

Regional Overview:

Powell Speaks ... Was Anyone Listening?

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In June, Secretary of State Colin Powell presented the Bush administration's most comprehensive statement to date on its East Asia policy. Hardly anyone noticed! In Asia, everyone was apparently too preoccupied with the World Cup soccer games while the crises in the Middle East and South Asia diverted world attention from Asian politics in general. Nonetheless, Powell's speech underscored the importance of America's regional alliances while reinforcing the administration's focus on antiterrorism. It also set a generally positive tone regarding Sino-U.S. relations. The same cannot be said about North Korea. While expressing hope that a U.S.-DPRK dialogue would soon begin (and we continue to wait), Powell also laid some specific prerequisites for progress that will guarantee arduous negotiations if and when the two sides ever actually sit down and talk.

Also overshadowing Powell's speech was President George W. Bush's June 1 commencement address at West Point, which signaled a more proactive (if not pre-emptive) strategy in the war on terrorism. Meanwhile, multilateralism took on new energy in Asia, highlighted by a *de facto* defense "summit" and a genuine summit on confidence building involving numerous Asian heads of state (but not the U.S.). The successful efforts of UN special envoy for Burma Razali Ismail to convince Rangoon's ruling junta to release Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest also captured the international spotlight. Malaysia remained a focus as a result of Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's tearful resignation (since delayed) from Malaysian politics.

Alliance-Based Strategy Remains in Place

In case there was ever any doubt, Secretary Powell's June 10 speech before the Asia Society in New York reinforced that the pre-Sept. 11 focus on preserving and strengthening Washington's East Asia alliances remained at the heart of the Bush administration's East Asia strategy. "Our alliances," Powell noted, "convey strength, purpose, and confidence, but not aggression, not hostility. Our allies have thrived on our stabilizing presence. Others in the region have also benefitted, though they are sometimes reluctant to admit it."

As always, the U.S.-Japan alliance was highly praised, but Powell's words not only stressed its positive contribution to regional stability (a familiar refrain) but also its role in providing "a framework within which Japan can contribute more to its own defense as

well as to peace and security worldwide.” Clearly Washington supports, and wants to encourage, a greater regional (if not global) security role befitting a more “normal” Japan. Powell praised Japan’s support to Operation Enduring Freedom (“we could not have asked for a more resolute response”) and underscored Tokyo’s “superb leadership” in the Afghan reconstruction effort. It was not all sweetness and light, however. Powell offered a detailed prescription of the things Tokyo needs to do to get its economy back on track, warning that “if this economic deterioration continues, Japan’s important leadership role could be undermined.”

Allied (and Others) Support for the War on Terrorism

Powell also commended America’s other East Asian allies – Australia, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, and the Philippines – for their support in the war on terrorism, while reinforcing Washington’s commitment to deterrence on the Korean Peninsula as well as to broader regional stability. Philippine efforts against Abu Sayyaf in particular were highlighted. He also praised the efforts of Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand in countering terrorism.

Powell recognized the domestic concerns of “Asian states with large Muslim populations” but, in remarks that appeared directed toward Indonesia (without mentioning names), noted that “far, far greater dangers come from ignoring the problem of terrorism and letting radical minorities drive domestic politics, rather than taking strong action against terrorists and their sympathizers.” This reflects Washington’s continued frustration over Jakarta’s inability or unwillingness to face up to the threat posed by Islamic radicals within its midst, despite Powell’s admonition that it is these extremists who “violate Islam’s fundamental precepts of tolerance and peace” and thus “do a disservice to a proud and noble religion.”

Reaching Out to China (Candidly)

Secretary Powell’s speech also reinforced the positive tone toward future Sino-U.S. cooperation set during Chinese Vice President (and heir apparent) Hu Jintao’s earlier visit to the U.S., while still candidly discussing disagreements, particularly *vis-à-vis* Taiwan. Powell noted that “market dynamism clearly has replaced dogmatism” in a China, which is “no longer the enemy of capitalism.” A key phrase was Powell’s statement that Washington “wants to work with China to make decisions and take actions befitting a global leader . . . to promote stability and well-being worldwide.” Ever since the two presidents first met in Shanghai in October 2001, President Bush appears to have been reaching out to his Chinese counterpart; he even called President Jiang Zemin prior to announcing his plan to withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty last December. Bush has also invited Jiang to visit his ranch in Crawford, Texas when Jiang comes to the October 2002 APEC Leaders’ Meeting in Mexico.

