



U.S.-Southeast Asia Relations:

Military Relations Restored with Indonesia, While U.S. Passes on the First East Asia Summit

Sheldon W. Simon
Arizona State University

Full-scale military relations have been restored with Indonesia, including Foreign Military Financing for lethal equipment, in recognition of the country's democratic practices and its importance for the U.S. global war on radical Islamic extremism. Although not a member of the first East Asia Summit (EAS), Washington launched an Enhanced Partnership with ASEAN by agreeing to a multi-dimensional Plan of Action that includes additional cooperation on security, trade, and investment. U.S. relations with the Philippines were complicated by reports in the local media of classified U.S. assessments of Philippine politics that emphasized vulnerabilities in President Arroyo's government. While Philippine-U.S. joint military exercises continued, the arrest of five U.S. marines on rape charges led to calls in the Philippine Congress for amending the Visiting Forces Agreement. The U.S. may provide some equipment and training for anti-piracy patrols in the Malacca Straits conducted by Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. Under Secretary of State Karen Hughes' visit to the region led to her enthusiastic endorsement of Malaysia's politics of inclusion as a possible model for Iraq.

Military relations restored with Indonesia

Completing the process of restoring U.S. military relations with Indonesia that began with the resumption of International Military Education and Training (IMET) in February, the State Department announced Nov. 22 that Foreign Military Financing (FMF) was once again available to Jakarta. Originally cut off in 1991 because of Indonesian military involvement in the Dili massacre of East Timor civilians, the ties were further reduced after military-backed militias killed thousands of people during the August 1999 East Timor independence vote. During 14 years of minimal military relations, the Indonesian armed forces' equipment deteriorated to such a degree that its navy could not safeguard archipelago waters from smugglers and poachers and much of its air force was grounded for lack of spare parts.

With Indonesia seen as the focal point of terrorism in Southeast Asia, the Bush administration persuaded Congress that the world's most populous Muslim country and the largest Muslim democracy known for a predominantly moderate approach to Islam was a key to Southeast Asian stability and security, especially since it is astride the

region's vital sea lanes. Thus, the State Department has waived conditionality in military sales and announced plans to help modernize and reform the Indonesian military – a prospect that is said to support mutual security objectives, “including counterterrorism, maritime security, and disaster relief.” Nevertheless, the State Department announcement went on to note that the U.S. will continue to press Indonesia to account for past human rights abuses – the behavior that led Congress to cut military ties in 1991 and 1999.

President Yudhoyono hailed the U.S. decision as “a new chapter in the strategic relations between Indonesia and the United States.” The waiver allows the U.S. to sell lethal equipment to Indonesia; however, there are still members of Congress who remain dissatisfied with Indonesia's justice system and the absence of accountability for the Indonesian Army's depredations in East Timor and Papua. Washington may also be concerned about the Indonesian military's turn to Russia and even China as alternative suppliers. With U.S. arms sales once again available, the Indonesian military (TNI) has declared the refurbishing of *F-16s*, *F-5s*, *C-130s*, and *OV-10s* “priorities.” Nevertheless, the TNI also stated that other suppliers (Russia, China, South Korea, and Spain) would be considered because they may be less expensive than U.S. platforms and more politically reliable.

In actuality, the TNI has received some training and assistance from the U.S., beginning in 2003, as part of the global war on terror. It has been the world's largest beneficiary of counterterrorism training that also involved local constabulary forces. In 2005, the TNI participated in over 100 events under the U.S. Pacific Command Theater Security Cooperation Program.

Indonesian human rights groups have objected to the State Department restoration of lethal weapons sales, arguing that Washington should have used the prospect of the waiver as leverage to insist on TNI reforms so that it would not continue to behave as if it were above the law. On other matters, Jakarta was gratified that Congress omitted references to the possibility of Papuan independence from a November State Department Authorization Bill, thus reaffirming Washington's commitment to Indonesia's territorial integrity. However, when the State Department's counterterrorism expert, Henry Crumpton, visited Jakarta in October, he was peppered with questions about why Jakarta authorities have not been given access to Indonesian terrorists in U.S. custody whose testimony could be used against those incarcerated in Indonesia for numerous bombings across the archipelago since 2000. To make matters worse, a leading Southeast Asian terrorist wanted for questioning by Indonesia escaped from U.S. custody in Afghanistan in July, a fact that became public only in early November.

