the attackers were able to navigate to their sea infiltration point undetected and under cover of darkness. The utilization of technology greatly reduced the likelihood that the attackers would encounter unforeseen obstacles along their assault paths, increasing the effectiveness of the attacks.

During the execution phase of the Mumbai assaults, the terrorists used cell phones configured with Subscriber Identity Module cards obtained from different countries. The attackers used these phones to provide status updates to their handlers, who were using Voice over Internet Protocol, or VoIP, channels to mask

their physical locations. Investigators speculated that the handlers used real-time television coverage to track the location of the police units and counterterrorism commandos that had responded to the attacks. The handlers reportedly updated their operatives on these police locations using the Short Message Service, or SMS, available on their cell phones. These communication steps made it more difficult for law enforcement agencies to intercept the calls or trace them after the attacks occurred.

Indian authorities have voiced concerns that future terrorist attacks in their country could be coordinated using either BlackBerry cell phones or the popular VoIP service Skype. One of the unique selling points of both these communication channels is strong encryption capabilities. The Indian government recently demanded that the manufacturer of the BlackBerry device, Canadian-based Research In Motion, provide the government with the keys to unscramble the SMS and e-mail messages being transmitted. Indonesia has also demanded that the company provide encryption keys to government authorities or face legal consequences.

Evidence shows that terrorist organizations have not only used commercially available encryption



programs but have developed their own sophisticated applications as well. For example, in response to growing fears about eavesdropping, the Global Islamic Media Front released an encryption application called Asrar Al-Mujahidin ("Mujahedeen Secrets") first on several restricted Web forums and later on dozens of publicly accessible file-sharing sites. Mujahedeen Secrets supports several advanced encryption algorithms, including the Advanced

Encryption Standard, or AES. In 2001, the U.S. government approved AES to safeguard sensitive public information, and in 2003, the National Security Agency approved AES to protect top secret information. The terrorist organization Hezbollah has praised the brilliance of encryption programs such as Mujahedeen Secrets, which allows its members to communicate without fear that their messages will be deciphered by the Americans.



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An Indian Soldier calls additional forces forward as the Taj Mahal hotel burns in Mumbai after terrorists attacked in November 2008. The attackers used the Internet to plan the assault, which left hundreds dead and wounded.

TERRORIST CLASSROOMS ON THE NET

Extremist groups have also distributed training materials on both public and restricted Web portals. These materials include copies of training manuals used by the U.S. military, especially the U.S. Army, which are available on many extremist sites. The manuals describing combat techniques further link these extremist groups to violence. For example, the TM 31-210 Improvised Munitions Handbook, created by the U.S. Army for the Special Forces, has been distributed on the websites of extremist groups. This technical manual offers practical advice on the construction of improvised explosive devices, or IEDs, from materials that may be readily purchased from most home improvement centers. Although the techniques described in this manual have been successfully exploited by terrorist groups for decades, the Internet has clearly lowered the cost of distributing these instructions. Other available manuals distributed on websites frequented by extremists have included The Terrorist's Handbook, The Anarchist Cookbook and the Mujahedeen Poisons Handbook.

Many terrorist or extremist organizations have also developed and distributed their own training materials via the Internet. Improvements in streaming online video have expanded the capabilities of these virtual training aids. Web-based distribution confers other advantages to the groups as well. For example, Web-based training may be more secure than physical training camps, which are vulnerable to physical attacks. Furthermore, aerial bombardment or skirmishes with ground forces pose a threat not just to the training camps but also to the people who attend them. By contrast, if a Web-based training site is shut down, its members remain unharmed and live to fight another day.

Web-based distribution also allows terrorist organizations to train more individuals in combat techniques more efficiently. Web-based training

materials may be disseminated quickly to members of extremist groups throughout the world. The materials may be downloaded (duplicated) by members at almost no additional cost and may be used by a large number of members simultaneously. These materials may also aid extremist organizations in their efforts to recruit and indoctrinate new members.

Virtual training materials developed by terrorist groups cover a wide range of topics, including IED construction and guidelines on the use of shoulder-fired, surface-to-air missiles. Another terrorist video demonstrates techniques for making a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device, or car bomb. Car bombs have been used successfully in many terrorist attacks in the Asia-Pacific region, including Bali, Indonesia, in 2002; Islamabad, Pakistan, in 2008; and Narathiwat, Thailand, in 2009. Currently the majority of terrorist bombs are delivered by suicide bombers, but GPS technology provides another method. This technology allows a terrorist organization to develop a bomb with a GPS-enabled detonator coupled with a timing device that can be delivered in multiple ways to a target location.

Many videos advertise the effectiveness of radical violence by extremist groups. For example, some videos show the tactical effectiveness of roadside bombs against coalition forces in Iraq. Others document brutality inflicted by extremist groups on their captives. Some videos highlight the path to martyrdom chosen by other group members. The As Sahab Foundation for Islamic Media Publication, which has supported various organizations known to be Al-Qaida associated movements, or AQAM, created a unique video depicting the 2008 bombing of the Danish embassy in Pakistan that blends several of these elements. The video begins with an interview with a suicide bomber. It then uses computer animation to simulate a suicide bombing attack on the Danish embassy, which ends in a massive fireball. The video has been widely distributed on many websites, including YouTube.

THE TERROR SOCIAL NETWORK

Extremist groups are also commonly using many of the most popular social networking sites, including Facebook, Friendster, LiveJournal and MySpace, to communicate with sympathizers and spread propaganda to the masses. For example, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in the Philippines maintains a Facebook page, and several purported members of Abu Sayyaf maintain MySpace accounts. By providing access to a large network of users, these portals facilitate worldwide recruiting and fundraising by these groups.

The microblogging service Twitter can be used by terrorists to distribute operational information to members anywhere in the world. For example, the following encrypted text contains the geographic coordinates for a popular Asian tourist site, the attack method that will be employed, the date to launch the attack and the next Twitter account that will be used to disseminate operational information:

T1HHTKampqYIs0Tmf0EDxXgyd4C0L1IX
g2YZSsvBmrwZsCZfa3pkNSKfKyP263gMTwU
JQK54tmPYCWWh0i8Y2fFethE0b8KCbFw==

The architecture for private, quasi-anonymous communication that is provided by many social networking sites shelters members of extremist organizations from detection by most law enforcement agencies. Some social networking sites feature user controls that allow extremist groups to prevent or detect infiltration. For instance, individuals who seek to become group members might have to be approved or invited to join the group. Individuals requesting membership may thus be thoroughly vetted before they are permitted to view the content on the group's website or to participate in forum discussions with other group members. Additionally, many social networking sites permit groups to monitor forum content or other website activities. These elements are critical to ensuring the group's operational security.

A Rapid Action Force policeman patrols outside the Taj Mahal hotel in Mumbai after terrorists attacked in November 2008. The attackers used Internet tools to plan the assault.

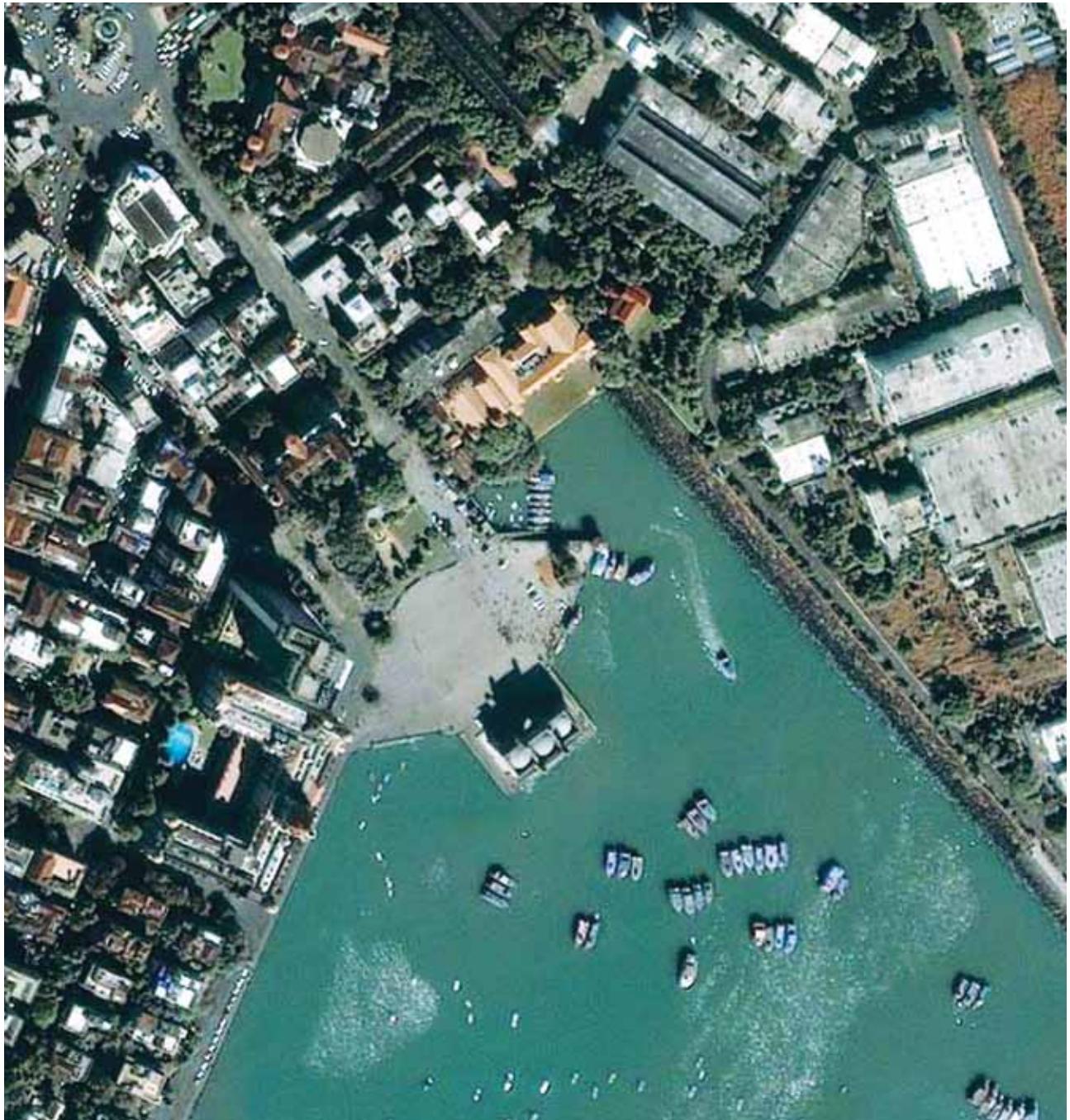
EASY DISTRIBUTION

Terrorist organizations have distributed other applications and programs on the Internet as well. Cyberspace has many digital repositories maintained by extremists that offer bootleg copies of commercially available programs that might help members evade electronic detection. For example, some applications anonymize Internet surfing activities. Others are designed to perform advanced anti-forensic tasks, such as securely deleting files via methods approved by the U.S. Department of Defense or erasing incriminating Internet surfing trails from a member's computer.

Video applications also play a pivotal role in the psychological warfare operations of extremist groups. Many videos direct persuasive communications toward a specific audience, for example, educated but disenfranchised individuals



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Terrorists used satellite images online to plot their attack on Mumbai's Taj Mahal hotel, seen here to the left of the center, on the water.

to propagate the groups' ideologies. Widespread campaigns of propaganda and possibly disinformation allow a terrorist organization to leverage the involvement of third parties who are sympathetic to, if not directly involved in, the organization's cause. AQAM organizations are increasingly featuring members who speak English in videos aimed at Western audiences. The release of a video may also be timed to achieve the greatest possible impact. For example, a cell-phone video of an IED attack may be

released immediately following the event, which attracts media attention and possibly an ancillary following by the general public. The video may thus intensify the emotional response of the public to an attack that has taken place. Several terrorist groups have used YouTube to distribute motivational videos about their armed struggles. For example, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, or LTTE, of Sri Lanka has a training video of its forces posted on that website.



a. An Indian woman checks out damage to the Taj Mahal hotel, which was attacked by terrorists in November 2008.

b. To combat extremists from 10 high-risk countries, Australian border officials plan to use electronic fingerprints and face scans.

c. People use computers at an Internet cafe in Shanghai in January 2010. Extremists launched sophisticated attacks against human rights activists around the world using Google's Gmail service.

EMERGING ATTACK CAPABILITIES

Most terrorist organizations operating in the Asia-Pacific region have mastered launching kinetic attacks but are still in the infant stages of understanding how cyber attacks can be employed effectively against digital targets. Some of the best computer programmers in the world live within the region and fully understand how to develop cyber attack tools. In 2000, one of the most disruptive computer worms in the history of the Internet, known as the "Love Bug," was developed by programmers living in the Philippines.

One of the most basic cyber attack techniques available to terrorist groups is distributed denial-of-service. Militants can launch these disruptive attacks by either renting computers from cyber criminals who specialize in providing this service or by distributing denial-of-service attack tools to sympathizers through social networking portals or restricted web forums. These tools can be designed to launch a large-scale cyber attack against any digital target in the world. Islamic terrorist groups have called for followers to conduct "www Jihad" against infidels. Several terrorist groups are already developing the necessary skills to forge an effective cyber assault against almost any digital target in the future. Some terrorist organizations have realized that the Internet can be used as a weapon, which can be wielded with great precision and power.

By providing a number of applications and services that substitute for face-to-face contact and physical training camps, the Internet helps extremist organizations promote their agenda. Ethnonationalist or religious militant groups can easily use the Internet to recruit, indoctrinate and train members to wage violent attacks within any nation in the Asia-Pacific region. As the Mumbai attacks showed, violent extremists can use the Internet to plan and coordinate physical acts of terrorism. Furthermore, some radical extremist groups have begun to investigate ways to use the Internet itself as a weapon to launch cyber attacks that would have catastrophic consequences in the real world. Extremist groups will use the Internet more and more as their members gain additional technical knowledge and as technology becomes ubiquitous in the world.