Powell’s “befitting a global leader” reference indicates (at least to this observer) that

Washington still seeks, and would welcome, a more proactive, positive Chinese global leadership role. Ironically, in my own discussions with Chinese officials and security specialists, they point to a perceived lack of initiative or receptivity in Washington as the reason for the admittedly slow pace of Sino-U.S. cooperation (especially when compared to U.S. cooperation with China's strategic partner, Russia). While this may be true as far as military-to-military relations are concerned – although even here there seems to be some progress, witness Hu's visit to the Pentagon and the visit of Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Peter Rodman to Beijing in late June – in terms of broader cooperation, it seems that it is Beijing that is holding back (perhaps due to preoccupation with its upcoming leadership transition).

Goodbye Strategic Ambiguity, Hello Dual Clarity?

Taiwan remains the most contentious issue between Washington and Beijing and Powell's speech broke no new ground, citing Washington's commitment to uphold its "one China" policy and its insistence on a peaceful resolution to cross-Strait differences. Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz did turn some heads, however, when he announced in late May that the U.S. "opposes" Taiwan independence; a marked departure from previous "does not support" statements (at least in Taiwanese and Chinese eyes).

Washington was quick to assert (as it always does in such instances) that this did not signal a change in policy. But it is worth noting that Wolfowitz has long been an advocate of shifting from the time-honored policy of "strategic ambiguity" – described as trying to convince Beijing that the U.S. will defend Taiwan while making Taipei think it will not, an approach managed with varying degrees of effectiveness by previous Democratic and Republican administrations alike – to one of "dual clarity," in which Beijing is sent an unambiguous message that Washington will do "whatever it takes" to help defend Taiwan, even as Taipei is bluntly told that independence is not an option that Washington will support. While the "one China" policy may not have changed, Washington seems to be shifting, by design or default, toward a new, less ambiguous approach in defining its cross-Strait stance.

U.S.-DPRK Prerequisites for Progress

Powell's comments on North Korea were perhaps the most noteworthy. Washington may remain willing to meet with North Korea "any time, any place, without preconditions" – the standing policy, although not repeated in Powell's speech – but it has clearly placed some very specific prerequisites for progress in any dialogue that may occur. While none is particularly surprising and all have been mentioned before, Powell's June 10 speech seems to cast them in stone, stating explicitly that "progress between us will depend on Pyongyang's behavior on a number of key issues." More specifically (to paraphrase), Powell states that the North:

- must get out of the proliferation business and eliminate long-range missiles that threaten others;

- must make a much more serious effort to provide for its suffering citizens (to include greatly improved monitoring and access to ensure the food provided by Washington and others gets into hungry mouths);
- needs to move toward a less threatening conventional military posture (by living up to its past pledges to implement basic confidence building measures with the South); and
- must come into full compliance with International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards (as called for in the 1994 U.S.-DPRK Geneva Agreed Framework, to which Washington remains committed).

This appears to represent a hardening of Washington's position prior to the initiation of long-awaited talks between Washington and Pyongyang; at a minimum, it certainly places "without preconditions" in a new context. Of course, Pyongyang is no stranger to prerequisites; it has a number of its own, to include a withdrawal of all U.S. forces from the peninsula. Should future U.S.-DPRK dialogue occur – and the North-South naval clash shortly before the quarter's end has at least delayed, if not derailed such talks – it runs the risk of resembling a "dialogue of the deaf," given both sides' seemingly unyielding attitudes.

[Note: On July 2, the U.S. rescinded its offer to send Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs James Kelly to Pyongyang for talks beginning July 10, citing the lack of a timely response to its offer as well as the "unacceptable atmosphere" created by the North-South naval engagement. This sent two clear signals: North Korea's behavior toward the South affects U.S.-DPRK talks and Washington is not going to tolerate unprofessional diplomatic behavior – Pyongyang frequently makes Seoul wait until the last minute (or beyond) before responding to ROK initiatives, as Seoul seemingly pleads for a response. Washington, it appears, will not play this game.]