Absent from first East Asia Summit, but links with ASEAN enhanced

East Asian regionalism has been dominated by ASEAN for the past 15 years. The Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and ASEAN Plus Three (A+3 – Japan, the ROK, and China) have all adopted the ASEAN consensus principle and their agendas are frequently set by ASEAN members. The U.S. participates in all except the A+3, from which the East Asia Summit (EAS) emerged on

Dec. 14 – a half-day event following the ASEAN summit. Washington elected not to join the initial summit, which added Australia, New Zealand, and India to the A+3.

The U.S. was not prepared to sign ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) – a condition for EAS participation – because as a nonaggression pact the TAC requires all signatories to resolve disputes peacefully. For some U.S. officials, this stipulation was interpreted as a potential constraint on the U.S. military in the Pacific. However, since the EAS is now scheduled to meet annually, following the ASEAN summit, Washington would do well to reconsider its decision. Even without the U.S., however, some ASEAN countries – notably Malaysia – see Australia and Japan as representing U.S. interests and believe additionally that India's introduction dilutes the "East Asian" composition of the group. Most ASEAN members and China will continue to emphasize the A+3 framework for economic agreements and East Asian political discourse where neither Australia, New Zealand, nor India are members. It appears that ASEAN will continue to dominate East Asian conversations.

Despite these developments, the U.S. is strengthening its ties to ASEAN. Following on the 2002 announcement by U.S. and ASEAN leaders of the economics-oriented Enterprise for ASEAN Initiative (EAI) and ASEAN Cooperation Plan (ACP), in November of this year, ASEAN and the U.S. launched an Enhanced Partnership emphasizing further political and security cooperation as well as economic activities. In the Enhanced Partnership statement, Washington acknowledged the TAC's importance as a code of conduct promoting peace and stability in the region, though making no commitment to join. The State Department and ASEAN ministers have agreed to develop a Plan of Action to implement the Enhanced Partnership. ASEAN members hope this plan will move U.S.-ASEAN cooperation beyond counterterrorism into other domains. The Singapore Foreign Ministry labeled the Enhanced Partnership a "strong U.S. commitment to ASEAN," as have Thailand and Malaysia. Specifically, the Enhanced Partnership calls for more trade and investment as well as closer cooperation in combating transnational crime, terrorism, the nonproliferation of WMD, illegal drug trafficking, and maritime and border security improvements. It is still too early to assess how these new pledges will be implemented.

On the sidelines of the APEC summit in Busan, Korea, in November, President Bush raised the issue of Myanmar's human rights violations with ASEAN leaders. However, ASEAN Secretary General Ong Keng Yung demurred that the association did not want to do anything that might lead Myanmar's ruling junta to withdraw from ASEAN. At the same time, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice characterized Myanmar's military government as "one of the worst regimes in the world." In December, Washington's UN Ambassador John Bolton persuaded the UN Security Council to hear a report on the political and human rights situation in Myanmar – the first time the Security Council had so agreed – though no subsequent Security Council action was taken.

Complexities in Philippine relations

In the past quarter, a kaleidoscope of issues characterized U.S.-Philippine relations ranging from counterterrorism to U.S.-Philippine military training and exercises, to allegations of spying on sensitive official U.S. assessments of Philippine politics, and the applicability of the Visiting Forces Agreement to crimes committed by U.S. military personnel on Philippine territory. Following last quarter's U.S.-Southeast Asia *Comparative Connections* article on a Filipino-American's alleged spying, the situation became even more complicated. Leandro Aragoncillo – the Filipino-American FBI agent – has been charged with passing classified information to opposition politicians in the Philippines from both FBI and White House computers, the latter when he worked in the vice president's office. The documents dealt with U.S. embassy political assessments of Philippine President Arroyo's policies and staff and were passed through a former Philippine official now in the U.S. and currently a target of charges by the Arroyo government. According to Philippine press reports, the documents mentioned armed supporters who would back Mrs. Arroyo in the event of a coup attempt by an "unreliable military."