As cyber extremist elements within the Asia-Pacific region continue to flourish, efforts to combat them must also grow larger and more sophisticated. In an open, democratic society, countermeasures must strike a difficult balance, thwarting terrorism without constraining liberty. □

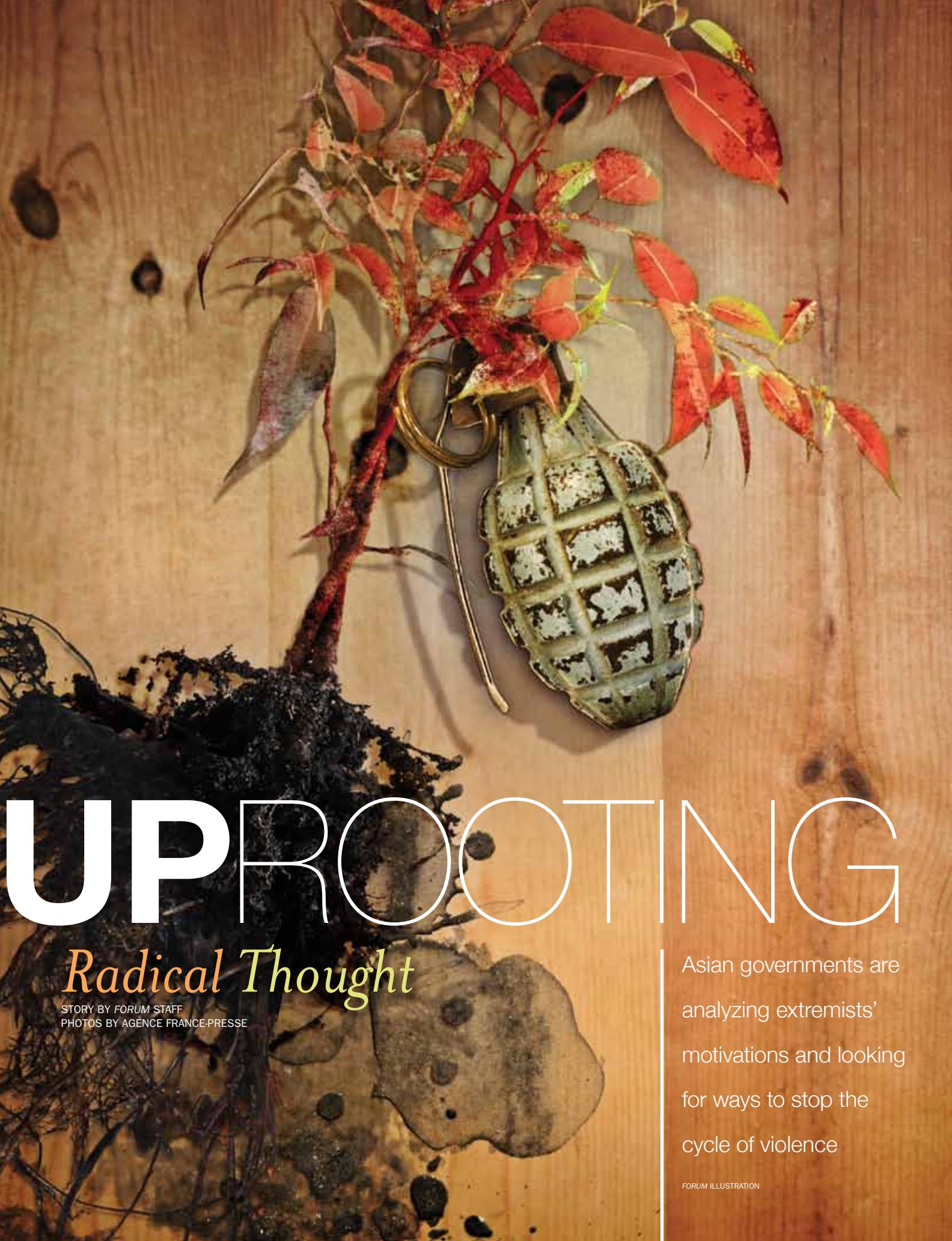
* John Bumgarner is chief technology officer for the U.S. Cyber Consequences Unit. He served as an expert source for various publications, including *Business Week*, CNN, Jane's Defense, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Guardian* in London.

14 WAYS TO COUNTER INTERNET EXTREMISM

COMPILED BY TIMOTHY L. THOMAS, ANALYST AT THE FOREIGN MILITARY STUDIES OFFICE AT FORT LEAVENWORTH, KANSAS.

- 01** Mute extremist messages.
- 02** Turn extremist groups' weaknesses against them.
- 03** Emphasize extremist organizations' mistakes.
- 04** Plant fake e-mail messages and website posting to seed confusion, dissent and distrust among extremist organizations.
- 05** Amplify speeches and writings of prominent clerics who renounce terrorist violence.
- 06** Identify territory that terrorists cherish, and damage that territory. For example, emotional territory such as a terrorist's reputation.
- 07** Identify, manipulate and even destroy terrorist territory on the Web.
- 08** Use captured computer hard drives to learn how to develop counter messages.
- 09** Release seized videotapes to show terrorist brainwashing session with children including hate cartoons and extremists' "camps" for children.
- 10** Release letters that demonstrate poor morale within extremist organizations.
- 11** Determine what dishonors extremist organization and undermines their rhetoric on the Web.
- 12** Undercut extremists' popular or theological legitimacy for actions such as their moral legitimacy for employing weapons of mass destruction.
- 13** Persuade extremist "support networks" to stop helping extremists and hold them accountable.
- 14** Develop technical systems that identify the source of unconventional weapons and components.

Thomas, T. "Countering Internet Extremism," *IO Sphere* Winter 2009.



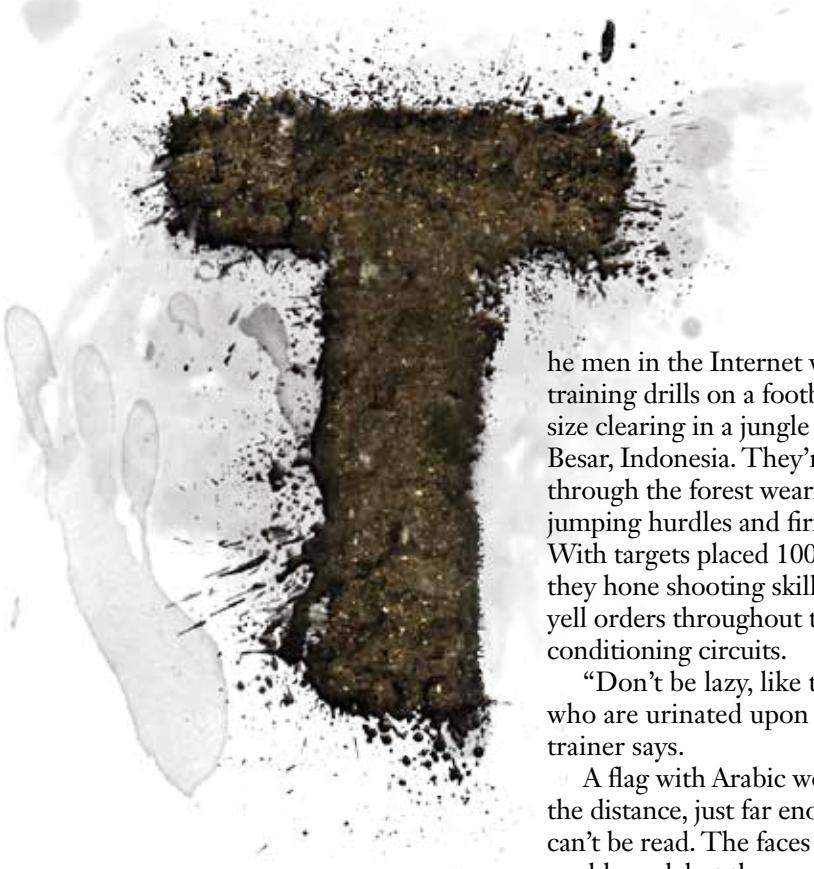
UPROOTING

Radical Thought

STORY BY FORUM STAFF
PHOTOS BY AGENCIE FRANCE-PRESSE

Asian governments are analyzing extremists' motivations and looking for ways to stop the cycle of violence

FORUM ILLUSTRATION



The men in the Internet video execute training drills on a football field-size clearing in a jungle near Aceh Besar, Indonesia. They're sprinting through the forest wearing black, jumping hurdles and firing weapons. With targets placed 100 meters away, they hone shooting skills as trainers yell orders throughout the physical conditioning circuits.

"Don't be lazy, like those sleeping who are urinated upon by Satan," one trainer says.

A flag with Arabic words waives in the distance, just far enough so that it can't be read. The faces in the footage are blurred, but the message of the 75-minute amateur video is clear.

"Jihad is every Muslim's duty," a preacher says to the men in a Javanese accent, gunshots sounding as he speaks, according to the *Jakarta Globe* newspaper. The paramilitary training camp footage had been posted on several jihadist websites in March 2010, the *Globe* reported.

The Indonesian government ultimately blocked the video, which was produced by an Aceh-based group calling itself Tandzim Al Qoidah Indonesia Serambi Mekkah, a Southeast Asia branch of al-Qaida.

The recruitment tool represents a growing anger and increasingly dangerous form of extremism that terrorist groups active throughout Asia have expressed, say some experts.

"The invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, the occupation of Iraq in 2003, and the continuing suppression of the rights of the Palestinian people within a hegemonic global system that appears to be biased against Muslims have generated a great deal of unhappiness and anger among Muslims everywhere, some of which is expressing itself through religious extremism," Chandra Muzaffar, president of the International Movement for a Just World, wrote in a commentary for OpinionAsia called "Positioning Religious Extremism in Southeast Asia."

To combat these extremist views and actions, which lead to instability in a region, governments have begun assessing why people develop such beliefs, and they are working toward ways of rehabilitating them.

"At best, the use of force only temporarily cripples the terrorists' capabilities," Rohan Gunaratna, a professor of security studies at the Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, said in a January 2010 article published by *The National* newspaper about Indonesia's attempt at rehabilitating extremists. "With the ideology intact, capabilities will be replenished and dangerously reinvented. Hence, the only way to stem the current global wave of terrorism is to effectively dismantle the terrorists' ideological beliefs."

Singaporean Jemaah Islamiya extremist Mohammad Hasan bin Saynudin, center, and nine other terror suspects sit behind bars while awaiting trial at the South Jakarta court detention house in January 2009. The 10 suspects were accused of forming a dangerous cell linked to some of the region's most wanted extremists.

Internationally, about 100,000 suspected Islamic terrorists are being detained by authorities, according to *The National*. A majority of those are in custody in the Middle East, Central and Southeast Asia, the newspaper reported. Those imprisoned have provided countries such as Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia — countries that have rehabilitation programs — with a built-in group of people to begin the work of deradicalization.

Muzaffar also puts the onus on governments to be proactive in the fight against extremism through public campaigns and policies that seed peace before radical thoughts take root.



"Since political turmoil and economic chaos pave the way for extremism in certain situations, movements that promote good governance and elite accountability, popular participation in the political process, and the equitable distribution of wealth and opportunities which enhance the dignity of each and every community, ought to be encouraged," Muzaffar wrote in his OpinionAsia piece. "Governments in Southeast Asia should also add their voices to the global chorus demanding a push toward multilateralism as an antidote to unilateralism and global hegemony. If global politics moves in this direction, extremists exploiting religious sentiments will soon discover that they have no constituency to mislead."

INSIDE AN EXTREMIST'S MIND

Conclusions about the success of rehabilitation programs are mixed.

Abdullah Sunata, once described as a "poster child" for Indonesia's deradicalization efforts, represents those inmates who resist change or return to their old ways. Just after being released early from prison for good behavior, Sunata was rearrested for suspected involvement in a Mumbai-style attack on Jakarta and an assassination attempt on President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, The Associated Press reported in June 2010. Authorities accused Sunata of leading a planned attack on the Danish Embassy and a police parade scheduled for July 1.

"There's no one country that can guarantee that their deradicalization program will work 100 percent of the time," Ansyaa Mbai, an anti-terrorism official for Indonesia's Coordinating Ministry for Security and Political Affairs, told The Associated Press. "The most important thing is that there are terrorists who want to cooperate and are aware of their mistakes and ideological confusion. If five out of 10 give up their ways and are integrated back into society, in my mind that's a success."

Sarlit Wirawan Sarwono, a professor of psychology at the University of Persada Indonesia, has worked as a deradicalization counselor since 2005, according to *The National*. Sarwono admits that it's hard to change the minds of his detainees. He uses group discussions and one-on-one sessions to encourage participants to embrace the nonviolent meanings of Islamic views.

"I tell them, 'I am not trying to discourage you from doing jihad,'" Sarwono told *The National*. "But I try and alter the way they interpret jihad."

Then there are those like Farihin Ibnu Ahmad. He completed an extremist rehabilitation program in prison, according to *The National*, but he still believes the 2002 bombings in Bali were justified.

"It was necessary to cleanse the place of immoral, lewd foreigners bringing their sins to our country. They spread AIDS in our country. Our jihad was against them, the infidels," Ahmad told *The National*.



Indonesian Army Soldiers secure the parliamentary building as Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono delivers his state of the nation address in Jakarta in August 2009. During his message, the president told Islamist extremists that Indonesia would not be defeated by terrorists after authorities discovered a plot to kill him.

INDIA REVAMPS ANTI-MAOIST OFFENSIVE

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

A year into India's more aggressive plan to fight Maoist rebels, the guerrilla group continues brazen attacks of defiance throughout most of the country.

But government officials say they intend to hold strong to an offensive plan put into place in October 2009, and a security analyst says more resources will be deployed to ramp up the fight against the Maoist insurgents.



Indian Crime Branch officials escort a suspected Maoist militant in May 2010.

"The government has to revamp the strategy," security analyst Brahma Chellaney said in a July 2010 UPI report.

Among the details India released on renewing its fight is that the government plans to upgrade 400 police stations and provide more helicopters, according to UPI.

The measures build on the strategy India announced in 2009. Security sources cited by the media said the plan called for a large-scale, coordinated offensive involving seven states worst affected by Maoist violence, with support from federal security services.

"Over 35,000 police are on standby. This time we have to flush them all out," a senior police officer in Chhattisgarh said when details of the strategy were released in 2009.

The officer refused to disclose precise details of the planned operation, saying only that it involved many "surprise factors."

The Maoist movement started as a peasant uprising in 1967 in the village of Naxalbari in West Bengal, hence members are sometimes called "Naxals" or "Naxalites." Since then, the movement has spread to 20 of India's 29 states.

"Maoist ideology feeds off the actual and perceived socioeconomic deprivation of tribal and landless classes. The movement derives its strength from popular support of the deprived masses," retired Lt. Gen. Tej Pathak, former commandant of India's National Defence College, wrote in a September 2010 analysis for the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies.

Maoist-linked violence claimed more than 600 lives in 2009 and included a series of incidents that raised concerns that the insurgency may be moving in alarming new directions.

One such incident involved suspected Maoist fighters who killed 16 villagers in eastern India in a 2009 attack apparently motivated by profit rather than ideology.

Witnesses and police officials said the rebels had been paid as hired guns by a party to a local land dispute.

And there was shock a few days after the village attack when Maoists in eastern India beheaded a policeman — an act seen as a deliberately provocative tactic employed by Islamist extremists in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

"Violence is simply unacceptable in a democracy and republic. As long as [they] do not abjure violence, the security forces will confront them," Indian Home Minister P. Chidambaram said.

The appeal was swiftly rejected by senior Maoist leader Koteswar Rao.

"We will not lay down arms. We know the government is trying to bring in the Army and Air Force on us. We are prepared to deal with it," Rao was quoted as saying by *The Indian Express* newspaper.

The Maoists say they are fighting for the rights of the rural poor, but officials accuse them of using intimidation and extortion to collect money and control impoverished villagers.

Little is known about the movement's shadowy leadership or its strength. Its followers are estimated to number between 10,000 and 20,000.

In June 2009, the government slapped a formal ban on the rebels, officially designating them terrorists. Authorities later began a graphic newspaper advertising campaign to counter the propaganda of the Maoist insurgents.

The government printed photographs of the bodies of people killed by the extremists in national newspapers with the tagline: "These are innocent people — victims of Naxal [Maoist] violence."



Indonesian Islamic extremist Abdullah Sunata sits behind bars while awaiting trial in Jakarta in 2005. One of Indonesia's most wanted terrorists, Sunata was released early for good behavior in 2009 and arrested again in June 2010 for suspected involvement in a Mumbai-style attack on Jakarta and an assassination attempt on Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

One tactic Sarwono uses in his rehabilitation arsenal is showing inmates a photograph of a veiled Muslim woman and her baby. Her husband was killed in the Bali bombings in 2002.

“See, you are killing Muslims too,’ I show them the picture and tell them, ‘Of what use is such a jihad? Islam is not so myopic,” *The National* quoted Sarwono saying.

Although some participants hold firm to their beliefs during group sessions, Sarwono said, “they are much softer” during private sessions.

Some say radicalization actually happens inside the prison walls.

Noor Huda Ismali, director of the Institute for International Peacebuilding, listed factors leading to prison radicalization in an opinion piece published by *The Jakarta Post* in August 2010.

