

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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1. COUNTRY REVIEW

A. SOUTH ASIA

AFGHANISTAN

- **IEC announces schedule for Lower House of Parliament elections; 16 new cabinet nominees appear before Wolesi Jirga; UN chief urges better international coordination; At least 50 militants killed in three separate operations; 9 killed in suicide bomb attack in Gardez; Pakistan urges the setting up of an Afghan Resettlement Fund**

The Afghan Independent Election Commission (IEC) announced the schedule for elections to the 249-seat Wolesi Jirga, the Lower House of Parliament on January 7. While the candidate registration process would start from January 16, polling and counting will occur on May 22 and final results will be announced on July 30.¹ The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has urged the IEC to remove and replace "those officials who were complicit in the fraud" committed in the August 2009 presidential and provincial council polls.²

Meanwhile, President Karzai's 16 new cabinet nominees including three women candidates appeared before the Wolesi Jirga for approval on January 9. The Wolesi Jirga had earlier rejected 17 of the 24 cabinet nominees. None of the rejected candidates were among the new nominees.³

In his latest report to the UN Security Council, UN chief Ban Ki-moon stressed that Afghanistan was at a critical juncture and urged the need for reinforced international coordination.⁴ Kai Eide, the departing UN envoy to Afghanistan warned the Security Council that an emphasis on security matters over social issues would lead to a failure of international efforts to stabilize the country.⁵

At least 50 militants were killed in three separate incidents in operations carried out by Afghan and international security forces in the provinces of Kandahar, Helmand, and Kunduz.⁶ 3 Chechens were among those killed in the

¹ 'Parliamentary vote set for May 22', *Pajhwok Afghan News*, January 7, 2010 at <http://www.pajhwok.com/viewstory.asp?lng=eng&id=87547>

² 'UNAMA calls for IEC reforms', *Pajhwok Afghan News*, January 4, 2010 at <http://www.pajhwok.com/viewstory.asp?lng=eng&id=87399>

³ '16 cabinet picks appear before MPs', *Pajhwok Afghan News*, January 9, 2010 at <http://www.pajhwok.com/viewstory.asp?lng=eng&id=87622>

⁴ 'Afghanistan at a critical juncture: Ban', *Pajhwok Afghan News*, January 5, 2010 at <http://www.pajhwok.com/viewstory.asp?lng=eng&id=87408>

⁵ 'U.N. Envoy to Afghanistan Warns of Peril of Emphasizing Security Over Social Issues', *The New York Times*, January 6, 2010 at <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/07/world/asia/07nations.html?scp=10&sq=afghanistan&st=cse>

⁶ 'A dozen insurgents killed in Kandahar, Helmand operations', *Pajhwok Afghan News*, January 4, 2010 at <http://www.pajhwok.com/viewstory.asp?lng=eng&id=87389>; 'Chechens among 25 killed in Kunduz offensive', *Pajhwok Afghan News*, January 4, 2010 at <http://www.pajhwok.com/viewstory.asp?lng=eng&id=87361>; 'Aliens among 13 militants killed in Kunduz blast', *Pajhwok Afghan News*, January 5, 2010 at <http://www.pajhwok.com/viewstory.asp?lng=eng&id=87437>

Kunduz operation. A suicide bomb attack at a market in the eastern city of Gardez killed at least nine people, including four children.⁷

In other developments, Pakistan Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani, during a meeting with visiting British foreign secretary David Miliband on January 9 in Islamabad called for the creation of an Afghan Resettlement Fund to support the return of refugees.⁸

PAKISTAN

- **Nawaz Sharif: PML-N will work to strengthen democracy; US official Brennan: CIA will continue to play a front line role on the Af-Pak border; McChrystal urges the need to “build trust” between US and Pakistan; US drone attacks kill 15 people in North Waziristan**

PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif stated that his party would fight conspiracy to destabilize civilian governments. He was reacting to President Zardari’s contention that certain groups have been trying to destabilize the existing government.⁹

The Supreme Court, hearing a case put up by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) criticized the government for having failed to provide fundamental rights to the people and for being on the “verge of disaster.”¹⁰

US Deputy National Security Adviser for Homeland Security and Counter-terrorism, John Brennan stated that CIA will continue to play a front line role on the Af-Pak border despite the killing of 8 CIA officials in Khost in the previous week.¹¹

Gen. McChrystal, speaking to media persons at the US Embassy in Islamabad on January 4 emphasised on the need to “build trust” between US and Pakistan.¹² He also aired the possibility of joint operations by Pakistani and US forces against the Taliban on both sides of the Af-Pak border.¹³

⁷ “‘Nine killed’ in suspected Afghanistan suicide bombing”, BBC News, January 7, 2010 at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/8446094.stm

⁸ “Pakistan calls for setting up Afghan resettlement fund”, *Pajhwok Afghan News*, January 10, 2010 at <http://www.pajhwok.com/viewstory.asp?lng=eng&id=87681>