The U.S. embassy in Manila stated in October that local press accounts of the purloined documents were "distorted" and insisted that the U.S. investigation was an "internal issue" in the U.S. and would not affect Philippine-U.S. relations. Among the press stories circulating in the Philippines is that the documents showed that former President Fidel Ramos was involved in a planned coup, an assessment dismissed by President Arroyo.

Radical Islamist terrorism continues to roil the southern Philippines. Reports circulate of Indonesian militants, involved in the 2002 Bali bombing, joining the radical Abu Sayyaf. The most prominent Indonesian terrorist, Dulmatin, carries a \$10 million price on his head offered by the U.S. – a reward second only to the \$25 million offered for Osama bin Laden and Iraqi insurgency leader, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. The U.S. Pacific Command also has a rewards program for the capture of top Abu Sayyaf leaders. The Bush administration's counterterrorism coordinator, Henry Crumpton, visited the Philippines in late October. While praising Manila's counterterror actions, he also urged the passage of an antiterrorism law by the Philippine Congress to strengthen the government's ability to pursue and apprehend terrorists more effectively in the southern Philippines. The Congress has balked on the bill, fearing that President Arroyo could use it against her critics and the country's legitimate opposition, in effect restoring the dreaded martial law of the Marcos era. Muslim representatives also fear it could be used against members of their faith.

U.S.-Philippine joint military exercises were carried out in Luzon in October. Some 5,000 U.S. and Philippine personnel – the U.S. forces from Okinawa – participated in *Talon Vision* and *Philbex 06*. In addition to improving interoperability, U.S. forces engaged in medical and engineering civic action in the villages surrounding the training areas. U.S. armed forces publicity about the exercises emphasized their utility for joint disaster relief as in the aftermath of the December 2004 tsunami. Beach landings and simulated counter-insurgency urban warfare were also components of this year's exercises. In

November and December a small number of U.S. trainers worked with Philippine forces in Sulu on small weapons tactics. The U.S. also provided medical services to local communities. Some Mindanao media claimed that the U.S. forces were fighting alongside Philippine troops against Moro rebels – an allegation denied by the Philippine government.

Meanwhile, the Philippine air force continued its precipitous decline, retiring the last of its old *F-5* combat jets in October, leaving an air force consisting only of five jet trainers, helicopters, and propeller-driven aircraft. Military officials state that lack of funds means that no new jet fighters can be purchased until 2011 at the earliest. The U.S. provides assistance in upgrading Philippine ground forces under a five-year Philippine Defense Reform Program but is not currently aiding either the navy or air force with new equipment.

A new source of friction in Philippine-U.S. military affairs occurred Nov. 1 when five U.S. marines at the end of joint exercises allegedly raped a Filipina in Subic. Leftwing Philippine legislators and human rights groups have used the alleged attack to call for the termination of U.S. exercises in the Philippines and the abrogation of the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA). A Philippine military spokesman countered that the alleged attack was an isolated incident and had nothing to do with the joint exercises. Because the U.S. marines remain in the custody of the U.S. embassy prior to any trial, some Philippine lawmakers argue that the VFA should be amended to require the hand over of U.S. troops accused of serious crime to Philippine authorities.

The Philippine president's office, responding to public criticism of the VFA, agreed in November to review provisions of the agreement relating to the custody of U.S. military personnel accused of crimes prior to trial. Part of the problem in amending the agreement is that the VFA was signed in Washington as an executive agreement, but in Manila the agreement was ratified by the Philippine Senate as a treaty. Any change would, therefore, have to be submitted to the Philippine Senate, thus reopening the VFA's future. The Philippines requested custody of the accused marines in late November, but as of December 2005, they were still held by the U.S. embassy.