According to Ismali:

- Religious gatherings take place in prison, where convicts serving terms for terrorism have the responsibility of managing prison mosques.
- Reading materials about jihad are relatively easy to find, duplicate and discuss inside prison.
- Strong bonds develop between jihadists (terrorists) and other inmates, making their existence even more prominent.

“The interaction between them in a group is continuous and, from an ideological standpoint, they strengthen each other’s positions,” Ismali wrote in the *Post*. “Many of their fellow Muslims around them consider those convicted of terrorism offenses to be true and tried ‘defenders of the faith,’ ‘heroes,’ and they are rewarded with high social status in their communities, circles and groupings.”

Ismali said prison guards must be more involved in what happens among inmates, including being familiar enough with Islamic teachings to recognize radical thoughts and be trained with ways to defuse them.

“An investment will be required on the part of prison authorities and the other government agencies concerned if this is to be an effective transformation,” Ismali wrote.

INSURGENCY’S RISE AND FALL

Islamist militancy and the Jemaah Islamiya, or JI, are on the rise in Southeast Asia, particularly in the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore, according to a 2009 Congressional Research Service report prepared for members of the U.S. Congress.

Al-Qaida has used its influence on terrorist cells in Southeast Asia to raise money and harbor insurgents. Osama bin Laden’s brother-in-law founded one of al-Qaida’s earliest Southeast Asia cells in the early 1990s.

“The cells have exploited the region’s generally loose border controls to hold meetings in Southeast Asia to plan attacks against Western targets, host operatives transiting through Southeast Asia, and provide safe haven for other operatives,” the report said.

To offset the increases, a multinational collaboration has occurred through things such as a Regional Maritime Security Initiative to improve security in the Malacca Strait, more intelligence sharing and military-to-military cooperation, the report said.

Continued on page 25

Extremism

Not Welcome in Bangladesh

For years, Islamist extremists have sought sanctuary within Bangladesh, preying on the country's political vulnerability. With the December 2008 election of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina — leader of the Awami League Party — the Bangladesh government has been focused on stemming the spread of radical groups. "According to our election manifesto, we want such a peaceful country where there will be no room for terrorism, militancy and corruption," Hasina said during a visit to Japan in December 2010, according to a report by the United News of Bangladesh. In addition to cracking down on radical groups operating in Bangladesh, Hasina has highlighted the democratic principles upon which the country was founded. The following is a list of five extremist groups identified in Bangladesh and a short description of each.

Source: Asian Studies Center at The Heritage Foundation

Political Group

Name	BANGLADESH JAMAAT-E-ISLAMI	HIZB UT-TAHRIR (ISLAMIC LIBERATION PARTY)
Leader	Maulana Motiur Rahman Nizami	Mohiuddin Ahmed†
Notes	Third-largest political party in Bangladesh. Goal is to establish an Islamic state in Bangladesh as part of creating an Islamic world order. Was coalition partner in previous Bangladesh Nationalist Party-led government (2001–2006). Held 17 seats in parliament. Currently holds two seats in the 300-seat parliament.	Goal is to transform and unite the world into an Islamic society through the establishment of a global Caliphate. Forty members were arrested for allegedly distributing leaflets supporting the Bangladesh Rifles mutiny in February 2009. Banned in Bangladesh in October 2009.

Grassroots Organization



British Muslim Maajid Nawaz has renounced his extremist views and now runs a foundation that fights militancy.

FORMER EXTREMIST FIGHTS MILITANCY

SEBASTIAN ABBOT AND CHRIS BRUMMITT/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A decade ago, Maajid Nawaz went to Pakistan to recruit for an extremist group intent on a global Islamic state. Now he's on a different mission — to steer youth away from militancy.

Nawaz's message is one rarely heard in Pakistan, where the response to extremism has been overwhelmingly military, with little attempt to try to rehabilitate insurgents or keep young people from turning to militancy in the first place.

In speeches to thousands of university students across the country, Nawaz emphasized the urgent need to renounce radicalism.

"We must reclaim Islam," the British citizen of Pakistani descent told some 100 students during a campus speech. "We must reclaim Pakistan."

While Pakistan has poured troops and weaponry into its fight against the Taliban and other extremist groups, it has adopted few of the

softer measures aimed at dissuading militancy. And critics say that is a major weakness in Pakistan's strategy against terrorism.

"There is no country where such a program is more important than in Pakistan," said Rohan Gunaratna, a terrorism expert who chaired the first international conference on militant rehabilitation in Singapore.

"In parallel with the kinetic fight to catch and kill terrorists, there needs to be a parallel policy to fight the ideology."

Nawaz used to belong to Hizb ut-Tahrir, which claims to have hundreds of thousands of members around the world working on establishing an Islamic caliphate. The group pledges nonviolence, but Nawaz alleges that in some countries — including nuclear-armed Pakistan — a key strategy was to foment a military coup.

Militant Groups

† Official spokesperson of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Bangladesh

†† Acting chief of the central committee

JAMAATUL MUJAHEDIN BANGLADESH (JMB)

Maulana Sayedur Rahman Jaffar††

Dedicated to removing the country's secular government and imposing a Taliban-inspired Islamic theocracy. Six members, including leader Shaikh Abdur Rahman and his deputy, Siddiqul Islam Bangla Bhai, were hanged in 2007 for attacks killing two judges in 2005 and for organizing 400 synchronized bomb blasts in 2005. Banned in Bangladesh in 2005.

HARAKAT UL-JIHAD-I-ISLAMI/BANGLADESH (HUJI-B)

Sheikh Abdus Salam

Formed in 1992 by a group of former Bangladeshi Afghan war veterans to establish an Islamic state in Bangladesh. Allegedly worked with Lashkar-e-Tayyiba in a plot to attack the U.S. embassy in Dhaka in fall 2009. Responsible for numerous terrorist attacks in India. Designated by the U.S. State Department as a foreign terrorist organization in 2008. Banned in Bangladesh in 2005.

SHAHADAT-E AL HIKMA (SAH)

Kawsar Hossain Siddique

Objective is to attain state power through Islamic revolution. Announced a seven-point agenda at a news conference in 2003 that included denouncing the 1971 War of Liberation, sovereignty and independence of Bangladesh, and the Bangladesh Constitution. Bangladesh Ministry of Home Affairs report in March 2009 named SAH a militant outfit. Banned in Bangladesh in 2003.

Pakistan has formally banned the group, as have several other Muslim countries, but authorities are not really enforcing the ban. Its members take part in demonstrations, hold public meetings and hand out leaflets largely unobstructed.

In 1999, Hizb ut-Tahrir paid for Nawaz to go to Pakistan, ostensibly as a student, to recruit members. He traveled all over the country doing so.

Later, he went to Egypt, where he was imprisoned for four years for recruiting for the group. He met other radicals, studied Islamic texts in jail and gradually changed his opinions, he said. He now believes that Islam calls for the separation of faith and politics.

Imran Yousafzai, deputy spokesman of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Pakistan, said he was aware of Nawaz's activities in Pakistan.

"I heard he was once an active member in Pakistan," he said. "I am sad to say that he is now working against Islam."

Nawaz said he hopes to start a network of moderate Pakistani Muslims to speak out against extremism. He gets a salary as director of the Quilliam Foundation, a mainstream think tank that challenges extremism and promotes pluralism and is partly funded by the British government.

"Now I am involved in trying to counter the black and white mindset that I once so vehemently encouraged," Nawaz wrote in a first-person account titled "Why I joined the British jihad — and why I rejected it," which published in *The Sunday Times* newspaper in September 2007.

"Although I was young when I was recruited to Hizb ut-Tahrir, I take full responsibility for my actions. I made the decision that I did, and I am responsible for undoing them."

His plan, Nawaz said, is to write a series of papers that re-evaluate certain core Islamist ideas and publish them.

Continued from page 23

"Years of surveillance, arrests and killings of JI members by various states are believed to have seriously weakened the organization, degrading its command, communication and fundraising structure to the point where many analysts believe it operates almost exclusively in Indonesia, with a number of operatives also active in Mindanao Philippines," the Congressional Research Service report said.

For Lt. Col. Sanuan Akkuh, a chaplain for the Armed Forces of the Philippines Westmincom who has been an imam for two decades and tries to promote peace, enough is enough.

"Personally, I think war is not the solution to the problems of our country," Akkuh said in a September 2010 *Philippine Star* newspaper article. "We should treat each other as brothers. We should talk to each other.

"The carnage left in the wake of terrorist acts affects all families, including those committing them," Akkuh said. He advocates leaving a different legacy — a legacy of peace for younger generations instead of recruiting them to continue the violence.

"That [peace] is our legacy for the young generation and for the future ... let us leave them with a good legacy," he told the *Star*. □

UNSETTLING ALLIANCES

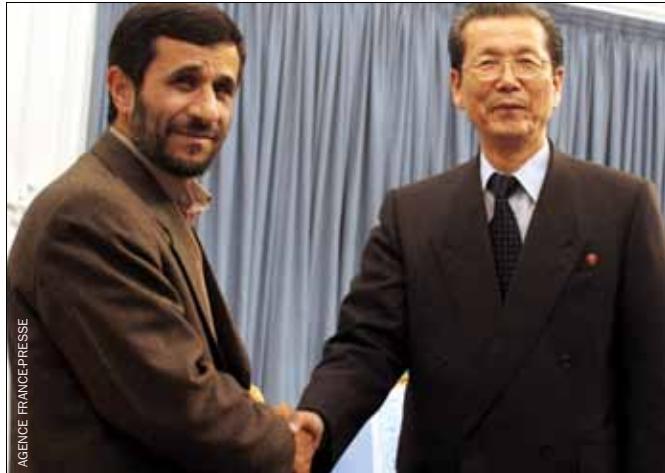
NORTH KOREA AND IRAN MAKE DANGEROUS BEDFELLOWS

FORUM STAFF



The Iranian Defense Ministry released this image in August 2010 of a surface-to-surface missile designed and built domestically and powered by liquid fuel, according to Defense Minister Ahmad Vahidi. Iran was scheduled to start operating its first nuclear power plant built with Russian technology the next day.

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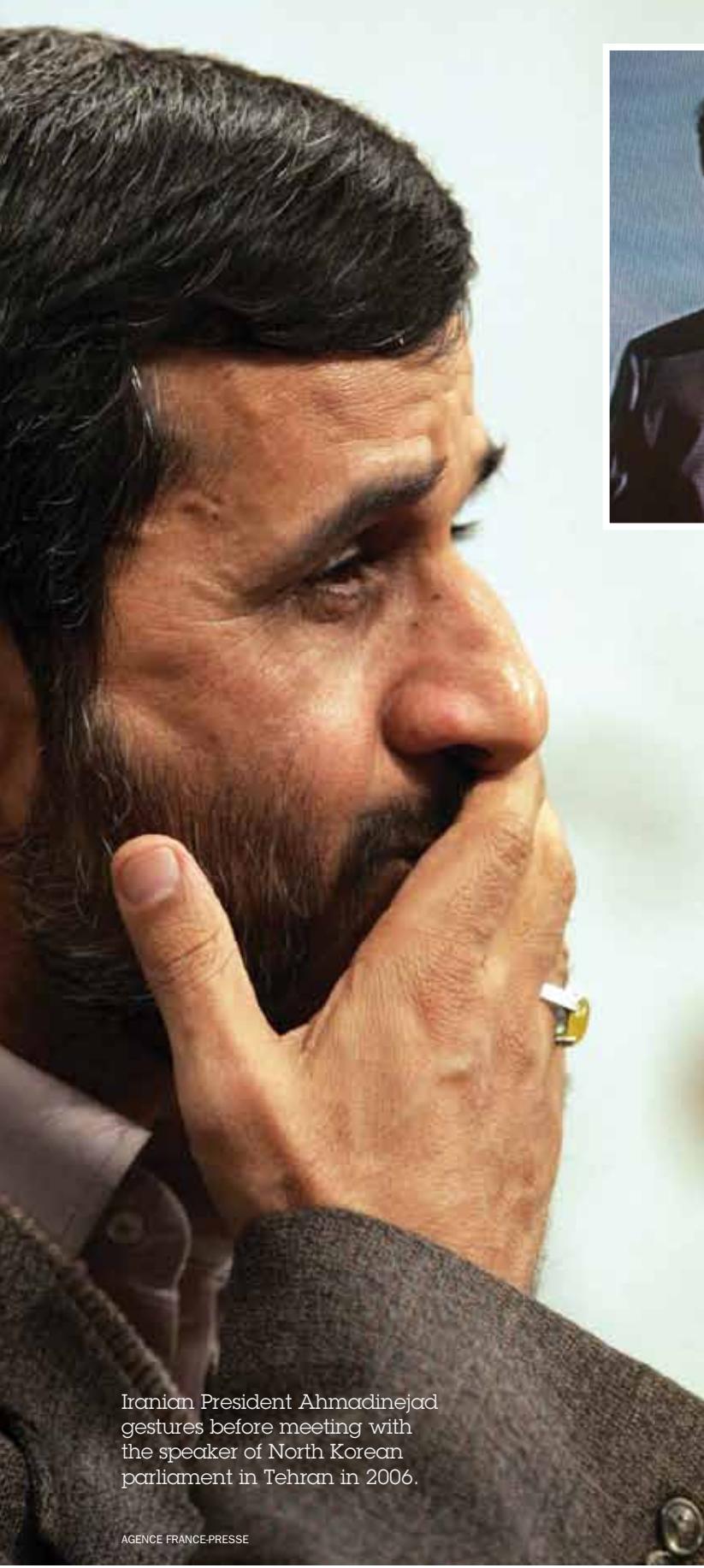
AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad shakes hands with the speaker of North Korean parliament, Che Tai Bek, in Tehran in 2006.

There is a relationship no one in the international community wants to see flourish. Yet the cooperation between North Korea and Iran — a country with demonstrated nuclear potential and one with budding aspirations, respectively — continues to deepen.

For years, North Korea has played a big brother role to Iran when it comes to nuclear know-how. Though the dynamic isn't the only example of state actors or organizations with extreme ideologies and intentions working together, it represents one of the most unsettling and widely watched collaborations in the Asia-Pacific region.

Over the past two decades, Iran's ballistic missile program has relied "very heavily" on components from North Korea, according to a Massachusetts Institute of Technology report published in 2009. Three of Iran's four missile systems have "essentially identical" flight characteristics to those from North Korea, *The Christian Science Monitor* newspaper reported.



Iranian President Ahmadinejad gestures before meeting with the speaker of North Korean parliament in Tehran in 2006.

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AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

North Korean leader Kim Jong Il appears in TV footage in October 2006 after North Korea tested its first nuclear explosive device. It conducted a second nuclear test in May 2009, according to GlobalSecurity.org.

“Here we have a country [North Korea] that has reneged on all of its international commitments and gone nuclear against the advice of all the international community. Other countries considering to do the same will now be watching and drawing conclusions,” Yigal Palmor, a spokesman for Israel’s foreign ministry, said in a May 2009 *Christian Science Monitor* article. (Although Israel is widely believed to have also developed nuclear weapons, the country has never officially acknowledged having them.)

The domino effect

Experts have long speculated on how North Korea’s nuclear weapons testing in 2006 would affect Iran. Some say that North Korea’s defiance would embolden Iran and provide a blueprint for how it could sidestep sanctions.

“If we have a strong negative reaction and North Korea is punished, that might influence the Iranians’ thinking,” said Jon Wolfsthal, an expert on nonproliferation at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington-based public policy research institution. He commented in a Council on Foreign Relations story about the domino effect of North Korea’s actions on Iran.