West Point Speech: Prelude to a New National Security Strategy?

If Secretary Powell's speech was largely ignored, the international media clearly focused its attention on President Bush's June 1 commencement address to newly commissioned officers at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. The speech itself was actually quite balanced. It was aimed, first and foremost, at inspiring young officers who were about to embark on the war against terrorism, but it also provided additional insights into Bush's thinking on how the war on terrorism should be fought.

In his remarks, President Bush stressed the importance of growing major power cooperation (including China in the group), noting that "we will preserve the peace by building good relations among the great powers." He also noted that maintaining deterrence and building a strong defense (both homeland defense and missile defense)

were essential priorities for the U.S. armed forces.

The part of the address that drew the most attention was Bush's assertion that "the war on terror will not be won on the defensive. We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans, and confront the worst threats before they emerge. In the world we have entered, the only path to safety is the path of action. And this nation will act." Bush noted that this will require the best intelligence; it will require modernizing domestic agencies (such as the FBI); it will require transforming the military (to make it more responsive to today's challenges); and it will require Americans "to be more forward-looking and resolute, to be ready for pre-emptive action when necessary to defend our liberty and protect our lives."

The reference to "pre-emptive action" did not refer exclusively to dropping bombs. Bush also cited other tools – finance, intelligence, law enforcement – and the need to help train others to fight terrorism within their boundaries. Then he added that "we will send diplomats where they are needed, and we will send you, our soldiers, where you're needed."

In analyzing Bush's comments, it is important to place his "pre-emptive" remarks in the proper, broader context of a multifaceted war on terrorism. Even so, his West Point remarks have caused speculation about a significant change in U.S. security strategy and raised new concerns about U.S. unilateralism. One hopes these issues will be adequately addressed once the Bush administration's first (overdue since January) annual *U.S. National Security Strategy* document is released (reportedly in early fall).

Multilateralism Takes on New Energy

Several new Asian multilateral security efforts took form during the past quarter, including a China-initiated economic forum, a *de facto* defense "summit" in Singapore organized by the nongovernmental International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) in London, a genuine summit focused on confidence building involving numerous "Asian" (broadly defined) heads of state (but not the U.S.), and a Thai-initiated gathering for pan-Asian foreign (and other) ministers. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) also took on increased status during the quarter.

Boao Forum for Asia. The first annual Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) took place in Boao, China (on Hainan Island) on April 12-13, 2002. Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji kicked off the conference. Other luminaries among the 2,000 officials, businessmen, and scholars in attendance included Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro, Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, ROK Prime Minister Lee Hang-don, former Philippine President Fidel Ramos, and former Australian Prime Minister Robert Hawke. The new forum, established by China as an Asian version of the influential annual Davos World Economic Forum, is aimed at strengthening economic exchanges and cooperation within the region.

Beijing has high hopes for this forum, which it sees as an important supplement to Asia's current cooperation mechanisms (such as the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation or APEC) that will "make a significant contribution to the building of a new Asia that features prosperity, stability, harmony, and peaceful coexistence." It also was aimed at promoting Hainan Island as a "first-class venue" for international conferences. It remains to be seen how much sustained interest this forum will be able to generate and if more Asian leaders can be attracted to follow-on meetings, especially given the complaint by some observers that this "nongovernmental" forum seemed to closely follow an official Chinese script.

Singapore "Shangri-La Dialogue." The May 31-June 2, 2002 IISS Asia Security Conference, dubbed "The Shangri-La Dialogue" after the hotel in which it was held, brought senior defense officials from many Asia-Pacific states together with regional strategists and key legislators for nonofficial security discussions. According to its organizers, it provided a "much-needed multilateral forum in which Asia's security challenges can be addressed" since "until now, there has been no forum founded specifically to allow Asia's defense ministers and key counterparts from outside the region to interact."