Anti-piracy patrols in the Malacca Straits

Over the past year, the Malacca Straits states have enhanced their anti-piracy efforts through greater coordination of their maritime patrols in the Straits. They have added an airborne dimension to sea-based monitoring called "Eyes in the Sky" to which Thailand will also contribute. User states, particularly the U.S., have expressed interest in assisting these efforts. Singapore has endorsed these offers, but Malaysia and Indonesia have been reticent. Nevertheless, in late October, Malaysian Defense Minister Najib Razak stated that the Straits states would welcome "a supporting role" by the U.S. such as the provision of aircraft for "Eyes in the Sky." At the same time, he stressed that U.S. participation "must not undermine national sovereignty of the littoral states." This seemed to mean that the U.S. could pilot the surveillance planes, but all monitoring on board could only be carried out by personnel from the littoral states' armed forces. Any

interception of suspected pirate vessels would also be the sole responsibility of the Straits states. Indonesia's navy chief, Adm. Slamet Subianto, was unwilling to go as far as Najib Razak. The admiral rejected the participation of any foreign country in any capacity. If other states wished to help, Subianto said, "they could just donate their equipment. We will operate the equipment, not them."

By mid-December a standard operating procedure among the three littoral states had been reached in which for the first time they could enter each other's waters in pursuit of a suspect vessel, though once a neighboring country's waters were entered, no military action could be taken by the pursuit ship. The three Straits states also agreed that user countries could assist by providing equipment and training, though not participation. Indonesia stated that aid from the U.S. and Japan was expected "in the near future..."

U.S. concerns about terrorism in southern Thailand

Although increasingly concerned with religiously inflected violence in southern Thailand where there have been more than 1,000 deaths since January 2004, the Bush administration has classified the separatist revolt as a "domestic issue" and not part of Washington's global war on terror. Neither has Thailand requested assistance from the U.S. However, in mid-October, U.S. Ambassador Ralph Boyce, in talks with Thai Deputy Prime Minister Chidchai Vanasathiday, expressed U.S. apprehension that if the unrest was not resolved soon, the area could become a breeding ground for international terrorism. In early November, responding to U.S. press reports that Thailand – among other countries – had allowed the CIA to hold terrorist suspects in secret prisons, Bangkok vehemently denied the allegation.

Competition between the Russians and the U.S. for Thailand's next large purchase of combat jets centered on the best deal manufacturers could provide. The Russians reportedly offered to accept Thai agricultural products in exchange for *SU-30MK* jet fighters. For the first time, the U.S. ambassador also said the U.S. would be willing to consider barter trade in partial payment for combat aircraft. No decision has been reached.

Human rights in Vietnam and Cambodia.

The State Department's annual Report on Religious Freedom released in November lists two Southeast Asian states of "particular concern" – Vietnam and Myanmar. Hanoi immediately protested, noting that it had entered into an agreement with the U.S. in May that addressed these concerns and that the State Department even acknowledged that religious freedoms had improved when Hanoi released some prisoners of conscience and reopened churches previously closed in the Central Highlands. Secretary Rice stated that if Vietnam's record continues to improve, the country would "eventually" be removed from the list of countries of particular concern. In a Nov. 14 article, the Vietnamese Communist Party paper *Nhan Dan* characterized Vietnam's place on the U.S. list as "ill-intentioned political pressure on Vietnam [and] a sheer fabrication." Hanoi warned that bilateral ties could be negatively affected.

Members of the U.S. House of Representatives expressed concern in late October that fundamental human rights and liberties had come under attack by Cambodia's Hun Sen government. Citing a report by Human Rights Watch, Iowa Republican Jim Leach noted that the ruling coalition was using the courts to harass government critics and members of the opposition Sam Rainsy Party whose parliamentary immunity had been lifted earlier in the year. Moreover, critics of a recent border treaty between Cambodia and Vietnam that apparently conceded some land to Hanoi had been arrested or forced into exile, including former King Norodom Sihanouk's nephew, who fled to stay with his father in Beijing.

