

U.S.-Southeast Asian Relations: Pausing for Politics

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A combination of domestic political preoccupations in Southeast Asian countries, the presidential election campaign in the United States, and continuing sensitivities over the U.S.-led intervention in Iraq meant that U.S. relations with Southeast Asia were essentially on hold during the second quarter of 2004. Nevertheless, ongoing concerns, including terrorism and piracy as well as the increasingly crowded calendar of regular regional meetings, ensured that activity and dialogue continued at a relatively intense pace throughout the quarter.

Terrorism and Security Cooperation

Terrorism remains the primary shared concern of the governments of Southeast Asia and the U.S. But unease over American military dominance and skepticism in the region (especially but not exclusively among Islamic populations) over the Iraq intervention are such that cooperation with the U.S. in the “war on terrorism” is a very delicate matter for many regional governments. This sensitivity was most dramatically highlighted during the quarter after U.S. Pacific Commander Adm. Thomas Fargo, in testimony on March 31 to a Congressional Committee, outlined a U.S. Regional Maritime Security Initiative (RMSI) – as an operational element of the administration’s Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) designed to counter threats of terrorism, piracy, and trafficking at sea. Fargo mentioned the Strait of Malacca, between Indonesia and Malaysia, a key passageway transited by nearly one-third of the world’s commerce, as a specific area of concern.

Adm. Fargo had been speaking about the desirability of such an initiative in forums involving Southeast Asian officials for nearly a year, but formal government-to-government discussions had been limited. His testimony focused attention on the initiative, and created the unintended impression that the U.S. might dispatch forces to the Malacca Strait, even unilaterally, to respond to the threat. Regional governments, most particularly those of Malaysia and Indonesia, reacted brusquely to what they interpreted as a threat of U.S. unilateral military intervention, and within a week publicly rejected the initiative, insisting that their forces were fully capable of policing the Strait. U.S. military and diplomatic officials, including Fargo, spent much of April and May clarifying U.S. intentions and emphasizing the preliminary and collaborative nature of the concept. However, on a visit to Singapore to attend the Shangri-la Dialogue, a regional security conference on June 4, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld reiterated the

seriousness of U.S. concern over terrorist threats, including in the Malacca Strait, leaving no doubt that the subject will remain on the U.S. agenda for the region. But discussions at the ASEAN meetings in late June reaffirmed overwhelming opposition among the Southeast Asian governments to direct participation by U.S. forces in new cooperative security operations in the Strait.

The Philippines and Indonesia: Electoral Limbo

In the Philippines and Indonesia, the quarter was totally dominated by hotly contested and highly uncertain presidential election contests. Filipinos went to the polls on May 10, but President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's narrow reelection was not confirmed until just before the scheduled inauguration on the last day of the quarter. In Indonesia, national parliamentary elections took place April 5, which was followed by formation of five competing president/vice president tickets and a month-long campaign before a first round of presidential voting on July 5. Many questioned whether President Megawati Sukarnoputri would even qualify for the runoff between the top two first-round finishers that is set for Sept. 20. Inevitably, electoral politics inhibited incumbents in both countries from taking actions in politically sensitive areas such as relations with the United States.

Beyond the similarity of their electoral situations, however, the underlying U.S. relations with the two countries differ markedly. Philippines-U.S. security cooperation is very close, including U.S. support for the Philippines' military campaign against Islamic terrorists in the southern Philippines. A major annual joint exercise concluded in March, and a further joint counterterrorism training exercise was announced at the end of June. Arroyo has been among the strongest regional supporters of U.S. policy in Iraq, including providing a modest Philippines contingent of peacekeepers and humanitarian workers, which the U.S. would like increased. Mindful of public opposition to her support of the U.S. on Iraq, however, on April 14 Magapagal-Arroyo said that the Philippines might withdraw its small force if security conditions continued to deteriorate. Nevertheless, after a Filipino civilian contract worker in Iraq was killed April 29, Magapagal-Arroyo said the Philippines would not withdraw its troops.

U.S. relations with Indonesia remain far more complicated and troubled, and Megawati's relatively weak leadership style and dim prospects in the presidential election virtually rule out any significant moves in the bilateral relationship during the remainder of her term. The Bush administration wants to work with the Indonesian government to enhance its antiterrorism capabilities, but is constrained by human rights-based legislation dating from 1999 prohibiting assistance to the Indonesian military. Thus anti-terrorism cooperation focuses on the Indonesian police force, still suffering from its position as the stepchild of the security services through most of Indonesia's independent history. Fuller restoration of security cooperation awaits more fundamental changes in Indonesia's armed forces.