Since at least 2007, there have been published reports about increased activity between North Korea and Iran, with Iranian nuclear scientists meeting with their North Korean counterparts to trade information.



Suspects, alleged members of Al-Qaida in Aceh, await their hearing in a Jakarta courtroom in August 2010. They face charges including carrying out acts that caused "terror or fear," possessing illegal firearms and participating in militant training.

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QUESTIONABLE COLLABORATIONS big and small

Collaborations between state and government entities with less than noble intentions aren't the only ones raising eyebrows. Smaller and sometimes lesser known violent extremist organizations often pool resources to seize on a community's vulnerability and spread terrorism.

A group of 71 people arrested in March 2010 during police raids at a terrorist camp in Aceh, Indonesia, didn't train there but came together "to work for a common cause," according to *The Jakarta Post* newspaper.

"Whoever wants to participate in jihad is welcome to join," former Jemaah Islamiya member Nassir Abbas told the *Post* in March 2010.

Provinces such as Aceh lure terrorist networks because the region has yet to create a stable environment to sustain peace after years of violence, *The Jakarta Post* reported in a special report on the crackdown of terrorist training camps in Aceh.

"It is easier in these areas to source firearms, explosives and manpower," Ansyaaad Mbai, a retired inspector general and head of the anti-terror division at the Coordinating Political, Legal and Security Affairs Ministry in Indonesia, told the *Post* in March 2010.



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Suspected militants await trial at West Jakarta District Court in Jakarta, Indonesia, in August 2010.

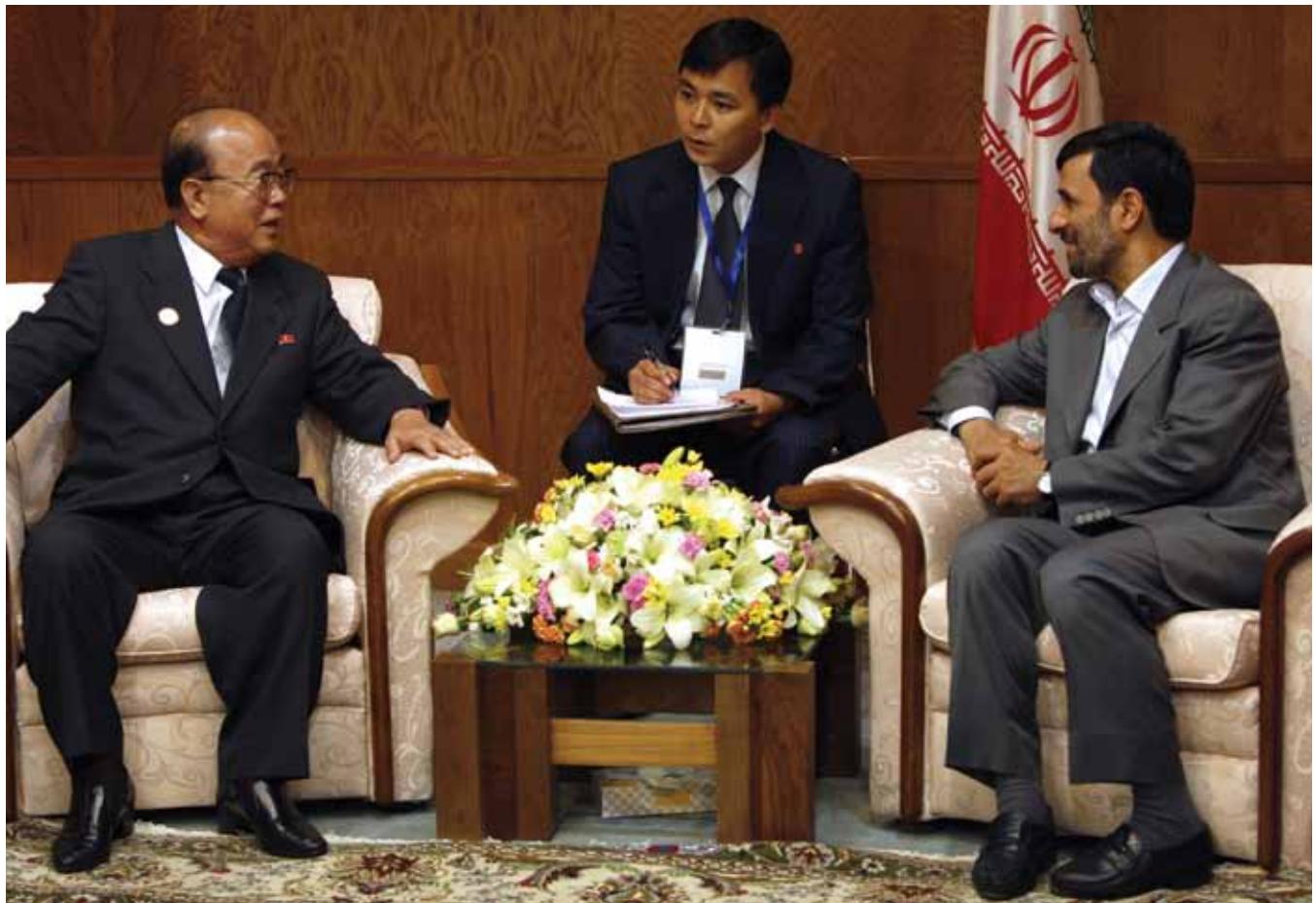
Terrorist groups may also be drawn to Aceh because it's near the Malacca Strait, enabling the ready smuggling of drugs and weapons through Thailand and Burma, the *Post* reported.

Despite the continued challenges of new, more sophisticated terror cells popping up and combining, authorities in Indonesia credit increased arrests to their crackdown. The most significant came this year when radical cleric Abu Bakar Bashir was again detained — his third arrest since the 2002 bombings in Bali.

The Indonesian government calls it a significant step in the right direction. Terrorism experts say it shows Indonesia's confidence in their case against Bashir this time.

"It's a mark of police confidence that they would go forward with this arrest," Sidney Jones, a terrorism expert with the International Crisis Group, said in an August 2010 *Financial Times* newspaper report.

Jones also told the newspaper that Bashir's arrest "attests to the weakening of the radical networks."



Ahmadinejad, right, meets with North Korea's Foreign Minister Pak Ui-Chun, left, in 2008 in Tehran.

And in 2010, a researcher for a nuclear intelligence center produced a paper questioning the added synergism China brings to the North Korea-Iran relationship.

"While the international community is facing a nuclear stalemate with Iran and North Korea, China is increasingly emerging as a Great Wall in blocking the path toward sanctions and peaceful resolutions of the Iranian nuclear crisis and denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula," researcher Christina Y. Lin writes in an analysis titled "China, Iran, and North Korea: A Triangular Strategic Alliance."

Lin's work, published by Israel's Global Research in International Affairs Center, explores the partnerships between the three countries and what she calls the "negative spillover" that could threaten regional stability in East Asia and the Middle East.

"While much recent literature has been written on the deleterious effects

of a regional nuclear arms race should Iran become a nuclear power, there has been relatively little effort to explore why China persistently defends Iran by blocking or watering down UNSC [U.N. Security Council] sanctions and on the strategic partnership between Iran and North Korea in missile and nuclear collaboration," Lin writes.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has urged Iran to comply with the U.N. Security Council resolutions about the country's nuclear activity and wants Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency. The agency has faced resistance from Iran as it tries to investigate whether the country is using its nuclear program to produce weapons.

"Let us be clear. The onus is on Iran to clarify the doubts and concerns about its program," Ban said in May 2010 at a Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty review conference in New York. □

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Normal story length is 1,000 words. Lengthy articles will be returned for revision before further consideration. Be sure to include attribution; quotes from subject-matter experts add weight to a story and provide a human element. Be wary of incorrect or outdated facts — they can ruin the author's and the magazine's credibility. **FORUM** uses *The Associated Press Stylebook* for text and grammar standards. Please include a cover letter with the article and a short biography with contact information.

We do not accept fiction, poetry or reviews. Photos, artwork or graphs should have a resolution of 300 DPI, a physical size of at least 5 by 7 inches and be submitted in high-resolution JPG file format.

Attach JPG files directly to an e-mail and supply a separate word document with captions and photo credits. Please don't embed photos in your story document. Make sure photos are in sharp focus and pertain to the story. Captions need to clearly identify the people and actions in the photos and include the photographer's name. Please send five or more photos, the standard amount for a magazine layout, although not all may be used.

Authors are invited to write and submit articles in their native language. All submissions will be reviewed in a timely manner.

UPCOMING TOPICS:

Upcoming topics for issues 3 and 4 are Facilitating Stability and Threat Finance. But all interesting articles relating to Asia-Pacific Region security, partnership and terrorism will be considered.

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Members of Iran's Revolutionary Guard participate in a Quds Day demonstration in 2007. One covers his chest with a portrait of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah.

ANALYSIS



COUNTERING THE THREAT LURKING IN IRAN

STORY BY FRED GEDRICH
PHOTOS BY AGENCIE FRANCE-PRESSE

One of the greatest dangers to Middle East peace and security is the threat of Shiite Islamic extremism emanating from Iran. The leaders of Iran's Islamic Republic seek to create a power base of like-minded regimes stretching across the upper tier of the predominantly Sunni Muslim Arab world (Iraq, Syria and Lebanon). Their prime instruments for doing so are the notorious Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, the Quds Force, terror proxies such as Hezbollah and Hamas, and generations of Shiite and Palestinian youth indoctrinated on Islamic law and Islamic extremism. If that isn't bad enough, Iran stands on the precipice of developing nuclear weapons capability in defiance of a series of United Nations resolutions and sanctions.

The immediate and principal aims of Iran's ruling theocrats are to drive the United States out of Muslim countries and destroy Israel and fragile democracies in Afghanistan, Iraq and Lebanon.

Fred Gedrich is a foreign policy and national security analyst who served in the U.S. departments of state and defense.



Iranian opposition supporters protest, flashing the "V" sign for victory in Tehran in September 2009 during a rally. Tens of thousands of Iranians protested against President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's re-election three months earlier.

Controlling the region's energy wealth with China and Russia is also a chief goal.

The youth are a particular focus for perpetuating and exporting the Iranian Revolution. Generations of Shiite and Palestinian youth in Iran, Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza, and elsewhere in the Middle East have been raised on sacred Islamic (Sharia) law and Islamic extremism. The indoctrination of youth begins practically at birth. Palestinian mothers sing lullabies to their infants about killing Jews. In nursery school, children are indoctrinated with plays, skits and songs about heroic "martyrdom," which train them from an early age to yearn to blow themselves up as "shaheed," what Islam calls "martyrdom." The term, which derives from Quranic verses and authenticated ahadith, refers to a Muslim who has been killed waging jihad "fi sabilillah," or "in the way of Allah."

Classroom and mosque lessons reinforce Islamic supremacy, jihad and the Sharia law imperative. Children begin pre-military training in early grades. Glorification of death and killing assault

the young from every perspective: television, radio, videos, video games, street processions and funerals, placards and posters of "shaheeds" plastered on street corners. Al-Manar and Palestinian Television, paid for with Iranian money, beam nonstop hatred of Jews and infidels.

The youth are the next generation of Islamic jihad, which is written into the Iranian Constitution, together with Quranic verse 8:60. Iran's theocratic leaders believe youth are essential to safeguarding Iran's Islamic Revolution, expanding it to neighboring states, and protecting the regime from domestic and foreign enemies. It's not necessarily "radicalization" but putting into practice the Islamic doctrine of Progressive Revelation of the Quranic message, just as Sayyid Qutb wrote in "Milestones," a jihadi field manual.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, or IRGC, led by Maj. Gen. Mohammad Ali Jafari, exports the revolution through its notorious Quds Force. Quds, which means "Jerusalem" in Arabic, references their intent to take Jerusalem. The force, led by Brig. Gen.



Qassem Suleimani, has about 20,000 highly trained personnel specializing in international terrorism, armed conflict and support of terror proxies or external groups acting on behalf of the Quds. Groups such as Shiite Hezbollah in Lebanon and Sunni Hamas in Gaza and the West Bank are tethered to a nexus of terror lifeline stretching from Iran's and Syria's terrorist states to their prime bases of operations.

While hundreds of thousands of Iranian youth, especially from poorer provinces, towns and villages, rally to the call of jihad, there are problems. Iranian youth in increasingly larger numbers from other parts of the country are turning away from Sharia and the command to jihad. And the declining country birthrate has become an issue. That's why Iraqi, Lebanese and Palestinian proxies are even more important than ever for Iranian mullahs.

The use of proxies is effective because it is relatively cheap, and history has shown that there is little support among international community members for taking direct military action against Iran and its proxies. The Quds Force supports proxies in

such places as Afghanistan, Bahrain, Gaza and the West Bank, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen. The Quds Force reportedly has a presence in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Venezuela. It has also established a global network of sleeper cells it plans to activate if Iran is ever attacked.

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini created the IRGC in 1979 primarily to safeguard the ideal of his Shiite Islamic Revolution; protect his regime from domestic and foreign enemies; and export his brutal brand of Islamic fundamentalism, influence and terrorism to neighboring states. With the consent of the Iranian regime, some current IRGC members participated in seizing the American embassy in 1979 and holding 52 hostages for 444 days — in violation of international law and centuries of diplomatic protocols. Its Quds Force used Hezbollah proxies to target and bomb the U.S. embassy and the Marine Barracks in Lebanon, bomb U.S. residences in Saudi Arabia, and kidnap and murder American captives (such as William Buckley and U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Col. William Higgins). The Quds Force now manufactures and supplies lethal



HEZBOLLAH'S TERROR TV

Hezbollah launched its Al-Manar television station in 1991 to spread the Iranian version of radical Islam. The paramilitary group uses the medium to incite hatred and violence, recruit and train youths and adults, fundraise and more. For example, on November 11 of each year, on what the station calls "Martyr's Day," Al-Manar programs a marathon of speeches glamorizing suicide bombers. Its extremist messages reach as many as 15 million people a day by some estimates.

Many satellite operators worldwide have terminated Al-Manar broadcasts. In 2008, the German government outlawed the station to protect Germany from radicalization. Similarly, many satellite companies cut Al-Manar transmissions as soon as they realized the nature of its content and its ties to Hezbollah, *The Wall Street Journal* newspaper reported.

Despite efforts by the international community to terminate Al-Manar's transmissions, Indonesian IndoSat and the Russian RSCC support Hezbollah's services, according to the Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center. These communication companies provide Al-Manar TV to Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, North and South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, China, India, Iran, Southern Russia, Oceania and Central Asia, the center reports. Qatar Telecom controls about 65 percent of IndoSat, which plans to offer coverage to Southeast Asia and South Asia for the next decade.

FORUM Staff

roadside bombs (IEDs) to Shiite militias in Iraq and the Taliban in Pakistan and Afghanistan that kill and maim American troops and countless civilians.

The IRGC operates independently from Iran's regular military — reporting directly to Iran's current Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. It currently has about 200,000 members assigned to special army, air force, navy and intelligence units in all 30 of Iran's provinces. At the behest of the Supreme Leader in 2009, the IRGC operatives (Basij militia) cracked down on innocent Iranians protesting the questionable re-election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (former IRGC member) and the Islamic Republic's 31st anniversary celebration.

The IRGC has become a vast military-based conglomerate, with control of Iran's missile batteries, oversight of its nuclear program and a multibillion-dollar business empire reaching into nearly every sector of the economy. Further complicating matters, the IRGC oversees at least seven nuclear facilities including those at Isfahan, Natanz and Qom. And the IRGC Quds Force operates at least 20 terrorist training centers including the Imam Ali Training Garrison, Tehran; Bahonar Garrison near Karaj Dam; and the Abouzar Garrison, Ahwaz, Khuzestan province. Lethal roadside bombs are produced by Sattari Industries in Tehran's Lavizan District. IRGC and Quds Force headquarters are located in Tehran, the latter in the former U.S. embassy.