Malaysia praised as a model of Muslim moderation

Karen Hughes, the under secretary of State for public diplomacy on a global tour of Muslim countries to help repair the U.S. reputation, praised Malaysia's moderate Islamic practices in a late October visit. She stated that the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition of ethnic-based parties could be an "outstanding" model for Iraq and also lauded Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi's *Islam Hadhari* concept, which embraces tolerance and modernity. In contrast to her Indonesian visit where she was grilled on U.S. racism and the Palestine issue by students at Syarif Hidayatiellah Islamic University, Secretary Hughes' visit to Malaysia was low profile. While Hughes played down the significance of the Indonesian students' remarks, a leading Indonesian Islamic educator, Azymumardi Azra, the State Islamic university's rector, said Hughes was wrong to dismiss the students' views, which reflect the attitude of mainstream Muslims in Indonesia. The U.S. undersecretary seemed more at ease in Malaysia where she stated: "Islam Hadhari has a powerful message of inclusion and tolerance. We discussed ways in which Malaysia can participate in international conferences to spread this message." Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Najib Razak said that Iraq could learn from Malaysia's power-sharing experience where all major groups are included. He further suggested that this could be a way to bring the Sunnis on board.

Singapore's desert training

Finally, Singapore's armed forces carried out the first ever unilateral combined exercise in the U.S. Mojave desert from Nov. 10-22. The air force and army utilized helicopters, *F-16s*, artillery, and commandos at the 29 Palms, California, U.S. military reservation. The Singapore second minister for defense, Ng Eng Hen, thanked the U.S. for the use of its facilities "to hone the operational proficiency of its units by operating in unfamiliar and challenging terrain" – though how desert warfare fits Southeast Asia's jungle environment is something of a mystery.

Conclusion: whither East Asian regionalism?

Until about 10 years ago, East Asia was described as under-institutionalized when compared with other major world regions. That is clearly no longer the case. While the U.S. belongs to several East Asian regional organizations, including APEC, the ASEAN post-ministerial conferences, and the ARF, Washington has held back from joining the

EAS – perhaps seeing it as an extension of former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir’s early 1990s idea of an East Asia Economic Community that would exclude North America, Australia, and New Zealand. However, the initial EAS included close U.S. allies – Australia, the ROK, and Japan – as well as states important to U.S. objectives, among them India. If countries with which the U.S. has defense agreements have signed ASEAN’s TAC (a condition of EAS membership), Washington should reconsider its refusal to do so. Although it is much too early to know whether the EAS is an embryo for an East Asian Community, given U.S. economic and security interests in the region, Washington should be on the inside helping to shape any nascent community’s future rather than on the outside belittling its prospects.

Chronology of U.S.-Southeast Asia Relations October-December 2005

Oct. 1, 2005: Three suicide bombers struck in Bali at tourist locations killing at least 25 and injuring over 100.

Oct. 1, 2005: In response to the U.S. ambassador’s concern that foreign terrorists could be operating in southern Thailand, Prime Minister Thaksin states: “I do not believe it,” though he later acknowledged there may be links among Islamist terror groups throughout Southeast Asia.

Oct. 2, 2005: Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice condemns the terrorist bombings in Bali and reaffirms the “common fight against terror” with Indonesia.

Oct. 6, 2005: U.S. posts an \$11 million reward for information leading to the capture of Dulmatin and Umar Patek, suspects in the 2002 Bali bombing. The reward is exceeded only by the \$25 million offered for Osama bin Laden and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

Oct. 7, 2005: U.S. and Philippine officials claim that one of the masterminds of the 2002 Bali bombings, Dulmatin, is hiding in Mindanao. An electronics expert, trained by al Qaeda, he is believed to be with a group of militants from Abu Sayyaf and Jemmah Islamiyah.

Oct. 7, 2005: U.S. Charge d’Affaires Daryl Johnson denies that Washington plays any role in the political turmoil in the Philippines and reiterates U.S. support for President Arroyo’s government.

Oct. 11, 2005: U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Michael Leavitt signs cooperation agreements with Cambodia and Thailand to combat a possible avian flu pandemic and pledged \$1.8 million to each country for its efforts.