Senior defense officials in attendance included the defense ministers from Australia, India, Indonesia, and Japan. Singapore Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew also attended, as did U.S. Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz. The PRC was represented by a major general and lower-ranking officials from many other Asia-Pacific nations (and beyond) also attended. In addition to open plenary discussions, the unofficial "defense summit" allowed senior regional defense officials to meet "privately and in confidence, bilaterally and multilaterally, without the obligation to produce a formal statement or communiqué." By all accounts, the conference was very successful and IISS has announced that, at the defense ministers' request, the Shangri-La Dialogue will be made an annual event.

While the meeting, as advertised, was unique, senior defense officials have for several years now been included in the annual ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) official ministerial dialogues, although the senior representative at ARF meetings is the foreign minister. Security issues are the focus of ARF discussions but some key issues have been left off the table or dealt with only tangentially. It remains to be seen whether regional defense establishments will see the Shangri-La Dialogue as a useful complement to the ARF or as a preferred alternative. At a minimum, it should put some pressure on the foreign ministers to ensure that their dialogue becomes more relevant.

It will also be interesting to watch the level of future Chinese participation. It is not clear why such a low-ranking Chinese delegation participated in the first meeting but one could speculate that the presence of many Taiwanese security specialists, including members of the official national security community, could have been a factor – IISS meetings are open to all members, and this includes many distinguished Taiwanese.

Conference on Interactions and Confidence Building Measures in Asia. Another new multilateral forum involving selected East Asian states has been formed in Central Asia through the initiative of President Nursultan Nazarbayev of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The first summit meeting of the Conference on Interactions and Confidence building measures in Asia (CICA) brought heads of state from China, Mongolia, and Russia together with their counterparts from 13 other Central, South, and Southwest Asian states. (Lower-ranking observers were also present from Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Thailand, the U.S., and Vietnam.) Media attention was focused on the presence of Indian President Atal Behari Vajpayee and Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf and the inability of both Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Jiang Zemin to get these two antagonists to sit down and talk to one another. CICA itself received almost no attention.

According to its charter, the main objective and thrust of the CICA will be “to enhance cooperation through elaborating multilateral approaches towards promoting peace, security, and stability in Asia.” Other objectives included increased trade and economic cooperation and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The member states “unconditionally and unequivocally condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations,” signing a CICA Declaration on Eliminating Terrorism and Promoting Dialogue among Civilizations. Summits are to take place every four years, with foreign ministers meeting every two years and working groups gathering annually to promote CICA’s objectives. As with the nongovernmental Boao Forum, it remains to be seen if interest in this extremely broad-based initiative can be sustained, although the fact that summits will occur only once every four years may keep Russia and China (among others) interested in supporting this Central Asian initiative, if for no other reason than to maintain their own influence in this buffer region.

Asia Cooperation Dialogue. A Thai-initiated Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) added yet another definition of “Asia” to the mix, involving ministers from nine of the 10 ASEAN states (all but Burma, which was invited but refused to participate due to ongoing border tensions with Thailand), ASEAN’s Plus Three partners (China, Japan, South Korea), three South Asia states (Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan), and, inexplicably, Bahrain and Qatar. It was initially supposed to be an informal gathering of foreign ministers but was later opened to ministers in general after several foreign ministers were unable (or unwilling) to attend. Discussions focused on economic, social, and cultural issues, rather than political or security concerns.

While the ACD’s host, Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, proclaimed the meeting an “historic Asian event” – not to mention the “beginning of a new chapter in world history” – and the ministers have agreed to meet again in Thailand next year for more informal discussions, critics have been less enthusiastic, with one former Thai diplomat describing it as ADC (Asia Diplomatic Confusion) rather than ACD. No one seemed to view this initiative as a potential threat to the official ARF ministerial gathering.

Shanghai Cooperation Organization. One common element in all the above forums is Chinese participation. China has become a big believer in multilateralism, playing the lead role in the BFA and a central role in the CICA, and sending its foreign minister to the ACD. Beijing also chose not to boycott the IISS meeting despite the presence of Taiwan officials (in their private capacities, of course). In addition, China remains a driving force behind the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which links China and Russia with four of their Central Asian neighbors (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan).