In its continuing war against Israel and others, IRGC Quds Force and terror proxies such as Hezbollah and Hamas routinely violate Geneva Conventions and protocols with impunity. These terror groups have shrewdly and callously exploited civilized rules of warfare to their advantage without rebuke.

In Lebanon where about 10,000 of its members are deployed, the IRGC Quds Force has an important command control center at the Iranian Embassy in Beirut in charge of coordinating tactical activity with Hezbollah in Dahyia, a Southern Beirut suburb. Intelligence reports also say most of Hezbollah artillery and missile bases in Southern Lebanon are under the direct supervision of Quds Force officers dispersed in secret hideaways south and north of the Litani River. The Quds Force also manages radar systems mounted on the peaks of Mount Lebanon and military training camps in the Bekaa Valley. After six-months of basic training, the best candidates are sent to Iran for further specialization.

In South America, the IRGC Quds Force is reportedly sponsoring Hezbollah training camps in Venezuela's Guajira Peninsula and elsewhere in Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay. The Quds force is also establishing a presence in Africa, where many expatriate Lebanese businessmen reside.

To date, policies employed by the United Nations, the United States and others to counter



FORUM ILLUSTRATION

Iranian Nuclear Sites

■ Research reactors

■ Uranium mine

● Nuclear Facilities

Arak.....Heavy water plant

Bushehr.....Nuclear power station

Isfahan.....Uranium conversion plant

Natanz.....Uranium enrichment plant

Qom.....Uranium enrichment plant



Source: BBC News Middle East

the belligerent activities of the Iranian regime, including the IRGC Quds Force and Hezbollah, have proved ineffective. For example, the U.N. Security Council attempted to curb Iran's nuclear development program by passing a resolution for Hezbollah to dismantle and disarm.

President Ahmadinejad's triumphant visits to Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and the U.N. during the past few years; Iran's continued work on its nuclear development program; Iran's continued terrorist supporting activities; Hezbollah's continued defiance of the international community's resolution for it to disarm and dismantle its organization; and the continued willingness of countries such as Germany, Japan, China and Russia to do business with Iran render current sanctions ineffective. Since formation of Iran's Islamic Republic in 1979, they have not changed the behavior of the theocratic regime and its terror entities and proxies.

Recently, Hezbollah forced the collapse of the Lebanese government. That action could lead to more sectarian violence in Lebanon, increase influence of U.S.-designated terror states Syria and Iran, in Lebanese affairs, and set the stage for another Israeli/Hezbollah War that could escalate into a wider Middle East conflict.

The time has come for the U.S. and its international community allies to intelligently recalibrate their overall strategy to counter the current Iranian threat. Otherwise, a nuclear-armed Iran will emerge and further menace the region and the world.

At a minimum, they should, first, encourage

Iranian opposition and resistance groups and dissidents, including "Green Revolution" participants, to combine efforts to peacefully change Iran's government. If the Iranian regime tries to crush the uprising as it did in 2009, they should be willing to immediately provide overt and covert aid. It is much preferable for the Iranian regime to collapse from within rather than by any other means. The collapse of the Islamic Republic would also make it more likely that Iran's nuclear program would be peaceful and inevitably destroy the IRGC and the Quds Force and starve terror groups such as Hezbollah of the vital support they are currently receiving from Iran.

Second, better educate the general public, especially young people, in Iran's sphere of influence in public communication venues not controlled by governments and clerics (Internet, cell phones, etc.) on the ideas and opportunities present in the modern world as opposed to Islamic dogmatism.

Third, inform Iran's leaders that it must stop developing its nuclear program immediately and verifiably and stop providing funding, weapons, and training to militias throughout the Middle East. If Iran fails to cease these activities, the consequences could be selective air strikes on nuclear facilities, improvised explosive device factories, terror training centers, and the special navy, air force, and ground units of the Revolutionary Guard Corps, including Quds Force components. History shows that diplomacy and economic sanctions will not succeed with a terrorist aggressor such as Iran without a viable military option on the table. □



Burma's Folly

IN SEARCH OF GOOD GOVERNANCE AFTER A SHAM ELECTION

FORUM STAFF

November 7, 2010 — the day of the first elections in Burma in 20 years — came and went. The exercise proved pure chicanery. In the aftermath of the vote, little has changed for citizens of the nation, as analysts widely predicted. Things may in fact be worse to the extent that the election consolidated the military's power and conferred legitimacy on the junta, if only in the eyes of some investors.

To this day, Burma is among the world's most militarized places. Despite solid laws on the books, Burma's "rule of law" remains suspended. Its human rights record is abysmal. It leads the world in the use of child soldiers with more than 70,000. Human rights organizations estimate 1 to 3 million people have been displaced from their homes throughout Burma, and several million more have fled illegally into Thailand.

Outgoing de facto head of state Than Shwe, 76, has relinquished his post as promised. However, post-election, the ruling military junta, through its proxy the Union Solidarity and Development Party, has only tightened its grip on the reins of power, suppressing dissenters, controlling every aspect of daily life through its repression apparatus and becoming even less accountable. The junta, which has effectively held power since 1962, remains exclusively Burmese or ethnic Burman, despite the fact that 130 ethnic groups make up roughly 40 percent of the population and reside in half of Burma's 14 states.



A man plows a rice paddy in the outskirts of Rangoon in June 2010. The Burmese army has forced many ethnic farmers from their ancestral lands.

REUTERS

As the election approached, the ruling junta accelerated the pace at which it was selling off the nation's natural resources to foreign firms, mainly in China, regardless of intensified international sanctions. Burma's deposits of oil, natural gas, gems, precious metals as well as its lush teak forests are enough for some nations to turn a blind eye to its abysmal human rights record and brutal method of governance. In the past few years, the prevailing political situation has concentrated wealth in the coffers of the ruling class, and the gap between these military and business elites and the general populace is only expanding under the new regime.

While at minimum a third of the 50 million-strong nation lives in poverty, subsisting on U.S. \$15 per month, the Burmese elite live in gated communities. Regime-connected "businessman" Tay Za regularly cruises in his yellow Lamborghini through the pockmarked streets, serving as a poignant symbol of the disparity.

A GRAND CHARADE

Many Burma watchers considered the election a sham before a single ballot was cast. For a start, the 2008 constitution allotted 25 percent of seats in both houses of parliament to military candidates, and the process lacked fair rules for registration of parties and candidates. For example, non-Burmese ethnic groups with standing armies, such as the Karen and the Wa, were excluded from the elections unless they joined a central border force. Moreover, the new arrangement includes establishing an authoritative national defense and security council void of democratic oversight.

Meanwhile, the regime kept prominent pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi under house arrest until after the elections and effectively banned her from running. Her party, the National League for Democracy, or NLD, overwhelmingly won the last election in 1990, but the junta prevented Suu Kyi from governing. She won the election and the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991 for her nonviolent campaign for



Members of the Free Burma Coalition Philippines demand the release of Burma's elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi and denounce the sham 2010 Burma elections in front of the Burmese embassy in Manila in September 2010 on the third anniversary of the so-called Saffron Revolution.

CONTROL of Media



THINKSTOCK

The regime has tightly controlled the Burmese media for more than 48 years. In fact, the regime was so good at it that the country perpetually ranks among the 10 worst nations when it comes to freedom of the press, according to Reporters Without Borders. After images were broadcast worldwide of the 2007 Saffron Revolution, when burgundy-robed monks led thousands of protestors demanding reforms only to be suppressed by machine gun fire that killed at least 31 people, the junta stepped up efforts to control the Internet. The government has blocked websites containing “suspicious” words — such as “democracy” — imprisoned cyber rebels and launched cyber attacks that deny service to news sources deemed unacceptable, such as the Thailand-based *Irawaddy News*. FORUM Staff

democracy from her jail cell. Although 37 parties participated in the election, the regime banned 10, including the NLD, which dissolved in protest. The regime allowed Suu Kyi to cast a ballot by mail and released her and 2,200 other political prisoners after the election. Suu Kyi, 65, had been under house arrest most of the past 20 years. The junta also banned international poll monitors and foreign journalists from covering the elections.

Observers remain underwhelmed. “Any government that emerges from the elections is highly likely to be just a facade over ongoing military rule,” said Sean Turnell, an economist at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia, who specializes in Burma. He offered his thoughts to *FORUM* via e-mail. “In this, there is quite a tradition and pattern in Burma. For instance, as far ago as 1974 the then-military rulers did something similar, and pretended a civilian government was in place for nearly 14 years (before the military unmasked itself once more, during the uprisings of 1988).”

“It is inconceivable, given everything they continue to do, that the regime (the military, the connected elites) are really about to surrender either power or the wealth they have been able to assemble from it,” Turnell wrote. “Seen in the light of ‘incentives’ (I am an economist after all), anything other than this seems very naïve.”

Under the guise of privatization, the regime divvied up and distributed a vast amount of state assets to regime-connected cronies in the time leading up to the election. It’s unlikely the new regime would suddenly devalue the economic “rent”

such cronies captured via the monopolies and semi-monopolies that they now control. “Unfortunately, genuine economic reform seems a distant prospect. Again, the incentives of the key players matter,” Turnell wrote.

“Just having an election is not going to change things much,” Alfred Oehlers, professor at the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, said in a *FORUM* interview. “But the challenge of change lies not only in flawed electoral processes. After decades of neglect, the entire structure of governance in Burma is weak and handicapped by severe capacity deficits, a lack of transparency and accountability, widespread corruption, and a general malaise in processes, principles, and values.”

“The junta has no intentions on having ‘good governance’ as the civilized world knows it,” agreed Tim Heinemann, retired dean of academics at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. “The structure of governance is designed to exploit Burma’s human and natural resources for the profit of a small exclusive club of Burmese generals and billionaires.”

MILITARY DOMINANCE

To seize and control ethnic groups’ ancestral lands rich in natural resources, for example, the Burmese military has burned an estimated 3,500 villages in Eastern Burma alone, forcing 470,000 non-Burmese ethnics to flee the country since 1996, according to a 2009 report by the Thailand Burma Border Consortium, a nongovernmental organization based in the United Kingdom. The military often mines the land so



Internally displaced people hide in the jungle after the Burmese army burned their village.

villagers can't return, effectively destroying their culture because rice farming is central to their way of life, the report explains. The military has forced more than 800,000 others to work in so-called "relocation" camps, which offer atrocious living conditions and also serve to destabilize ethnic populations, as the consortium has extensively documented.

Along with its "scorched earth" campaigns, the Burmese army controls strategic villages to extract food, supplies and services through intimidation by randomly killing rice farmers en route to the fields, women, forced laborers and even

children, according to organizations such as Free Burma Rangers. "It is the unpredictable nature of these killings that creates continuous fear," says Heinemann, who in 2004 founded a nonprofit called Worldwide Impact Now with his wife to assist with human rights reporting and ethnic human capacity-building and support the pro-democracy movement in Burma. The Burmese military also resorts to raping and dismembering women and girls to maintain control, various groups report.

In many villages, women must step forward to lead because the Burmese army has murdered



WORLDWIDE IMPACT NOW

most of the men. For example, the Karen Women's Organization recounts the tribulations of these "iron ladies," who range in age from 25 to 82, in the sobering February 2010 report "Walking Amongst Sharp Knives." On a daily basis, these women confront the army's systematic and wanton murder, rape, torture, brutalization and extortion of villagers. "These women chiefs are unsung heroes," said Blooming Night Zan, the organization's joint secretary. "They are placing themselves not only at the front line of the abuses by the Burma Army, but also at the forefront of the struggle for gender equality in Burma."

Gen. Than Shwe's systematic control failed every other category of governance as well. During his last year in office, for example, the Burmese government harbored more than U.S. \$5 billion from foreign direct investment in its reserves, according to International Monetary Fund figures, yet it spent less than U.S. \$1 per capita on health, education and welfare per year. "The destruction of the health and education systems has not happened through negligence, it has been a large element of the government's strategy to subjugate the people," Heinemann said. "It is easier to control people who are badly educated and in poor health."



A farmer plants rice seedlings outside Rangoon. The Burmese army extracts food and supplies from villagers through intimidation.

REUTERS

How big is BURMA'S MILITARY?

Andrew Selth, a Burma scholar at Australia's Griffith Asia Institute, estimated its strength at 300,000 to more than 600,000 members in a September 2010 article in *East Asia Forum*. Even at the low end, the number places its army as the second largest in Southeast Asia, he writes. "Then again, it is not the size of the Tatmadaw [armed forces] that really matters, but what it is able and willing to do to enforce the military government's will over the civilian population. Looking back over Burma's recent history, in particular the army's harsh response to the 2007 'Saffron Revolution,' that appears to be almost anything." *FORUM Staff*

INTERNATIONAL STAGE

Burma's strategy on the international front seems just as calculated. The junta has built one of Asia's largest standing armies. The regime has also sought closer ties with China and Russia, permanent members of the U.N. Security Council. "They're much less isolationist than we think, although they choose their friends carefully," activist Benedict Rogers told *Time* magazine. "Those friends tend to be countries that turn a blind eye to their conduct." To bolster trade and build alliances, Burma joined the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, in 1997.

Perhaps Burma's desperation to secure some type of legitimacy on the world stage is why it continues to pursue its nuclear ambitions. Although there have been claims on activist websites and in some newspapers that Burma was developing a secret nuclear weapons program, none had been substantiated at press time. "Whether Burma will have the wherewithal remains to be seen," Macquarie University's Turnell wrote. "Many respected commentators are totally at odds on the nuclear issue. My own feeling is that the regime wants to create doubt — this gives them options." But options are exactly what the citizens of Burma are not getting from their government.

There are grounds for guarded optimism, however, according to Oehlers at the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies. "Despite draconian rules around the conduct of the November elections, we see brave Burmese forming political parties and campaigning for support. Ethnic minorities, community, self-help and nongovernmental groups, together with political activists and dissidents, have seized the opportunity to organize," he explained. Like many authoritarian regimes of the past,

Members of the National Democratic Force hand out fliers in October 2010 in Bago, 100 kilometers north of Rangoon, as they campaign for votes in the Burmese elections, which proved to be a sham in terms of approximating true democratic rule.



REUTERS

Burma's military junta may not be able to turn back the process that's been set in motion. "Despite the regime's best efforts to script the future, all this will be uncharted territory for it. Subject to the push and pull of political forces, will it accommodate or resist? What level of tolerances are we likely to see?" Oehlers wonders. Mounting international pressure for a U.N. Commission to investigate war crimes committed by the regime is further incentive for the ruling junta to change its ways. □

STRATEGIC TRIANGLE



Russia, India and China form a triad to boost security and resources

STORY BY FORUM STAFF
PHOTOS BY AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

A light rain fell on Russia's largest port city on June 2, 2005, causing three foreign ministers to walk through a 15-degree C chill. As the 600,000 inhabitants of Vladivostok went about fishing and building ships, a small brief on the front page of the *Vladivostok Times* belied the importance of the summit.

The meeting the three men attended later that day would have been inconceivable in 1998, when then Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov thought of the idea as a way to curb U.S. influence. Many people scoffed at the notion that Russia could form a strategic alliance with China and India, but Primakov already had a name for it: the "strategic triangle."