Oct. 13, 2005: Secretary Leavitt signs a cooperation agreement with Laos promising \$3.4 million to control outbreaks of avian flu. Soon thereafter, he pledges another \$7 million to assist Vietnam. U.S. Ambassador to Thailand Ralph Boyce expressed concern that less

developed Southeast Asian states may be unaware of a flu outbreak until it has already spread beyond the region.

Oct. 16, 2005: U.S. and Philippine forces begin a two-week war game called *Talon Vision* on the main island of Luzon. Its purpose is to improve interoperability in joint amphibious landings and other operations. U.S. forces are coming from Okinawa.

Oct. 17, 2005: After Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Sen arrests activists for alleged defamation when they challenged Cambodia's recent border demarcation agreement with Vietnam, the U.S. embassy in Phnom Penh called on the Cambodian government to protect the constitutional right of freedom of expression.

Oct. 20, 2005: On a tour to improve U.S. understanding of and image in the Muslim world, President Bush's special envoy on public diplomacy, Karen Hughes, faces harsh questioning from Muslim women university students in Jakarta about the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq.

Oct. 22, 2005: U.S. backs Indonesian government plan to strengthen counterterrorism legislation.

Oct. 22, 2005: State Department bioterrorism expert Henry Crumpton in Manila urges Southeast Asian states to prepare for bioterror attacks from al-Qaeda-affiliated groups that have stated intentions to develop such weapons.

Oct. 24, 2005: Malaysian Defense Minister Najib Razak says that the U.S. could provide aircraft for the littoral states' "Eyes in the Sky" anti-piracy patrol of the Malacca Straits but that the primary responsibility remains with the straits states. So far, there are only two flights per week.

Oct. 25, 2005: Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien-loong, speaking at the PRC Higher Party School, reiterates his government's position that Asia be open to all great powers, including the U.S., China, the EU, and Japan.

Oct. 27, 2005: U.S. embassy in Jakarta issues a warning to avoid non-essential travel to Indonesia after the Oct. 1 Bali bombing. The last time a U.S. travel warning was issued was in May.

Oct. 28, 2005: A U.S. Navy ship, *Joint Venture*, delivers humanitarian supplies to Mindanao for a U.S.-Philippine joint civic action effort.

Oct. 28, 2005: State Department expresses concern about Myanmar's intimidation efforts toward the ILO office in Rangoon which received 21 death threats in August and September.

Oct. 28, 2005: Congressman James Leach, chairman of the House International Relations Committee, castigates Hun Sen's government in Cambodia for human rights and press freedom violations.

Oct. 29, 2005: Vietnam demands that the U.S. remove it from a State Department blacklist of religious rights violators so as not to negatively affect the recent progress in bilateral relations. The list is produced annually as mandated by Congress.

Oct. 30, 2005: Philippine Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo briefs U.S. Director for National Intelligence John Negroponte on the current Philippine political situation. Negroponte praises Philippine reform and counterterrorist efforts.

Nov. 2, 2005: U.S. defense officials reveal Omar al-Faruq, al-Qaeda's most senior operative in Southeast Asia, escaped from U.S. custody in July.

Nov. 4, 2005: U.S. Treasury Department freezes the assets of six Thai companies with alleged ties to Burmese drug traffickers linked to the United Wa State Army's heroin and methamphetamine distribution networks.

Nov. 7, 2005: Thai Prime Minister Thaksin denies there was ever a secret prison in his country where the CIA held terrorist suspects.

Nov. 8, 2005: In the U.S.-Thailand Strategic Dialogue, Thai officials briefed U.S. representatives on the situation in the restive south, while U.S. officials affirmed this was Thailand internal affair, though Washington was ready to assist if requested.

Nov. 8, 2005: Secretary Rice releases the State Department's annual report on international religious freedom and mentions Vietnam as one of eight countries of "particular concern." Hanoi condemns its inclusion.

Nov. 8, 2005: Thailand and the U.S. conclude a two-day "Strategic Dialogue" at which both sides agreed to encourage Myanmar toward democratization. While Washington supports sanctions, Bangkok prefers quiet diplomacy.