Several ministerial-level SCO meetings took place during the past quarter, culminating in a summit meeting in St. Petersburg, Russia on June 5-8, 2002, immediately after the CICA summit. The six heads of state signed the SCO Charter, giving the group formal legal status as a full-fledged international organization. A secretariat has been established in Beijing. The leaders also agreed to set up a joint regional antiterrorism agency based in Kyrgyzstan, which President Putin observed would be a “contribution to global antiterrorist efforts.”

To its credit, the SCO had already taken on an antiterrorism focus prior to last Sept. 11. At that time it was also touted as a check against unipolar tendencies, with pronouncements also strongly condemning missile defense and supporting the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. While the SCO was “not aimed at any third country,” it was not too difficult to discern a growing anti-U.S. bias. Those themes are now being played down, with Putin stating that others, including the U.S., were welcome to join the SCO if they desired. Thus far, India seems to have expressed the greatest interest.

One country being encouraged to join by both China and Russia is Mongolia, a former Soviet satellite that has focused on becoming part of the East Asian security community in recent years. Ulaanbaatar seems hesitant to sign up, however. As one Mongolian security specialist told me, the SCO seems to work as follows: Russia and China get together and decide what should happen next and then the others are told about it and expected to go along. While this may be a bit harsh, it does reflect the legitimate sovereignty concerns of a small landlocked country caught between two giant neighbors. At present, Mongolia seems more comfortable participating in the broader-based CICA and the East Asia-oriented ARF.

Southeast Asia in the Spotlight

Refreshingly, Southeast Asia also managed to attract Washington’s and the world’s attention during the past quarter. In his June speech, Secretary Powell, in addition to praising individual and collective attempts to fight terrorism, also applauded the ARF for tackling new threats ranging from terrorism and narcotics trafficking to human trafficking and HIV/AIDS, and noted that he was personally looking forward to attending the ARF meeting in Brunei in late July.

In addition, Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly gave a very comprehensive presentation centered on U.S. Southeast Asia policy during a speech at the Asia Society's Washington Center on April 4. Kelly called on ASEAN to "harness its collective political will" to address transnational threats, while pointing out that Washington "needs to engage more with ASEAN members and with the organization, and we will." He underscored America's support for an ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (AFTA) and the establishment of bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs) like the one being negotiated between Washington and Singapore.

Kelly emphasized the need for both economic and political reform, commending the great strides made by some ASEAN members while pointing out continuing deficiencies. He also expressed support for continuing efforts to create an ASEAN Human Rights Commission. Kelly also praised the individual and collective ASEAN efforts to combat terrorism, which included the subsequent signing of an antiterrorism pact among Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines on May 8. This laid the groundwork for a broader agreement to facilitate antiterrorism training and information sharing reached by ASEAN home affairs and interior ministers on May 22.

Also capturing the international spotlight was the success of retired Malaysian diplomat Razali Ismail, acting in his capacity as UN special envoy for Burma, to convince Rangoon's ruling junta to release Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest on May 6. Kelly had praised Rizali's initial efforts during his April speech, calling on Burma's generals to demonstrate their sincerity about reform and national reconciliation by taking some positive steps, including the release of Aung San Suu Kyi.

The release, while significant, is only a small step in a long process to achieve national reconciliation. During my own discussions in Rangoon in late May, no one seemed to be sure what the ruling junta's long-term game plan was or even if they had one. Thus far, they seem to be honoring their "no strings attached" release of Aung San Suu Kyi, however. She was able to travel to Mandalay in June; it was her previous attempt to travel outside the city that earned her 18 months of house arrest. And, on May 31, her National League for Democracy hosted its first ever public lecture featuring an outside guest speaker – I had the honor and pleasure of presenting this lecture to an overflow crowd of heroic Burmese democracy advocates. The government made no attempt to impede or disrupt the presentation (even though they turned down a request, made through the American Center in Rangoon, for me to give a lecture on U.S. foreign policy at the national university).

Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's tearful announcement of his immediate resignation from Malaysian politics on June 22 (since temporarily rescinded) kept Southeast Asia in the spotlight, as did his earlier trip to Washington for his second meeting with President Bush – they also met along the sidelines of the APEC Leaders' Meeting in Shanghai last October. While democracy, Malaysia-style, has its definite shortcomings, Mahathir has gained much international recognition and respect, clearly echoed in Washington, for his outspoken criticism of Islamic extremism. His willingness as a Muslim to speak out

against radicalism and his efforts over the years to create a multi-ethnic, religiously tolerant society in Malaysia may have some in Washington actually missing him when he official steps down in favor of Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi after hosting the Organization of Islamic Conference summit in October 2003.

Regional Chronology **April - June 2002**

Mar. 31-April 1, 2002: Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri visits South Korea.

April 3-6, 2002: Ex-ROK Unification Minister Lim Dong-won visits Pyongyang as ROK President Kim Dae-jung's special envoy. After talks with DPRK Leader Kim Jong-il and others, he returns with a commitment to resume inter-Korean cooperation, including a new offer of a second cross-DMZ rail link.

April 1-4, 2002: President Megawati visits India.

April 2-9, 2002: Li Peng, chairman of China's National People's Congress, visits Japan.

April 3-5, 2002: ROK special envoy Lim Dong-won meets with DPRK leader Kim Jong-il in Pyongyang.

April 4, 2002: Asst. State Secretary James Kelly lays out the U.S. ASEAN and North Korea policy in a speech at Asia Society in Washington, D.C.

April 4, 2002: President Bush calls Taiwan "Republic of Taiwan" in a State Department speech.

April 4-5, 2002: USTR Robert Zoellick meets with Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra in Bangkok.

April 4-12, 2002: DPRK Deputy PM Cho Chan-dok visits Russia.

April 5, 2002: Douglas Paal appointed director of the Taipei office of the American Institute in Taiwan.

April 6, 2002: Liberal Party leader Ozawa Ichiro suggests Japan could "produce nuclear warheads" if threatened by China "arrogance."

April 6, 2002: India-Burma-Thailand foreign ministerial meeting is held in Rangoon, Burma.

April 7-9, 2002: Indian PM Atal Behari Vajapayee meets with Singapore PM Goh Chok Tong in Singapore.

April 7-11, 2002: ROK PM Lee Han-dong meets with Vietnamese President Tran Duc Luong and PM Phan Van Khai in Vietnam.

April 8, 2002: Japanese and ROK Justice Ministers sign an extradition treaty in Seoul.

April 8-10, 2002: USTR Zoellick visits China.

April 9, 2002: Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG) meeting in Tokyo.

April 9, 2002: U.S. Congressional Taiwan Caucus is inaugurated by Co-Founders and Co-Chairs: Representatives Robert Wexler, Steve Chabot, Sherrod Brown, and Dana Rohrabacher. Ambassador C.J. Chen, Representative of Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office, and a 14-member delegation from the Legislative Yuan, led by the Honorable Trong R. Chai, also attend.

April 9-12, 2002: Former U.S. Ambassador to South Korea Donald Gregg visits Pyongyang in a private capacity.

April 11, 2002: Secretary of State Colin Powell meets with Russian FM Igor Ivanov for talks on nuclear arms at Madrid conference on Middle East security.

April 11, 2002: USTR Zoellick meets with Japanese Trade Minister Hiranuma Takeo and FM Kawaguchi Yoriko in Tokyo.

April 11-14, 2002: The first Boao Forum for Asia in Hainan, China; PRC Premier Zhu Rongji, PM Koizumi, and PM Thaksin among attendees.

April 13-15, 2002: Asst. Secretary Kelly meets Malaysian PM Mahathir Mohamad in Malaysia.

April 15, 2002: USCINCPAC Adm. Dennis Blair visits the Philippines.

April 15, 2002: Japan and the ROK hold the first bilateral history panel attended by high-level officials.

April 15, 2002: Air China Flight 129 from Beijing to Pusan crashes in bad weather on approach to Pusan's Kimhae Airport.

April 16, 2002: U.S.-Japan working-level security meetings held in Washington, D.C. *Asahi* reports U.S. officials informally request Japan to dispatch Aegis-equipped warship to Indian Ocean.