⁹ ‘PML-N will be first to fight conspiracy against system’: People’s Party key to democracy: Nawaz’, *Daily Times*, January 7, 2010 at http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\01\07\story_7-1-2010_pg1_1

¹⁰ ‘System on the verge of disaster: SC’, *The News*, January 7, 2010 at http://thenews.jang.com.pk/arc_default.asp

¹¹ ‘CIA on the front line in war along Pak-Afghan border’, *Dawn*, January 4, 2010 at <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/19-cia-on-the-front-line-in-war-along-pakafghan-border-410-hh-01>

¹² Sajjad Malik, ‘Trust deficit between Pak, US forces shrinking: McChrystal’, *Daily Times*, http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\01\05\story_5-1-2010_pg1_5

¹³ Baqir Sajjad Syed, ‘Joint Pakistan-US action against Taliban in the offing’, *Dawn*, January 5, 2010 at <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/joint-pakistanus-action-against-taliban-in-the-offing-510>

In other developments, 15 people were killed in US drone attacks in Dattakhel area of North Waziristan on January 6.¹⁴

BHUTAN

- **Bhutan and India to open shorter 38-km-long highway connecting the two countries; Revised financial model for hydro projects between India and Bhutan agreed upon; Bhutan to meet education targets set by MDG**

India and Bhutan will open the 38-km-long, two-lane highway linking Pathshala in Assam to Nganglam in Bhutan, by March 2010. This road will provide the shortest access to Bhutan's biggest cement plant being constructed under the aegis of Indo-Bhutan Friendship Project.¹⁵

Preliminary agreements were reached between India and Bhutan towards the construction of Amochu hydel power plant. A revised financial model for hydro projects between the two countries was also decided during the visit of Economic Affairs Minister Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk, from January 4-8, 2010. All future inter-governmental projects will be executed on a 70 percent loan and 30 percent grant basis. While the 70-30 ratio would increase Bhutan's loan commitments, the mechanism also entails higher tariff rates from India.¹⁶

Bhutan's Education Ministry stated that the country would be able to provide 100 percent school enrolment by 2013, much ahead of the targets set by Millennium Development Goals (MDG).¹⁷

B. EAST ASIA

CHINA

- **Third round of defense consultations between India and China held in Beijing; China criticizes US arms sales to Taiwan; Visiting Singaporean Army Chief meets Liang; PLA Reiterates supremacy of CCP; New directives on military training issued**

China and India held the third round of defense consultations on January 6. The meeting was jointly presided over by the Deputy Chief of General Staff of the PLA Ma Xiaotian and the visiting Defense Secretary Pradeep Kumar. Both countries exchanged views on bilateral ties, regional security, national defense policies and military exchanges and cooperation.¹⁸ Mr. Kumar also met with

¹⁴ 'US drone attacks kill 15 in NWA', *The News*, January 7, 2010 at http://thenews.jang.com.pk/arc_default.asp

¹⁵ 'The road to Bhutan', *Indian Express*, January 10, 2010 <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/The-road-to-Bhutan/565463>

¹⁶ '70 loan and 30 grant for inter-govt. projects', *The Kuensel*, January 11, 2010 at <http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=14458>

¹⁷ 'Education for all by 2013', *The Kuensel*, January 8, 2010 at <http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=14427>

¹⁸ 'China, India Hold 3rd Round of Defense Consultation', *PLA Daily*, January 9, 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-01/09/content_4113246.htm

Defense Minister Liang Guanglie, who urged “efforts to lead media and public opinions into an aspiring and positive direction which can help create a favorable environment for the development of bilateral ties.”¹⁹

China strongly criticized US arms sales to Taiwan and urged the US to respect its core interests. Defense Ministry spokesman stated that the US was still following the Bush administration's plan to arm Taiwan, which severely undermined mutual trust between the two countries.²⁰

The visiting Singaporean Army Chief Neo Kian Hong met with Defense Minister Liang Guanglie during the week. Noting the diversified and pragmatic cooperation between the two militaries, both officials pledged to further boost military cooperation.²¹

The Central Military Commission (CMC) reiterated the supremacy of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in a recently issued guideline which reiterates the “the absolute leadership of the Communist Party of China over the armed forces.”²²

According utmost priority to military training, the General Staff Headquarters (GSH) of the PLA promulgated new directives on military training treating the issues of military readiness and up-gradation of military training a major priority area.²³

Reports meanwhile noted that flight training of the 3rd generation J-10 indigenously developed fighter started on January 6.²⁴

B. WEST ASIA

IRAN

- **Iran’s Intelligence Minister: Several foreign nationals arrested during anti-government demonstrations; Petraeus: Contingency plans available to bomb Iran’s nuclear facilities**

Iran’s Intelligence Minister Heydar Moslehi stated that several foreign nationals were arrested during anti-government demonstrations in the previous week. He added that those detained during the protests had been “pursuing propaganda and psychological warfare against the government.” Hundreds of people were