Nov. 10-22, 2005: Singapore Armed Forces conduct first unilateral exercise at the U.S. Marines Training Center in 29 Palms, California. The exercise integrates the Singapore Air Force with commando ground forces and includes UAVs.

Nov. 15, 2005: U.S. and Vietnam sign accord permitting the emigration of Vietnamese who had been unable to benefit from the U.S. humanitarian resettlement program before it ended in 1994. The U.S. will accept applications from Vietnamese citizens who would have been eligible for immigration under the earlier program.

Nov. 17, 2005: U.S. and several ASEAN members led by Thailand call for an "enhanced partnership" on security and development issues at a meeting prior to APEC in South Korea.

Nov. 18, 2005: Malaysian Prime Minister Badawi, meeting President Bush on the eve of the APEC summit, urges the U.S. to be more even handed in its treatment of Muslims in Iraq and the Palestinian territories.

Nov. 18, 2005: President Bush and Southeast Asian leaders congratulate Indonesia on the killing of Azahari, one of the region's most wanted terrorists who built the explosives used by suicide bombers in Bali, the Jakarta Marriott, and the Australian embassy. Bush meets with six ASEAN leaders on the sidelines of the APEC meeting in Busan, Korea.

Nov. 18, 2005: U.S. and Australian defense chiefs agree to enhance Southeast Asian counterterror cooperation, building on their work with Indonesia and the Philippines.

Nov. 22, 2005: Under Secretary of State Nicholas Burns, citing national security interests, waives conditionality pertaining to Foreign Military Financing and defense exports to Indonesia, thus expanding bilateral military reengagement.

Nov. 22, 2005: Indonesia welcomes renewal of military ties with the U.S., broken after the 1991 Indonesian military shootings in East Timor. The ties have been restored to acknowledge Indonesia's cooperation in the war on terror.

Nov. 28, 2005: U.S., Thai, and Singapore air forces begin annual *Cope Thunder* air exercise with a two-day Command Post event. A follow-on flying exercise will occur in February 2006.

Nov. 28, 2005: State Department condemns Myanmar's military junta for extending opposition leader and Nobel Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi's house arrest for 12 months.

Nov. 29, 2005: Indonesian President Yudhoyono lifts an entry ban that had been placed on terrorism expert Sidney Jones of the International Crisis Group. The president's action is a rare example of his overriding the bureaucracy. The ban on Jones was creating international embarrassment for Indonesia.

Dec. 2, 2005: UN Security Council agrees to a U.S. proposal to hold a formal briefing on the situation in Myanmar – the first time the UNSC will discuss the political situation in that country. U.S. Ambassador John Bolton claims that Myanmar was seeking nuclear power capabilities, an allegation denied by Burmese authorities.

Dec. 6, 2005: U.S. embassy in Manila “temporarily” closes for security reasons.

Dec. 6, 2005: Philippine Defense Secretary Arellino Cruz, Jr. meets Secretary Rumsfeld in Washington while about 200 U.S. troops are in the southern Philippines conducting training and civic action programs.

Dec. 6, 2005: U.S. State Department denounces the “National Convention” of Myanmar's military junta, calling it “neither a credible political process...nor a means for

the national reconciliation.” It has no legitimacy to draft a constitution representative of the Burmese people.

Dec. 7, 2005: Thai Justice Minister denies U.S. media reports that the U.S. CIA operated a secret jail in Thailand for captured high-level terrorist suspects.

Dec. 7, 2005: Director of U.S. National Intelligence John Negroponte meets with President Arroyo and reportedly urges that the Philippines pass antiterrorist legislation against the growing threat of Jemmah Islamiyah training activities in Mindanao.

Dec. 12, 2005: Singapore Ministry of Defense announces purchase of 12 *F-15SG* fighters to be the Republic’s next multi-role combat aircraft. Delivery is scheduled for 2008-2009.

Dec. 16, 2005: At the request of the U.S., the UNSC hears a briefing on human rights abuses in Myanmar. Ambassador Bolton said, on the basis of the briefing, that the U.S. would “continue advocating Security Council scrutiny.”