April 16-21, 2002: ROK FM Choi Sung-hong meets President George W. Bush, Secretary Powell, and National Security Council Advisor Condoleezza Rice in the U.S.

April 17, 2002: Xanana Gusmao wins East Timor's first presidential election.

April 20-21, 2002: G-7 financial ministers' meeting in Washington.

April 20-21, 2002: Japanese Defense Agency (JDA) chief Nakatani Gen visits the ROK.

April 21, 2002: PM Koizumi unexpectedly visits Yasukuni Shrine.

April 21, 2002: China cancels April 27-30 visit of JDA chief Nakatani and scheduled May port call in Tokyo by PLA Navy.

April 22-May 6, 2002: "Balikatan 2002" military exercises held on Luzon island, Philippines.

April 23-26, 2002: PRC Vice President Hu Jintao visits Malaysia and Singapore.

April 24, 2002: Under Secretary of State John Bolton and Russian Deputy FM Mamedov hold arms talks in Moscow.

April 24-25, 2002: Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Peter Brookes visits Jakarta to initiate a new U.S.-Indonesian security dialogue.

April 25, 2002: FM Ivanov meets Chinese FM Tang Jiaxuan.

April 25, 2002: Secretary Powell says U.S. is ready to resume dialogue with North Korea.

April 25-May 3, 2002: U.S. Joint Chief of Staff Gen. Richard Myers visits the Philippines, Japan, and the ROK.

April 26, 2002: Shanghai Cooperative Organization (SCO) holds foreign ministers' meeting in Moscow.

April 27-28, 2002: PM Koizumi visits Vietnam.

April 27-May 3, 2002: VP Hu meets with President Bush and other senior officials in Washington.

April 29, 2002: PM Koizumi visits East Timor.

April 29, 2002: Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld meets with Russian DM Sergei Ivanov and FM Ivanov in Moscow.

April 29-30, 2002: Officials from the DPRK and Japan meet in Beijing to discuss abduction issue.

April 29-May 1, 2002: Laotian PM Boun Nhang Vorachith meets with President Macapagal-Arroyo in the Philippines.

April 30, 2002: KEDO-DPRK talks resume in Hyangsan, North Korea.

April 30-May 3, 2002: Malaysian DM Najib Tun Razak meets Secretary Rumsfeld and members of Congress.

May 1, 2002: PM Koizumi visits Australia and agrees to open working level talks on a free trade area.

May 2, 2002: East Timor President Gusmao meets President Megawati in Indonesia, invites her to East Timor's independence ceremony on May 20.

May 2, 2002: PM Koizumi visits New Zealand.

May 2, 2002: Singaporean Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew meets President Bush in the U.S.

May 2-3, 2002: FM Ivanov meets with President Bush and hold arms talks with Secretary Powell in Washington.

May 6, 2002: North Korea cancels participation in new round of inter-Korean economic talks.

May 6, 2002: Burma's democratic leader Aung San Suu Kyi is released from 19 months' house arrest.

May 7, 2002: Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines sign pact to coordinate security operations to fight terrorism.

May 8, 2002: North Korean asylum-seekers forcibly taken from Japan's consulate in Shenyang by Chinese police.

May 9-11, 2002: Two PRC naval ships pay the first visit to the ROK.

May 10, 2002: ASEAN Plus Three hold fifth finance ministers' meeting in Shanghai.

May 11-15, 2002: South Korean Representative Park Geun-hye visits DPRK, meets with Kim Jong-il.

May 13, 2002: Indonesian DM Matori Abdul Djalil hold talks with Secretary Rumsfeld and NSC Rice in D.C.

May 13, 2002: President Kim quits the Millennium Democratic Party

May 13-15, 2002: PM Mahathir visits the U.S. and signs antiterrorism treaty.

May 14-28, 2002: The U.S., Thai, and Singapore forces joint military exercise “Cobra Gold” is held in Thailand.

May 15, 2002: SCO defense ministers meet in Moscow.

May 16, 2002: Burma’s military junta signs agreement with Russia to build a nuclear research reactor.