Nevertheless, the Indonesian government continued through the quarter to pursue suspected terrorists and to prosecute those involved in the 2002 Bali bombings and the 2003 Jakarta bombing. Under strong U.S. pressure, on April 30 *Jemaah Islamiyah* (JI) leader Abu Bakar Bashir was rearrested immediately on his release from an 18-month term for immigration violations and charged with terrorism. The Indonesian police developed a substantial dossier to support a further trial of Bashir for involvement in the Bali bombings. (The Indonesians have argued, reasonably, that this process would have been significantly aided had the U.S. granted them direct access to JI operations leader Hambali, now in U.S. custody.)

In the meantime, a series of tangled human rights issues, combined with the general weakness of Indonesian government structures, continue to frustrate efforts to put the relationship on a more stable and positive course. The inability or unwillingness of the Indonesian legal system to hold senior military officers accountable for human rights violations in East Timor and elsewhere is illustrative of the problem.

The murders in August 2002 of two American schoolteachers at Timika in Papua, on which successive investigations produced clear suggestions of military involvement but no charges, have increasingly acquired the status of a litmus test for improvement in U.S.-Indonesian relations. Strong U.S. pressures led to involvement of the FBI in the Indonesian investigation and finally, to the indictment on June 24 by a U.S. grand jury of a leader of the Papuan separatist movement for the crime. But by that time U.S. human rights activists simply refused to accept the inference that the Indonesian military was not involved, so the case will continue to be an irritant in the relationship.

The expulsion from Indonesia in early June of Sidney Jones, Indonesian representative of the International Crisis Group and a respected American Indonesia scholar and human rights activist, further underscored the basic distrust of the Indonesian government in U.S. human rights circles. The expulsion was never clearly explained by the Indonesian authorities, but was presumed to have been due to Jones' unblinking criticism of Indonesia's security and human rights performance. On June 2, the State Department released a statement criticizing the Indonesian action as inconsistent with the country's recent record of democratization.

Indonesian policies in dealing with insurgencies in Aceh and Papua are another issue in the relationship, particularly for human rights groups and some members of Congress. On June 28, in a letter to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan coordinated by the U.S.-based East Timor Action Network, 19 U.S. senators called for the appointment of a UN Special Representative on Aceh and Papua. The fact that this appeal came in the middle of the Indonesian presidential election process and the reality that there was no possibility of constructive discussions on the subject before a new president was chosen in September clearly were not major considerations for those who initiated or endorsed the letter. And given the fundamental intractability of the conflicts both in Aceh and in Papua, this issue will not be readily or quickly removed from the agenda of U.S.-Indonesian relations.

Malaysia and Singapore: Transitions

The U.S. relationship with Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi continued to be relatively smooth during the quarter, solidifying a more civil version of the combination of criticism and cooperation that had characterized relations under Badawi's colorful predecessor Mahathir Mohamad. Badawi has maintained Malaysian criticism of U.S. policies in Iraq and the Middle East, though not with the same edge as Mahathir. (As if to emphasize the contrast, in May Mahathir broke his self-imposed moratorium on political statements to urge Muslims to withdraw funds deposited in the U.S. as a weapon to weaken U.S. support for Israel.) A special meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) on Iraq on April 22 (called by Malaysia, as chair) predictably provided a forum for such criticism and produced a communiqué calling for a change in Washington's approach on Iraq and Israel. Meanwhile, negotiations on a U.S.-Malaysian trade and investment framework agreement (TIFA) proceeded, leading to signature of the TIFA on May 10.

The Malaysian government joined Indonesia in rejecting a U.S. proposal for maritime security cooperation in the Malacca Strait in advance of a visit to Malaysia by U.S. Pacific Commander Fargo in late June. Deputy Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak expressed the government's willingness to further discuss the maritime security initiative. On June 15 the government announced the formation of a new paramilitary maritime force to enhance security in Malaysia's territorial waters. Further, on May 28, the Malaysian authorities arrested B.S.A. Tahir, a Sri Lankan businessman said to have been a key official in the international nuclear trafficking network led by Pakistan's Abdul Qadeer Khan, demonstrating Malaysia's determination to follow the trail opened by the revelation in February of involvement by a Malaysian firm in providing uranium centrifuge equipment to Libya. And in mid-April, U.S. experts conducted a counter-terrorism workshop at the new regional counter-terrorism center in Kuala Lumpur.