Moscow

Beijing

New Delhi

The way Primakov saw it, Moscow, Beijing and New Delhi had to come together to counter the United States' expanding influence and the spread of democracy across Central Asia at that time. But China and India weren't ready for such a pact, as *Pravda* newspaper reported. For a start, they still had unsolved border disputes, some still lingering from the Sino-Indian War in 1962. Late in the war, Russia sold military hardware to India after the U.S. refused India's request for military assistance. Plus a host of other issues remained unsettled, such as China's steady transfer of military technology to Pakistan, according to security analysts.

But less than a decade later, the political winds had changed and so had the national interests of the three key players. Other trends, which continue to build today, also favored such an allegiance. The foreign ministers from Russia, India and China — Sergey Lavrov, Kunwar Natvar Singh and Li Zhaoxing, respectively — met on that chilly day in Vladivostock, marking the first official assembly of the leaders and the emergence of a coalition commonly referred to as RIC.

These nations' foreign ministers had met informally several times before.

Today Russia, India and China are growing at an extraordinary pace, especially in terms of their combined economies, populations and defense expenditures. Factors related to that growth such as increasing demands for resources also conspire to advance the workings of the strategic triangle. Of course, like most relationships, the bonds between the members of RIC are also increasingly complex, as each may also be the other two countries' greatest competitors — and greatest threats to security — in the Asia-Pacific region. To be sure, the selection of Vladivostok for the 2005 meeting may well prove prophetic. Literally translated, the city's name means "Owner of the East."

POWER BLOC

"Currently, China, India and Russia account for about 40 percent of the world's population, a fifth of its economy and more than half its nuclear warheads," according to *The Times* of London. Geographically



Left to right: Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Indian Foreign Minister Kunwar Natvar Singh answer journalists' questions after their meeting in Russia's Pacific port city of Vladivostok in June 2005.



combined, the three countries make up 20 percent of the Earth's surface, according to *The Economist*.

China will have the largest economy in the world by 2027, according to August 2010 predictions by Goldman Sachs Group's chief economist. Financial experts currently rank China's economy as the second largest in the world. India's and Russia's markets are also on their way to making the world's top 10, according to the Euromonitor blog.

By 2025, India's population will surpass China's, according to the blog. By 2020, Russia is expected to rank higher than Germany to become the fifth-largest economy.

Russia also ranks second in the world for exporting oil, selling at least 70 percent of its oil to other countries, according to a U.S. Energy Information Administration report. With India's population on track to surpass China, both nations are looking at Russia's vast oil reserve. India is already dependent on foreign oil to meet its energy needs, according to a 2010 Reuters report. The report also stated that not only has India invested nearly U.S. \$3 billion in oil ventures, but "it also wants to use Russia's influence over some Central Asia countries to secure energy supplies."

With the economies of China and India exploding, energy resources become more important. And with Russia's oil-rich resources and influence in the area, it's no wonder China and India formed an alliance with Russia. By 2020, China will increase its oil imports from the current 40 percent to 90 percent, according to a U.S. National Intelligence Council report. Experts from the Institute for the Analysis of Global Security predict India's dependency on foreign oil imports in 2020 will increase to nearly 92 percent.

SECURITY ALLIANCE

The viability of the strategic triangle in 2005 hinged on the ability of the three countries to resolve some of their differences and establish relationships, for example, enabling military-to-military cooperation. In the years after Primakov conceived of the alliance, according to Jason D. Söderblom, director of the World-International Community Experts Group, an international security firm, the countries laid the groundwork to do exactly that. Russia became India's leading supplier of military equipment, providing 70 percent of its arsenal. China in turn became Russia's top customer, purchasing nearly half of its military weapons. Both India and Russia



India's military successfully tests a surface-to-surface version of the BrahMos cruise missile in March 2009. The missile was developed jointly with Russia.

Continued on page 52

CHINA'S APPETITE FOR OIL GROWS



FORUM ILLUSTRATION

China's staggering population and economic development brings with it a powerful demand for energy. Constituting 70 percent of China's primary energy source, coal is used at a startling rate. China produces and uses more coal than any other country in the world, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, or EIA. It stores about 104 tons of coal reserves, about 13 percent of the world's total reserves, the EIA reports. However, coal alone will no longer fuel China's massive growth.

To meet related expanding energy needs, China is aggressively securing energy sources. For instance, China and Japan are hotly disputing the ownership of the East China Sea, with its vast reserves of oil and gas. The two countries came to an agreement in 2008 that would allow both countries to jointly develop the area for oil exploration and share in the profits and risks, according to the EIA. Then, in 2009, China declared sovereignty over the area after Japan disputed China's extraction of natural gas from a contested boundary region. The U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea has yet to resolve the issue.

China also claims a portion of the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea — but so have the Philippines, Malaysia, Taiwan and Vietnam.

China continues to use its vast wealth to secure oil rights around the world. China has a loan-for-oil program that has offered countries U.S. \$50 billion total in long-term loans, according to the EIA. China has loaned money to Russia, Brazil, Venezuela, Kazakhstan and Ecuador, and it agreed to a U.S. \$3 billion loan to Turkmenistan to assist in developing the South Iolotan gas field project to feed



the Central Asia Gas Pipeline. The 7000 kilometer pipeline will pump gas from Turkmenistan through Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan to China.

Pepe Escobar summed up the playing field in an article in the *Asia-Pacific Journal*. "Global financial crisis or not, oil and natural gas are the long-term keys to an inexorable transfer of economic power from the West to Asia," Escobar wrote. "Those who control 'Pipelinestan' — and despite all the dreaming and planning that's gone on there, it's unlikely to be Washington — will have the upper hand in whatever's

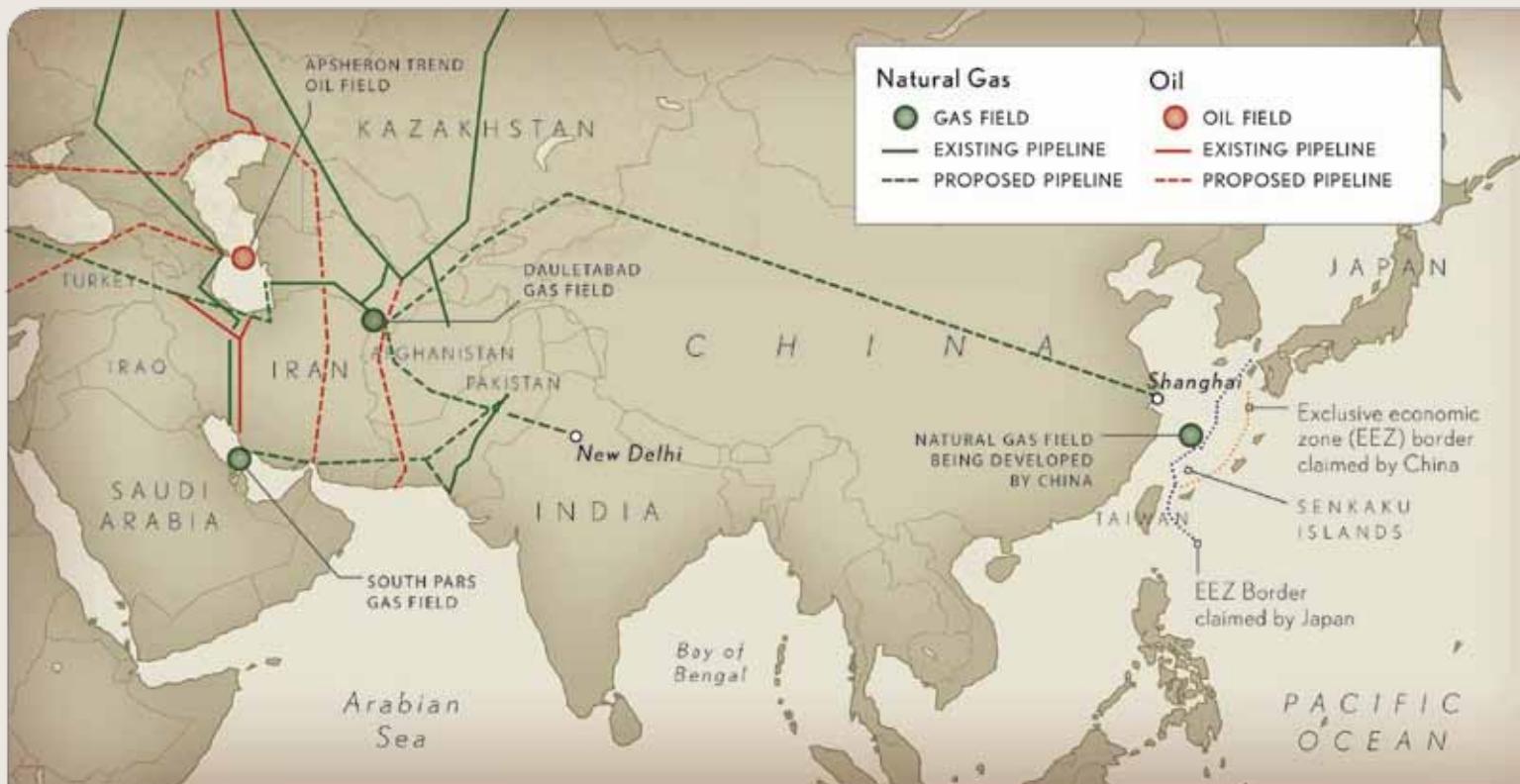
to come, and there's not a terrorist in the world, or even a long war, that can change that."

China also agreed to loan U.S. \$24 billion to Russian oil companies to finance the East Siberia Pacific Ocean oil pipeline in exchange for oil shipments, according to the energy administration. China has also loaned money to Nigeria essentially in exchange for oil. As China improves its oil refining technology, the EIA expects China to look for investments in Iran, Iraq, Syria and Latin America, where it has already secured a U.S. \$4 billion loan to Venezuela

to increase oil exports to China.

In 2006, China increased by 30 percent its trade with members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, according to a Center for Strategic International Studies report called "U.S. Japan Alliance" by Richard Armitage and Joseph Nye.

"While most of ASEAN has benefited from the expanded trade and investment opportunities with China, there has been considerable debate in Asia over how China's economic rise will change the economic, political and security landscape," the report stated.



FORUM ILLUSTRATION



Workers assemble rifles at the Izhmash firearms factory in Izhevsk, Russia, in August 2007. China and India are Russia's best customers for its military hardware.

backed China's claim to Tibet, and all three countries started conducting joint military training with one another.

In June 2001, China and Russia founded the Shanghai Cooperation Organization with other countries including Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. The organization formed to quell border disputes, but it expanded to increase military exercises, share intelligence and cooperate in counterterrorism drills, according to the Council on Foreign Relations.

The three foreign ministers also met informally on the sidelines of the September 2002 U.N. General Assembly. Two months later, India sent its commander in chief of the Central Command, Lt. Gen. Dinesh Singh Chauhan, to meet with the Chinese People's Liberation Army, a first for India, according to the *Executive Intelligence Review*. The meeting took place on the 40th anniversary of the eruption of the 1962 border conflict between both countries.

India also established a military alliance with Russia called the India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Military Technical Cooperation. Defense ministers from both countries have met every year since 2000 to discuss the relationship. In 2002, the two militaries held their first joint exercise. As recently as October 2010, Indian and Russian armed forces held joint anti-terrorism training in a mountainous region near the Chinese border. The Indian-Russian military partnership has evolved beyond Russia just selling India military weapons into a collaborative joint research and development venture, according to india-defence.com. Both militaries have agreed to develop a fifth-generation fighter aircraft. And today, China and India are Russia's best customers for its military hardware, which is a booming business.

The three countries in the RIC alliance share another attribute — expanding military might. China ranks second, Russia fifth and India ninth in the world for military expenditures, according to the *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute Yearbook 2010*. To put the three countries' military spending in perspective, the yearbook compared country expenditures in 2000 and 2009 in U.S. dollars. China's expenditure tripled and Russia's nearly doubled in the past decade. China's climbed from U.S. \$31 billion



Chinese and Russian military officers salute Soldiers in July 2009 after completing Peace Mission 2009.

Currently, China, India and Russia account for about 40 percent of the world's population, a fifth of its economy and more than half its nuclear warheads.

— *The Times of London*

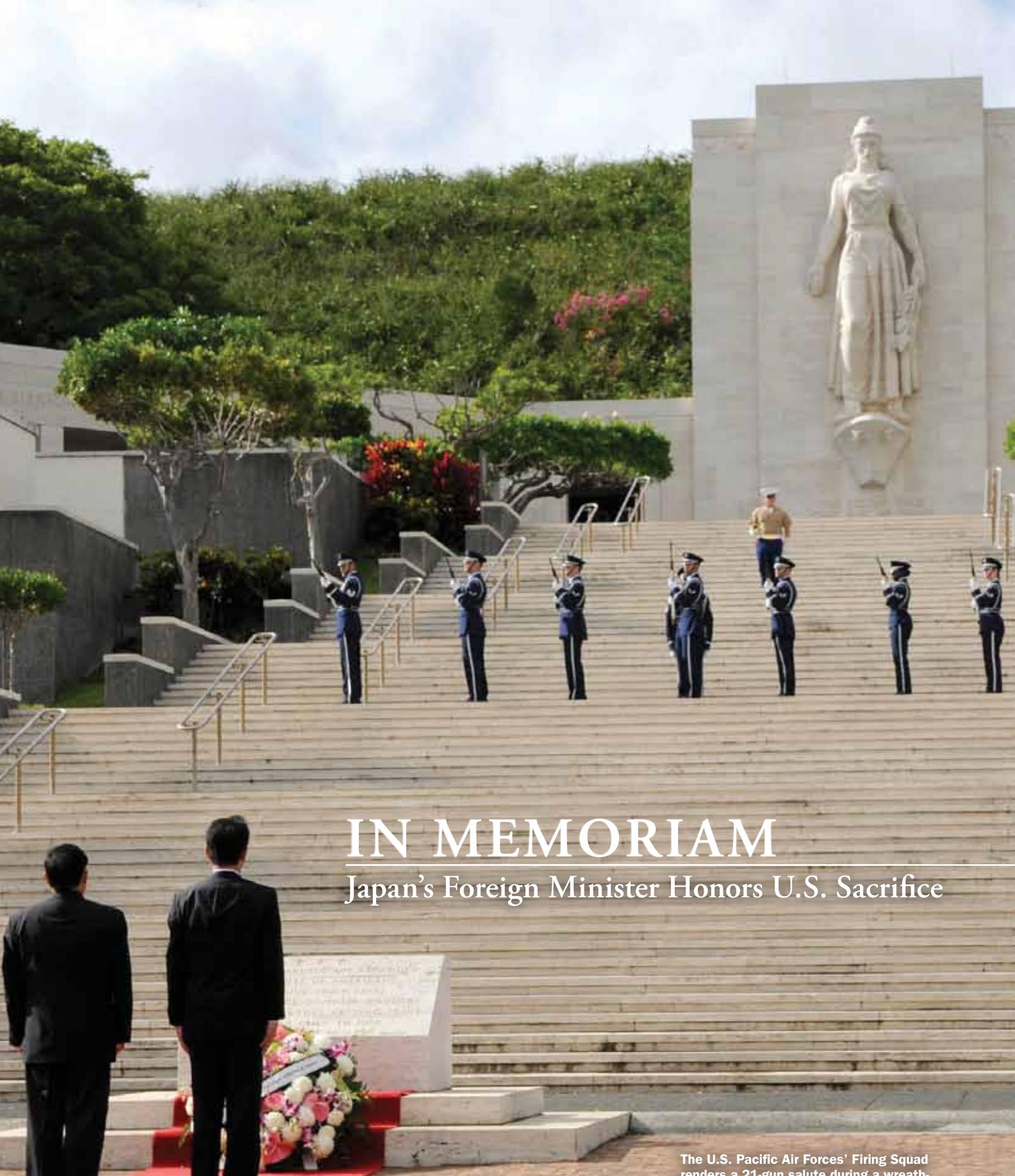


in 2000 to U.S. \$100 billion in 2009, and Russia's from U.S. \$30 billion to U.S. \$61 billion, according to institute estimates. India's grew from U.S. \$22 billion in 2000 to U.S. \$36.3 billion in 2009.