May 16-19, 2002: New USCINCPAC Adm. Thomas Fargo meets President Macapagal-Arroyo in the Philippines.

May 19-24, 2002: A DPRK team visits the South to inspect a nuclear power plant.

May 20, 2002: East Timor achieves independence; President Megawati attends ceremony.

May 20-24, 2002: President Macapagal-Arroyo and PM Mahathir in Tokyo.

May 21, 2002: DPRK FM Paek Nam-sum meets with FM Ivanov in Russia.

May 21, 2002: PRC FM Tang Jiaxuan meets with PM Goh in Singapore.

May 22-24, 2002: PM Mahathir meets President Kim in Seoul.

May 23-24, 2002: Australian FM Alexander Downer meets with Indonesia FM Hassan Wirajuda in Jakarta.

May 23-27, 2002: President Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin sign a treaty that slashes long-range nuclear warheads by two-thirds by the year 2012, in Russia.

May 27-June 2, 2002: U.S. joint military exercise Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) held in Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia.

May 28, 2002: Bush and Putin both arrive in Italy to formally sign the NATO protocol on the NATO-Russia Council.

May 28-29, 2002: SCO holds first economic ministerial meeting in Shanghai.

May 29, 2002: Secretary Wolfowitz states that the U.S. “opposes” Taiwan independence.

May 29-30, 2002: APEC Trade ministerial meeting held in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

May 31, 2002: PM Koizumi attends World Cup opening ceremony in Seoul, meets President Kim Dae-jung.

May 31, 2002: DM Djalil and Secretary Wolfowitz meet in Singapore.

May 31-June 2, 2002: Russian DM Sergei Ivanov visits Beijing to meet Chinese counterpart Chi Haotian and other leaders.

May 31-June 2, 2002: DM Ivanov meets President Jiang in Beijing.

May 31-June 2, 2002: Shangri-la dialogue on Asian security is held in Singapore. Ministers and security officials from 20 countries participate, including Secretary Wolfowitz.

June 2-3, 2002: Secretary Wolfowitz meets President Macapagal-Arroyo in Manila.

June 4, 2002: The first Conference on Interaction and Confidence building measures in Asia (CICA) held in Kazakhstan; Presidents Jiang, Putin, Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, and Indian PM Vajpayee participate.

June 5-8, 2002: President Jiang visits St. Petersburg for the SCO summit.

June 6, 2002: Bush administration grants Russia status as a “market economy.”

June 7-9, 2002: U.S.-North Korea MIA talks in Thailand. Negotiators agree to hold three 30-day searches in North Korea starting July 20.

June 10, 2002: U.S. and South Korea draw 1-1 in World Cup match.

June 10, 2002: Secretary Powell’s address to Asia Society outlines U.S. Asia policy.

June 11, 2002: U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft meets with Russian Prosecutor General Vladimir Ustinov in Moscow.

June 13, 2002: U.S. formally abandons the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.

June 14, 2002: Russia announces it is no longer bound by the 1993 Start II accords that outlaw multiple-warhead missiles and other destabilizing strategic weapons.

June 14, 2002: U.S. coordinator on North Korea Jack Pritchard meets with North Korean Ambassador to the UN Pak Gil-yon in New York.

June 17, 2002: U.S. and Philippine forces exchange fire with guerillas in the Philippines.

June 17, 2002: TCOG meets in San Francisco.

June 18-19, 2002: The Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) in Cha-am, Thailand.

June 19, 2002: Thai troops and Burma troops exchange fire.

June 21, 2002: Trade Minister Shi warns countries not to enter FTAs with Taiwan.

June 21, 2002: Asst. Secretary Kelly says the U.S. will hold talks with DPRK soon.

June 22, 2002: PM Mahathir announces intention to retire immediately, later agrees to remain for 16 more months.

June 22, 2002: The U.S.-Malaysia "CARAT 2002" joint military exercise.

June 26-27, 2002: G-8 summit is held at the Kananaskis retreat in the Canadian Rockies.

June 29, 2002: An inter-Korean firefight in the Yellow Sea sinks an ROK patrol boat, killing five. Northern casualties are estimated at 30. Each accuses the other of shooting first.