In Singapore, the long-anticipated handover of power from Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong to founding PM Lee Kuan Yew's son and political heir Deputy PM Lee Hsien Loong has been put off for an indeterminate period, according to a statement by Goh to a party gathering on April 24. But whatever stylistic individuality the younger Lee may bring to the office, there is virtually no chance that this transition will have any substantive impact on U.S.-Singapore relations, however, which continue to be as close, collaborative, and unabashed as ever. Singapore was the only one of the three Malacca Strait littoral countries to welcome the U.S. initiative for enhanced security in the Strait. In early May, Goh paid a five-day visit to Washington, which included his third meeting with President Bush in a year. On May 24, a joint U.S.-Singapore sponsored regional disease response center opened in Singapore, and June 1 saw the start of a 10-day joint naval training exercise in Singapore water, and Singapore become the first country to join the U.S. Coast Guard's International Port Security Program.

However, a telling indication of the discomfort that even a committed supporter such as Singapore can feel over the current U.S. international posture came at the Shangri-la dialogue, a senior security conference in Singapore in early June – attended by Secretary

Rumsfeld. In his remarks to the conference, Goh urged the delegates to remember that “America is not the enemy; the terrorists are the enemy.” And while stressing the need for the U.S. to fulfill its commitments in Iraq, Goh also criticized Washington for its position on Israel, commenting that “The U.S. is essential to the solution, but it is part of the problem.”

Thailand: Political and Civil Turmoil

Thailand’s assertive and energetic prime minister, Thaksin Shinawatra, is facing a series of problems at home that could threaten his party’s political prospects in the general elections to be held by February 2005. Factional infighting, scandals, and policy mistakes are eroding the government’s public standing, but the most serious problem is an ongoing series of violent incidents in Thailand’s Muslim southern provinces that began in January 2004. The most serious of these to date occurred April 28, when 113 insurgents, many of them lightly armed youths, were killed in simultaneous attacks on police posts in the southern region. Thaksin’s credibility further suffered when he initially attributed this incident to criminal drug traffickers rather than acknowledging the apparent resurgence of Islamic separatism.

Among other things, Thaksin’s domestic difficulties have complicated his commitment of Thai troops to the reconstruction effort in Iraq. On April 10, Thaksin stated in his weekly radio address that he would bring the troops home if security conditions in Iraq prevented them from conducting their humanitarian mission. Similarly, Thaksin’s government, while supporting U.S. intelligence and technical assistance to enhancing security in the Malacca Strait, joined Malaysia and Indonesia in rejecting active involvement by U.S. forces as unnecessary. For its part, the U.S. government continued to provide assistance to Thailand in dealing with both the renewed insurgency in the south and continuing drug trafficking in the north. But Thailand reportedly turned aside an American offer of more direct assistance in the antiterrorism campaign in the south.

Burma, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos: Human Rights Leads

U.S. relations with Burma and Cambodia remain at an impasse, and issues relating to human rights in Vietnam (treatment of religious communities) and Laos (treatment of ethnic Hmong people and restrictions on religious and political freedoms) assumed greater prominence in those relationships during the quarter. In each case positions held by the Bush administration are powerfully reinforced, and even strengthened, by Congressional advocacy groups and individual members. One powerful Republican senator has been the major force in sustaining sanctions on trade with Burma and restrictions on assistance to Cambodia.

In the case of Burma, the administration has supported continued and even strengthened sanctions in view of the regime’s refusal to allow opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi to participate in the political process. On Cambodia, U.S. bilateral assistance has been suspended since 1997 except for limited humanitarian programs, due to the authoritarian practices of the Hun Sen regime. This limits the ability of the administration to respond

in graduated ways to positive developments such as the conclusion at the end of June – after 11 months of stalemate – of an agreement between the Hun Sen government and the principal opposition party on the formation of a coalition government. This in turn will likely lead to legislative approval of an arrangement negotiated with the United Nations for trials of former Khmer Rouge leaders for human rights violations. In an election year there is no political incentive or prospect for introducing more flexibility into the U.S. position and therefore little practical room for negotiation with either regime.