TRIUMVIRATE EVOLVES

In November 2010 in central China's Wuhan city, Indian External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi held the 10th trilateral meeting of the countries. Far from the Cold War intentions of Primakov, they exchanged views on key regional and international issues and reached important consensus on "deepened cooperation," according to a joint statement. The three countries continue to meet annually to negotiate their relationships. The 2011 summit returns to Russia. Whether the countries ultimately become stronger allies or greater competitors remains to be seen.

In the meantime, Vladivostok remains in the spotlight as the city prepares to host the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit in 2012. □



IN MEMORIAM

Japan's Foreign Minister Honors U.S. Sacrifice

The U.S. Pacific Air Forces' Firing Squad renders a 21-gun salute during a wreath-laying ceremony while then-Japanese Foreign Minister Seiji Maehara, right, and Alan Sumimoto, support services supervisor at National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, pay respects.



STORY BY U.S. PACIFIC COMMAND

PHOTOS BY CHIEF PETTY OFFICER KEITH W. DEVINNEY/U.S. NAVY

Japanese Foreign Minister Seiji Maehara paid his respects in October 2010 to U.S. war dead at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, Hawaii. He laid a wreath with orchids and red anthuriums at the cemetery, also known as Punchbowl. He also bowed in honor of those who lost their lives and signed the memorial guest book.

The last time a Japanese official visited the site was in December 2008 when Yohei Kono, Japan's House of Representatives speaker, visited the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. Maehara resigned in March 2011; he was succeeded by Takeaki Matsumoto.

Maehara visited Honolulu to meet with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and U.S. Pacific Command Adm. Robert F. Willard to discuss the Japanese-American alliance, the role of U.S. forces in Japan and the secretary's overall Asia-Pacific strategy. Maehara became foreign minister in September 2010 after Prime Minister Naoto Kan reshuffled his cabinet. Maehara has worked on the relocation of the U.S. Marine base on Okinawa.

After meeting with Maehara and Adm. Willard to discuss regional issues, Clinton traveled throughout the Asia-Pacific region. She visited Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand and Australia. She also met briefly with Chinese State Councilor Dai Bingguo on China's Hainan Island — a last-minute addition to the itinerary. □



Maehara lays a wreath at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific to honor U.S. service members.



The U.S. Pacific Command Joint Service Color Guard renders honors during the wreath-laying ceremony.

East Meets West in the “Last Frontier”



**Indian Army and U.S.
Army Alaska Soldiers
set up security around
a simulated Black
Hawk helicopter during
static loading rehearsal
training as part of Yudh
Abhyas 2010.**

Indian and U.S. Soldiers strengthen partnership during exercise in Alaska

STORY BY U.S. ARMY PACIFIC

PHOTOS BY SPC. ASHLEY M. ARMSTRONG/U.S. ARMY

Ambassadors from the Army of India traveled more than 8,800 kilometers to the foothills of the Chugach Mountains and Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in the U.S. to join their Arctic Warrior hosts the 4th Brigade Combat Team, or BCT, 25th Infantry Division in Exercise Yudh Abhyas 2010.

Yudh Abhyas is a regularly scheduled bilateral, conventional-forces training exercise sponsored by U.S. Army Pacific and the Indian Army. The exercise promotes cooperation between the two militaries, develops U.S. Army Pacific relationships with India and advances interoperability through use of the combined Military Decision-Making Process, battle tracking and maneuvering forces, and exchange of tactics, techniques and procedures.

The 2010 bilateral exercise in November 2010 brought roughly 200 Soldiers from the 6th Infantry Regiment, Republic of India Army, together with paratroopers from the 4/25 BCT (Airborne) Staff and 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment. Collectively, U.S. Army Pacific and Indian Soldiers embarked on a 14-day training event that enriched the defense relationship between the two countries through a variety of cultural exchanges, teamwork and operations. By expanding common ground and sharing tactics, techniques and procedures, Soldiers laid the framework for the focus of the training events, geared toward supporting humanitarian assistance operations and ongoing terrorism deterrence efforts.

Braving the frigid climate of Alaska, Indian Army Soldiers prepared to meet the extreme challenges that U.S. Army Alaska's Arctic Warriors face day to day. Icy terrain, blowing snow and temperatures in the low teens provided the backdrop to what was to become a rewarding experience for all involved.

"The exercise is designed to build lasting friendships through the promotion of cooperation between our two great democracies while sharing training, cultural exchange and improving partner readiness," said U.S. Army Alaska Deputy Commander Col. Mark S. Lowe, acting exercise director. "The relationship between U.S. Army Pacific and the Indian military grows stronger on a day-to-day basis with these training events."

The list of events for the exercise included both classroom instruction and hands-on collective training that brought Soldiers together to share their experiences and to exchange knowledge on tactics and techniques. Indian and American Soldiers conducted the classroom instruction during the command post exercise

portion of the operation, working together through the processes involved in managing a United Nations-style brigade-level tactical headquarters. This tested their abilities to plan and control actions in a bilateral environment and to achieve success in meeting exercise objectives.

The classroom portion of the field training exercise lasted approximately three days and was immediately followed by visits to small- and large-arms weapons ranges, small team assault raids, airborne and forward operating base procedures.

U.S. jumpmasters also explained and demonstrated U.S. procedures involved in conducting a safe and successful jump from a U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster. These steps included airborne sustainment training, aircraft familiarization, and proper exiting and landing techniques, culminating with practice at a 40-foot jump tower.



Soldiers from the Indian Army, front, and U.S. Army Alaska stand ready to receive foreign airborne jump wings during a wing exchange ceremony at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska.

On the day of the airborne operation, the Soldiers met to don their parachutes and conduct the jumpmaster's pre-inspection. More than 400 Soldiers met all tactical objectives and landed safely in the cold, deep snow.

"It was a great feeling being able to jump with our fellow Indian Army paratroopers," said Chief Warrant Officer Cleveland Butler, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4/25 BCT, and a recent graduate from the U.S. Army Airborne School. "This really built a long-lasting bond and comradery that will be embedded in our Airborne community for years to come." □



AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

SOLAR SUMMIT

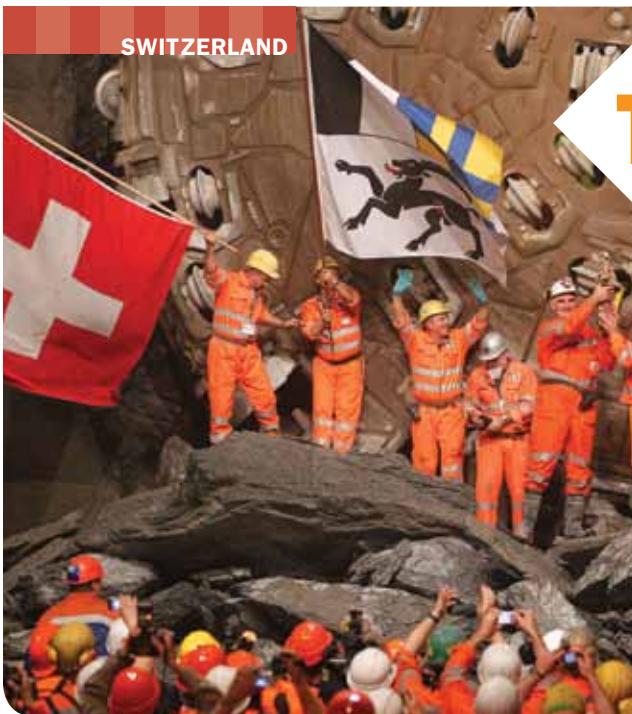
South Africa wooed investors in October 2010 for what could become the world's largest solar project to be built on the edge of the Kalahari Desert (above). The facility could provide an eighth of the country's electricity.

More than 400 investors and solar industry insiders from India, South Korea, Spain and the United States descended on the tiny town of Upington in South Africa's arid Northern Cape province for a conference aimed at laying the

groundwork for a 5,000-megawatt solar park.

Energy Minister Dipuo Peters said the park, whose estimated price tag is 150 billion rand (U.S. \$21.3 billion), would be funded mainly by private developers who would sell power to the national grid.

Peters called the park a "win-win" project. It would move South Africa toward a green economy and help break its dependence on coal, while giving investors a share in one of the world's best locations for solar power. Agence France-Presse



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TUNNEL VISION

Swiss engineers smashed through the last stretch of rock in October 2010 to create the world's longest tunnel. They sparked a national groundswell of elation over a costly, technically difficult project that has been 60 years in the making.

Trumpets sounded, cheers reverberated and even burly workers wiped away tears as foreman Eduard Baer lifted a statue of Saint Barbara — the patron saint of miners — through a small hole in the enormous drilling machine several kilometers underground central Switzerland.

At that moment, a 56-kilometer tunnel was born, and the Alpine nation reclaimed the record from Japan's Seikan Tunnel. The new U.S. \$10 billion Gotthard Base Tunnel, an important milestone in the creation of a high-speed transportation network connecting all corners of Europe, will open in 2017. It will let trains pass under the Alps at speeds up to 250 kilometers per hour en route from Germany to Italy. The Associated Press



REUTERS

EU'S PEOPLE POWER

Europe's people-power initiative, giving European Union citizens the power to propose legislation on the condition of gathering a million signatures, passed into law in December 2010.

Titled the "European Citizens' Initiative," the bid to bring democracy closer to the bloc's half a billion people was approved 628 to 15, with 24 abstentions, by the European Parliament meeting in Strasbourg.

Under the new rules, a petition can be launched by seven people from seven countries — a quarter of the EU's 27 states — gathered in an organizing committee.

But to be turned into action, the petition will have to get backing from 1 million people within a year, with the signatories old enough to vote and coming from a quarter of the EU's member states.

Agence France-Presse



Female POLICE FIGHT Terrorism

Female police have been a key element in the fight against terrorism in Yemen, despite the short time that they have been in the field, according to police officials. The first group of female officers graduated in 2001.

"Female police have participated in advanced operations against terrorists that proved successful, especially carrying out house raids where terrorists were hiding and where women and children were present," Maj. Souad Kamel said.

Training women to serve in the police is a necessity because terrorist organizations increasingly use women to evade investigation or searches, knowing that male officers are less likely to suspect a female operative.

"Women in a conservative society have been used as a tool by terrorists, particularly [for] smuggling of weapons, ammunition and drugs," Kamel said. Al-Shorfa

CHINA'S EXPANDING STRATEGIC FOOTPRINT



ANAND KUMAR IS AN ASSOCIATE FELLOW AT THE INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES IN NEW DELHI, INDIA.

China has recently decided to develop a second seaport in Sri Lanka at Colombo. This port would be in addition to the one already at Hambantota. Along with it, China has also agreed to develop a rail and road link between Yunnan province and Chittagong, a port city of Bangladesh. These steps have consolidated China's presence in India's strategic backyard.

China has been intensifying the development of strategic assets in South Asia for the better part of this decade. It began with the Karakoram highway, which connects China and Pakistan across the Karakoram mountain range through the more than 4,690-meter-high Khunjerab Pass, making it the world's highest highway. Later, the Chinese built ports in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Burma. Though India has friendly relations with all its neighbors barring Pakistan, the greater engagement of Chinese with these countries has allowed them to increase their diplomatic influence over India.

A few years ago, India signed a free trade agreement with Sri Lanka. This agreement proved to be successful and made India its largest trading partner. But the Chinese have now almost undone this advantage by

becoming the largest foreign donor to that country. Last year, the Chinese donated U.S. \$1.2 billion to Sri Lanka, replacing Japan from the top donor spot. This donation came to Sri Lanka at a time when it was fighting a crucial war with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, or LTTE, and after the West — including the United States, United Kingdom and Germany — had started scaling down their assistance to it.

India also helped the Sri Lankan government by providing nonlethal military assistance to fight its war against the LTTE, but it was no match for the military assistance that originated from China and, to a lesser extent, from Pakistan. More recently, Sri Lankan Defense Secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa visited China to further deepen the defense cooperation with Beijing. China reciprocated by agreeing to construct another seaport in Colombo.

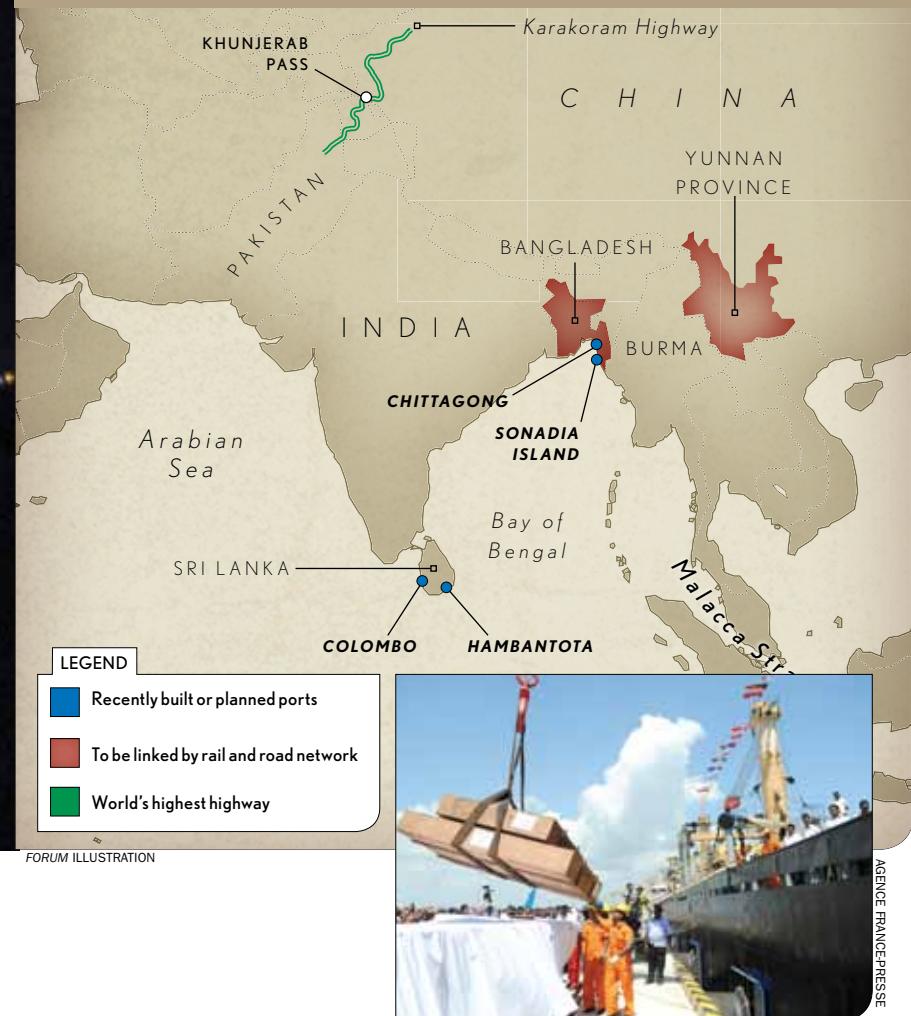
No Indian company showed interest in constructing this port, and for a reason: Indian companies are mostly privately owned, whereas Chinese companies are state owned. The latter are protected by Beijing in times of trouble and benefit from not being hamstrung by shareholder value and profit maximization. They also bid and secure projects, which allow the Chinese state

NEW CONNECTIONS



Sri Lankan workers labor under floodlights at the main port of Colombo in 2009.