The U.S. relationship with Vietnam is more complex than those with the other three mainland Southeast Asian countries, and despite problems over human rights issues the consolidation of normal U.S.-Vietnamese relations proceeds apace. Noteworthy events during the quarter were: a joint military conference on HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention in mid-April and the subsequent (June 23) inclusion of Vietnam in a special U.S. presidential funding program for combating AIDS; the April 26 announcement by United Airlines of plans to resume direct flights to Vietnam (the first since 1975); a relatively favorable U.S. decision on May 12 on quota levels for imports of Vietnamese textiles; agreement on June 15 (after two years of negotiations) on U.S. access to Vietnamese military files for purposes of locating remains of American servicemen; and approval on June 21 by the Vietnamese for a third U.S. bank to open a branch in Vietnam, with which the U.S. is now the largest trading partner.

Institutions

Regardless of fluctuating political atmospherics, the intense and basically institutionalized network of regular exchanges between the U.S. and the Southeast Asian governments was clearly demonstrated at a series of ASEAN-sponsored meetings in Jakarta at the end of June. These were the 37th Annual Ministerial Meeting (AMM) of foreign ministers June 29-30; Post-Ministerial Consultations (PMC) with 12 “dialogue partner” ministers July 1; and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) meeting on July 2. Security issues including terrorism dominated the discussions at all these meetings. The AMM produced various declarations and agreements, including a reassertion of the ASEAN states’ intention to maintain control over the interrelated dialogue processes, and an announcement that Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore will launch coordinated patrols of the Strait, as an alternative to the U.S. RMSI. The PMC meetings saw conclusion of a counter-terrorism agreement between the 10 ASEAN members and Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Russia, an initiative welcomed by Powell but which the U.S. is not a party.

However, little progress was made at the ASEAN meetings or elsewhere during the quarter on some more controversial institutional questions. These include an Indonesian proposal launched at the previous ministerial for an ASEAN Security Community and a proposal by China, Japan, and South Korea for an “East Asian Summit” with the ASEAN states in 2005. The ASEAN representatives also essentially ducked the question of human rights concerns in Burma, whose position as 2006 ASEAN Chair will cause it to host some of next year’s meetings; an action that could, in turn, lead to non-attendance by the U.S., Europe, and other ASEAN dialogue partners. The most noticed event at the

ARF meeting seem to have been an informal side meeting between Powell and his North Korean counterpart, as a preliminary to an impending round of the six-party talks in Beijing on the North Korea nuclear issue, and a boffo performance by Powell at the now-traditional hair-down entertainment the last night of the meeting. Thus, the Southeast Asian regional institutions continue to serve more effectively as discussion forums (including outside the formal meetings) than as instruments for coordinating actions on regional problems.

Conclusion

The events of the quarter provide a glass half-full/half-empty picture of the state of U.S. relations with Southeast Asia. The relationships are (in almost all cases) multidimensional and self-sustaining. The shadow of the Iraq adventure hangs heavily over even the closer and longer-standing relationships, and in a political season both in the region and in the U.S. the interests in cooperation can easily be overshadowed or even undermined by more ephemeral considerations. There is always a possibility that damage to credibility and trust may be hard to restore, and that current difficulties may lead Southeast Asian governments to attempt to reduce the intensity and relative importance of their relationships with the U.S. But there is also recognition on the part of most participants of the underlying mutual interests and the need to move forward at whatever pace is achievable. So the business of the relationships will go on, punctuated by specific differences but driven by the imperatives of the calendar and increasing, inescapable interdependence.

Chronology of U.S.-Southeast Asian Relations April-June 2004

March 31, 2004: Adm. Fargo, Commander of U.S. Pacific Command, proposes a regional maritime security initiative to help guard the strategic Malacca Strait against terrorist attacks. Malaysia and Indonesia oppose the plan.

April 5, 2004: Indonesians vote in parliamentary elections.

April 5, 2004: Singapore confirms talks with U.S. over possibility of U.S. forces protecting the Strait of Malacca from terrorists; advocates a cooperative effort and financial contribution from all nations using the Strait.

April 5, 2004: U.S. embassy in Kuala Lumpur refutes reports of U.S. plan to deploy U.S. forces in the Strait of Malacca.

April 6, 2004: Malaysia and Indonesia reject U.S. proposed Regional Maritime Security Initiative to help patrol in the Malacca Strait.

April 10, 2004: In radio address Thai PM Thaksin Shinawatra indicates for the second time in two days he will bring Thai troops home from Iraq if the security situation continues to deteriorate.

April 13, 2004: Burmese government releases two senior members of the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) party, who have been under house arrest for more than a year, ahead of the National Convention aimed at drafting a new constitution to be held in May. NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi remains under house arrest.

April 15, 2004: U.S. and Vietnamese military officials meet for the first-ever joint conference aimed at increasing HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention.

April 19, 2004: U.S. experts from the justice department, FBI, and customs and border control begin a four-day workshop to train Southeast Asian counterparts in counterterrorism techniques.

April 19, 2004: Vietnam allows tourists eight-day trip to visit Spratly Islands.

April 21, 2004: Former Indonesian armed forces leader Wiranto, one of seven Indonesian military officials indicted by the UN on war crimes in East Timor in 1999, wins Golkar party presidential nomination.

April 22, 2004: At a special meeting of the Organization of Islamic Conference Malaysian PM Badawi criticizes U.S. strategy in Iraq and regarding Israel. Representatives issue a communique urging Washington to end support for Israel's plan.

April 26, 2004: Singapore Defense Minister Teo Chee Hean warns of insufficient patrols in the Malacca Strait to ward off a terrorist attack and assistance from outside sources is necessary to ensure the security of the Strait.

April 26, 2004: United Airlines announces plan to begin direct flights to Vietnam, the first U.S. carrier to do so since 1975.

April 29, 2004: State Department releases the *2003 Patterns of Global Terrorism* Report, which identifies the Asia-Pacific region in general and Southeast Asia in particular, as "an attractive theater of support and logistics" for al-Qaeda, and "a theater of operations" for Jemaah Islamiyah (JI).

April 30, 2004: Indonesian authorities re-arrest Muslim cleric Abu Bakar Bashir on terrorist charges immediately after his release from prison where he has served 18 months on immigration violations.

May 3, 2004: Singapore PM Goh Chok Tong kicks off five-day visit to Washington to meet with President Bush, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and other top U.S. government officials; it is the third meeting between PM Goh and Bush in a year.

May 5, 2004: Indonesian National Election Commission confirms Golkar's first-place finish in April 5 parliamentary election.

May 6, 2004: Philippine security forces expose JI cell and arrest suspect.

May 10, 2004: Filipinos vote in elections for presidential, congressional and township posts. More than 90 are killed in election violence.

May 10, 2004: U.S. and Malaysia sign the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement, (TIFA), paving the way for a bilateral free trade agreement.

May 10, 2004: Speaking in Jakarta, Assistant Secretary James Kelly emphasizes Indonesia and Malaysia are more than capable of safeguarding the Malacca Strait.

May 12, 2004: Four civilian Filipino contract workers are killed in a mortar attack on a U.S. air base in Iraq.

May 12, 2004: At ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) senior officials meeting in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, U.S. proposes plan to increase maritime security cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. ASEAN members welcome the initiative but emphasize the U.S. would not be given operational patrolling duties.

May 14, 2004: Assistant Secretary James Kelly visits Hanoi for the U.S.-Vietnam Annual Political Dialogue.

May 18, 2004: President Bush criticizes Burma's leaders for their handling of constitutional talks and says Burma's "actions and policies pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States."

May 28, 2004: Malaysian authorities arrest Buhary Syed Abu Tahir, allegedly the most senior official of A.Q. Khan's nuclear trafficking network to be arrested thus far under a security law allowing for indefinite detention without trial.

May 28, 2004: State Department releases statement urging Burma to release democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi and move towards greater democratic rule.

May 31, 2004: U.S. terrorism expert Sidney Jones, working with the International Crisis Group, receives expulsion notice from Indonesian government allegedly on visa violations.

June 1, 2004: Malaysian PM Badawi says worsening security conditions in Iraq and Palestinian territories alienate Muslims, creating a new generation of anti-American terrorists.

June 1, 2004: The U.S. and Singapore navies begin a 10-day joint training exercise in Singapore waters emphasizing threats from air and submarines.