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE



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to gain strategic advantage. The construction of the deep-sea port at Hambantota and the latest one in Colombo was precisely to fulfill this latter objective. A strong foothold for the Chinese in Hambantota would allow them to control a vast area of the Indian Ocean extending up to Antarctica.

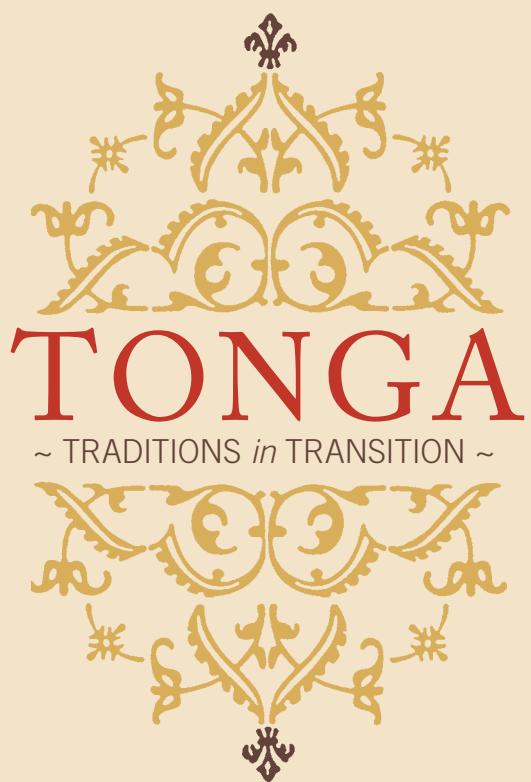
The Chinese relationship with Bangladesh is similar. The countries have now decided to develop the rail and road link between Yunnan province and the Chittagong port. This is a trilateral project of which Burma is also a party. This project would reduce the travel distance between Yunnan and Chittagong. The Chinese already host trans-shipment rights at Chittagong. Now this rail and road link would further increase their presence at Chittagong. In addition, China is planning to construct a deep-sea port at Sonadia island.

Both Sri Lanka and Bangladesh say they want to become trans-shipment hubs in South Asia. Sri Lanka plans to replace Dubai and Singapore as trans-shipment hubs for India. Bangladesh wants to become a trans-shipment hub for goods bound for Nepal, Bhutan and northeast India. China is interested in these ports to protect its sea lines of communication and to secure overland access routes in the event of an unforeseen strategic problem in the Malacca Strait.

In both cases, if Chinese economic interests are served, then India also stands to benefit in a similar fashion. But a problem arises in the strategic sense if one keeps in view the recent muscular foreign policy China has adopted against India. Since there is little hope for India to drive Pakistan away from China, it can only think of working with its other neighbors.

The smaller neighbors of India have tried to play the China card against India to keep their bigger South Asian neighbor under check and to extract the best deals from both. In this situation, overplaying the Chinese threat could also work to India's disadvantage. At the same time, India cannot ignore the ever-growing expansion of Chinese influence in South Asia. As of now, both Sri Lanka and Bangladesh have said that the facilities being developed with China are of a commercial nature only. India's neighbors ought to be acutely aware of the potential that these facilities could be transformed into military outposts.

Source: OpinionAsia, www.opinionasia.com



STORY AND PHOTOS BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

When the Kingdom of Tonga crowned its last ruler, King George Tupou V, in August 2008, the elaborate ceremony was the culmination of almost a week of festivities that included roast pig feasts, tribal rites and British-style pomp and cost more than U.S. \$2.5 million. It was Tonga's first coronation since 1967, when the king's father ascended to the throne. The tab included U.S. \$418,000 for royal robes made in London and U.S. \$37,000 on the newly minted gold scepter — similar to that of Britain's Queen Elizabeth II. At the time, the Oxford-educated King George V became one of the few remaining monarchs with true ruling power and the sovereign of the only Polynesian kingdom.

But that has changed. The king, now 62, kept his promise to cede most of his power to a prime minister and hold parliamentary elections in 2010. His pledge to voluntarily surrender "his powers to



meet the democratic aspirations of many of his people" came after pro-democracy riots shook the small island nation of 120,000 in 2006 and delayed his coronation. During the protests, 80 percent of Tonga's capital of Nuku'Alofa burned to the ground.

The elections held on November 25, 2010, drew more than 38,000 voters to the polls and ushered in a new era in Tonga. The Friendly

many challenges such as mounting poverty and unemployment among its youth as well as resource issues.

Tonga relies heavily on aid and money remitted by citizens living abroad. The World Bank has said 40 percent of the nation's people live near or below the poverty line.

In a parliamentary session prior to the handover of power, King George V said that



Islands Democratic Party, the driving force of Tonga's pro-democracy movement, won 12 of the 17 publicly contested seats. Nobles still hold nine of the 26 total seats.

In sharp contrast to King George V's coronation, the vote passed without pomp and fanfare in the archipelago of 169 islands east of Fiji. In 2008, the king officially became the 23rd head of Tonga's Tu'i Kanokupolu chiefly line in a traditional Tongan ceremony that included an offering of pigs and the imbibing of a narcotic beverage called "kava," as well as the donning of a ceremonial white ermine fur cape and dancing at three formal balls. The ruling line dates to the 17th century.

Constitutional reforms after the king's coronation enabled the majority of Tonga's parliament to be popularly elected for the first time. Prior to the vote, the king appointed all members of parliament from the noble class, chiefs and supporters of the royal family. Although Tonga was never formally colonized, reformers had been pushing for the nation to become a modernized democracy for years.

Post-election, the new parliament faces

while energy-hungry Tonga is planning to produce half its electricity from renewable energy within three years, "nature is dictating that we must look to nuclear energy." Currently 95 percent of Tonga's 20 to 30 megawatts of annual power consumption is produced by generators using high-cost diesel fuel. Just 5 percent of the electricity is produced by small solar plants on outer islands of the archipelago. He did not indicate how the near-bankrupt nation would fund a nuclear power plant.

Although no South Pacific states, including Australia and New Zealand, have nuclear power plants, then-King George V noted that building a nuclear station in Tonga would also help solve its need for clean drinking water through desalination. Tonga's main water sources are underground and have been polluted in recent years by fertilizers and pesticides. "The government maintains that nuclear power is our best hope of resolving our water problem as we can produce abundant supplies through desalination very cheaply," he said. "The quicker we move in this direction the better."

Curbing Software Piracy Boosts Asian Prospects



AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

MARTIN ABBUGAO/AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

Asian economies, especially China's, can reap a financial windfall and create hundreds of thousands of jobs in a few years by cracking down on software piracy, according to an industry study released in October 2010.

The Business Software Alliance (BSA) and International Data Corporation (IDC) research group

"The primary message is to tell countries that if you do more in reducing your piracy rate, you're going to get more,"

~ Roland Chan, BSA's senior regional director for marketing

said nearly 60 percent of the software programs installed on personal computers in 2009 across the world's largest region were unlicensed.

Reducing software piracy to about 50 percent in four years would produce almost U.S. \$41 billion in economic activity, create 350,000 new jobs and generate nearly U.S. \$9 billion in taxes, according to the joint study.

Achieving the same reduction in two years would boost the economic benefits for the region by another 33 percent, a press statement said. Worldwide, a cut in piracy rates from the current 42 percent to 32 percent over four years would add U.S. \$142 billion to the global economy, 500,000 new jobs and U.S. \$32 billion in tax revenue, according to the study.

Roland Chan, BSA's senior regional director for marketing, said the Asia-Pacific region will

capture more than three-fifths of the new jobs forecast to be generated globally because of the size of the market. "Reducing software piracy is an opportunity to inject much-needed stimulus into Asia-Pacific economies," he said.

Chan said he hoped the study results would help convince governments to strengthen their fight against piracy, which cost technology companies more than U.S. \$50 billion in 2009.

"The primary message is to tell countries that if you do more in reducing your piracy rate, you're going to get more," Chan said. "And if it is accelerated, the economic benefits will even be better."

According to the study, China stands to benefit the most if it further cuts its piracy rate, which stood at 79 percent in 2009. Of the estimated 350,000 jobs expected to be generated in the Asia-Pacific region, China will account for 250,000 due to the size of its software industry, the study showed. India will account for nearly 60,000 jobs, followed by South Korea at more than 10,000 and Japan at 9,500. China will also benefit most in terms of revenue and taxes, the study said.

The report looked at 13 economies that make up 98 percent of the region's packaged software market — Australia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam. Piracy rates in the 13 economies in 2009 ranged from a low of 21 percent in Japan to 86 percent in Indonesia, BSA said.

Counterfeit computer software is displayed in a shop in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Formula One *Cruises into* South Korea



Ferrari Formula One driver Fernando Alonso of Spain sprays champagne on the podium after winning the Korean Grand Prix.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

After three years of work, a U.S. \$275 million investment and frantic last-minute building, Formula One came to South Korea in October 2010 on what is touted as Asia's best circuit.

F1 supremo Bernie Ecclestone predicted the world would watch a "great race" on a 5.6-kilometer track featuring a mix of corners, long straights and good overtaking opportunities.

And it did. Fernando Alonso of Ferrari won the Korean Grand Prix after Red Bull's Mark Webber crashed out of the race and his teammate Sebastian Vettel retired with an engine problem. Lewis Hamilton of McLaren and Ferrari's Felipe Massa were second and third.

The inaugural Korean Grand Prix, the third-to-last race of the season, was delayed after heavy rain lashed the Yeongam circuit.

Organizers say they are looking to long-term returns after spending an estimated 340 billion won (U.S. \$275 million) building the circuit on reclaimed land in Yeongam county, in South Jeolla province, 320 kilometers south of Seoul.

A floral tower with an F1 logo greets visitors to the track, which passed an inspection by world governing body the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile, or FIA, just a week before the race. Construction crews finished the sports facility just in time for the race. It is the country's biggest sports facility, capable of accommodating more than 120,000 spectators at a time.

"I bet this event will boost regional development and our national image, but many people in other regions appear to be indifferent," complained Kim Song-Moon, a 51-year-old taxi driver.

The province had set aside some 38,000 hotel and motel rooms near the circuit in a bid to attract 120,000 spectators, including 25,000 foreigners. Some 32,000 rooms were booked, said Yoon Keun-Sang, director of the organizing committee's public relations team.

"We can hardly expect to be perfect from the outset. The circuit has great potential in terms of revenue and will become a money-spinner in the long term," Yoon said.

Korea Auto Valley Operation, or KAVO, a joint venture between the provincial government and a private company that organized the three-day event, had failed to find a major sponsor in time for the first race, said its spokesman Kim Jae-Ho, even though South Korea is the world's fifth-largest automaker. He said financial problems would be inevitable for at least a few years.

"We don't expect early returns as this project needs long-term investment to turn this area into a regional leisure and tourism hub," said Kang Hyo-Seok, director of the province's F1 support headquarters. The race is forecast to bring some 1.8 trillion won (about U.S. \$1.6 billion) in "visible and invisible" economic benefits over seven years, he said.

Charmed by Snakes



Most fathers would prefer their 2-year-old daughters not ride a giant Burmese python down the street like a pony — but not Jamal Amwasi of Ramallah in the Palestinian Territories.

The 35-year-old civil servant is the proud owner of more than a dozen snakes, including several pythons, all of which live in a shed a few meters from his home in the occupied West Bank.

"These snakes have become part of the family. Every morning and every night I check up on them and feed them," he says.



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Amwasi stands out in the West Bank, where pets are rare and snakes are viewed as pests. His experience has made him the local authority on the reptiles. Some 40 species of snake inhabit Israel and the West Bank, and about 10 of them are venomous.

Amwasi, who knows how to treat various snakebites, regularly gets calls from people asking him to remove troublesome snakes. If they are venomous, he kills them. If not, he keeps them.

Agence France-Presse

Small Feat

A Nepalese man has turned 18 and officially claimed the title of world's shortest man.

Khagendra Thapa Magar — who is 67.08 centimeters (or 2 feet, 2.41 inches) — has been campaigning for the record since early 2010, and he got his wish in October 2010 when the folks from Guinness World Records visited him in his hometown of Pokhara in central Nepal for the measurement.

Agence France-Presse



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GOING UP

Some call it man's modern day obsession with building a stairway to heaven, but one engineer's vision of an elevator to space could become reality sooner than he thought.

"It's happening very quickly," Yuri Artsutanov, a Soviet engineer credited with the idea of an "electric train to the cosmos," told MSNBC.com's Cosmic Log in August 2010.

Artsutanov attended the August 2010 Space Elevator Conference at the Microsoft corporate campus in Redmond, Washington. Researchers at the annual event discuss the types of technology needed to create a space elevator.

Artsutanov and other developers say the first space elevator could be operational within the next 30 years.

"Space elevator-related research is valid, but there are hurdles to overcome," David Smitherman, a space architect at NASA's George C. Marshall Space Flight Center, told CNN in November 2009.

Creating a tether strong enough to support an elevator remains a chief hurdle. Most models portray an elevator and a cable that is attached to a satellite, space station or counterweight, CNN reported.

FORUM Staff



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BLAST OFF

A new runway for space tourists



VMS Eve and VSS Enterprise
fly over Spaceport America.

PAULA BUSTAMANTE/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

The world's first commercial passenger spaceship moved a step closer to takeoff as British tycoon Richard Branson unveiled a new runway at a remote New Mexico spaceport. Branson and New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson hosted a ceremony in October 2010 marking the completion of the main runway at Spaceport America, near the town of Las Cruces, where the Virgin Galactic project is based.

"This is the beginning of the second space age, and we are proud to have been supporters of this part of the story. From here we will see, perhaps daily flights into space, but also scientists, explorers of new opportunities beyond our planet," Branson said.

Buzz Aldrin, the second man to set foot on the moon, said: "I am very happy that civilians will be able to reach space. I'd like to be one of the passengers on these flights, of course."

SpaceShipTwo, a six-seat craft that is scheduled to carry paying customers into suborbital space by early 2012, made its maiden flight above the California desert in March. In October 2010, the aircraft — re-named the VSS Enterprise — flew high above the new 3.2-kilometer-long, 60-meter-wide runway in tandem with its mothership, WhiteKnightTwo or Eve.

The spaceship is 18 meters long, and its cabin is similar in size to a Falcon 900 executive jet, "allowing maximum room for the astronauts to float in zero gravity," according to the company.

Guests for the October ceremony included people who have already paid deposits and are just waiting for the day they go into space. Virgin started taking deposits from people wanting to become astronauts in 2005, and it has now collected U.S. \$50 million in deposits from more than 380 people willing to pay the U.S. \$200,000 ticket price, Branson said.

"Two hundred thousand dollars is a lot of money, but I think it's a fair price for this life experience," said New Zealand entrepreneur Devek Handley, 32.

Russian Igor Kutsenko, 36, an advertising company boss, said he plans to go into space with his 57-year-old mother and 59-year-old father.

"We will travel together as soon as Virgin Galactic makes space travel a reality. This has been the dream of my life," he said, adding that he had paid a deposit of U.S. \$150,000 each.

When it takes off, WK2 will carry SpaceShipTwo to an altitude of about 15 kilometers before dropping the smaller spaceship and allowing it to fire up its rocket motor to blast up to the brink of space.

Once it has reached suborbital space, SpaceShipTwo passengers will be able to view the Earth from portholes next to their seats or unbuckle their seatbelts and float in zero gravity.

Branson said that although initially the spaceship will remain suborbital, "in time we'll go to orbital flights. And, you know, one day ... we hope to build a hotel in space."

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