June 1, 2004: Singapore becomes first country to join the U.S. Coast Guard's International Port Security Program.

June 2, 2004: U.S. State Department calls Indonesian expulsion of policy analyst a disappointing reversal of democratic trends and recent positive moves against terrorists in the country.

June 3, 2004: Philippine President Arroyo says her country's troops will remain in Iraq but will probably redeploy to safer areas after three Filipino soldiers were wounded in June 1 ambush.

June 4, 2004: Defense Secretary Rumsfeld in Singapore to attend an international security conference warns Asian governments against underestimating terrorist threat.

June 5, 2004: Adm. Fargo says U.S. plans to enhance maritime security in Asia by sharing information that could lead to inspections of ships carrying suspicious cargo in the Strait of Malacca.

June 7, 2004: The members of the Five Powers Defence Arrangements (FPDA), a regional Southeast Asian defense alliance composed of Australia, the UK, Malaysia, Singapore, and New Zealand, agree to increase training to prevent terrorist attacks in the Strait of Malacca; move seen as an alternative to U.S. proposal.

June 9, 2004: Malaysia's Deputy PM says it would be counterproductive to have a strong presence of foreign troops or assets in the region, but his country is ready to further discuss the U.S. maritime security initiative.

June 15, 2004: Malaysia announces the formation of a new paramilitary maritime force to patrol its territorial waters after international pressure to increase maritime security in the region. The force is to begin operations next March.

June 16, 2004: U.S. announces \$5.6 million in aid to Cambodia to help stem human trafficking to neighboring countries to work as forced laborers, prostitutes, and beggars.

June 17, 2004: Indonesia's naval chief announces his country will form a special maritime force to coordinate patrols in the Malacca Strait after Indonesian pirates conduct yet another attack in the area.

June 18, 2004: U.S. State Department calls upon Burma's military rulers to release Aung San Suu Kyi and fellow democracy leader U Tin Oo immediately and unconditionally.

June 19, 2004: Hundreds of pro-democracy activists protest in Rangoon on NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi's 59th birthday and demand her release.

June 21, 2004: Vietnam's central bank grants the U.S.-based Far East National Bank approval to open a branch in Ho Chi Minh City - the third U.S. bank with a branch in Vietnam – as the U.S. is now Vietnam's largest trading partner.

June 21, 2004: Malaysian Deputy PM Najib Abdul Razak says Malaysia and the U.S. will work together to boost maritime security, but will not undertake joint patrols in the Strait of Malacca.

June 22, 2004: Indonesia and Malaysia agree to conduct joint military patrols in the Malacca Strait to stem piracy and maritime terrorist threats.

June 23, 2004: U.S. announces Vietnam will become the 15th country to receive money to combat AIDS under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Vietnam is the sole Asian country named in the program.

June 23, 2004: During a visit to Malaysia, Adm. Fargo denies reports that Washington wanted U.S. forces to help patrol the Strait of Malacca: says cooperation would focus on sharing intelligence and offering to help build the capacity of countries in the region to face the threat themselves.

June 23, 2004: President Bush dismisses criticism of decision to make Vietnam eligible for funds under a global AIDS initiative.

June 24, 2004: U.S. Senate approves bill to renew sanctions against Burma.

June 24, 2004: U.S. grand jury indicts Anthonius Wamang, alleged operational commander of the separatist Free Papua Movement, for the 2002 murder of two U.S. schoolteachers in the Indonesian province of Papua. Wamang remains at large.

June 26, 2004: Thailand expresses support for the U.S. plan to enhance technical and intelligence assistance to Southeast Asian countries to guard the Strait of Malacca against piracy and terrorism, but emphasizes that the deployment of U.S. troops is unnecessary.

June 27-30, 2004: Adm. Fargo meets Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita and Philippine Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Narciso Abaya, while attending the inauguration of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

June 29, 2004: U.S. delivers refurbished helicopters to Thailand to help it fight Muslim militants in the south and guard against drug trafficking in the north.

June 30, 2004: Macapagal-Arroyo begins new six-year term as Philippine president.

June 30, 2004: The two main parties in Cambodia, the Cambodian People's Party of PM Hun Sen (CPP) and the Funcinpec party led by Prince Norodom Ranariddh, sign agreement on a coalition government, ending 11 months of political deadlock.