¹⁹ ‘Chinese Defense Minister Urges Favorable Media Environment for Sino-Indian Ties’, *PLA Daily*, January 8, 2010 http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-01/08/content_4112477.htm

²⁰ ‘China Denounces U.S. Arms Sales to Taiwan’, *PLA Daily*, January 9, 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-01/09/content_4113250.htm

²¹ ‘China, Singapore Seek to Further Military Ties’, *PLA Daily*, January 7, 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-01/07/content_4111613.htm

²² ‘China’s Armed Forces Urged to Improve Party Building’, *PLA Daily*, January 4, 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-01/04/content_4105165.htm

²³ ‘GSH Makes Deployment for Military Training in New Year’, *PLA Daily*, January 1, 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-01/06/content_4111444.htm

²⁴ ‘J-10 Fighters Kick off Flight Training of 2010’, *PLA Daily*, January 7, 2010 at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2010-01/07/content_4112323.htm

arrested after mass protests in Tehran on December 27 during the Shia Muslim festival of Ashura. A pro-government website, Rajanews stated that a "British citizen" was among those arrested.²⁵

Even as the imbroglio surrounding enrichment of Iran's nuclear fuel outside the country continued, US Centcom Chief Gen. David Petraeus stated that the US has developed contingency plans to include a possible bombing of its nuclear facilities. He added that "the level of effect would vary with who it is that carries it out, what ordnance they have, and what capability they can bring to bear."²⁶

IRAQ

- **Iraq's electoral commission to decide on banning 15 political parties**

Iraq's Independent High Electoral Commission stated that it will soon decide whether to ban 15 political parties from contesting the March 2010 general elections. The Commission was yet to receive the final report of the Accountability and Justice Committee regarding these 15 political parties allegedly having supporters of the former Saddam Hussein regime.²⁷

II. DEFENCE REVIEW

DEFENCE

NATIONAL

- **HAL to contribute 25 per cent work share on fifth generation fighter aircraft, with Sukhoi**

Reports noted that Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) has negotiated for a 25 per cent work share in the design and development of the Fifth Generation Fighter Aircraft (FGFA), with Russia's Sukhoi Corporation. HAL will work on critical software, including the mission computer, navigation system, most of the cockpit displays, the counter measure dispensing (CMD) system, and carry out modifications to enable the aircraft to be a twin-seater plane.

India and Russia had signed an Intergovernmental Agreement for the joint development and joint production of the aircraft in 2007. The FGPA, known as PAK FA in Russia, is expected to cost around \$8-10 billion. Both sides are expected to induct around 250 planes each.²⁸

²⁵ 'Foreigners in Iran protest seized', *BBC News*, January 4, 2010 at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8439820.stm

²⁶ 'Iran's nuclear facilities 'can be bombed'', *Khaleej Times*, January 10, 2010 at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2010/January/middleeast_January191.xml§ion=middleeast

²⁷ 'Fate of 15 Iraqi political parties in balance', *Khaleej Times*, January 9, 2010 at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle09.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2010/January/middleeast_January191.xml§ion=middleeast

²⁸ Ajai Shukla, 'India to develop 25% of fifth generation fighter', *Business Standard*, January 6, 2009.

- **MoD cancels Rs. 6,000 mid-air refueling contract**

India's Ministry of Defence cancelled the Rs. 6,000 crore contract to purchase six mid-air refueling aircraft after the Finance Ministry objected to the competitiveness of the bid. The IAF, after a two year evaluation process, had recommended the Airbus A330 multi-role transport tanker aircraft, over the Russian IL-78 aircraft.

- **India issues letter of request to acquire 10 Boeing C-17 Aircraft**

In what could be the biggest defence deal so far between New Delhi and Washington, India's MoD sent letter of request to the US government, enquiring about the possibility of acquiring 10 C-17 Globemaster III heavy lift aircrafts. Country head of Boeing Integrated Defense Systems stated that his company was "very pleased that the Indian government has expressed interest in acquiring the C-17 to modernize its airlift capabilities, and we look forward to working closely with them."

Each aircraft is expected to cost around \$202.3 million. If the deal fructifies, India will buy the aircraft through the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) route, under which it is expected to pay the same price which the US pays to Boeing, plus some service charges. The C-17 has a "payload of 1,60,00 pounds, can take off from a 7,600-foot airfield, fly 2,400 nautical miles, and land on a small, austere airfield in 3,000 feet or less."²⁹

INTERNATIONAL

- **Pakistan's Defence Committee of Cabinet vows to strengthen country's strategic and conventional capabilities**

Pakistan's Defence Committee of the Cabinet (DCC), which met under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Gilani on January 5, vowed to strengthen the country's strategic and conventional capabilities. The meeting was attended by Cabinet Ministers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee and the Services Chiefs. The Committee reiterated that "Pakistan's defence forces and its strategic and conventional capabilities will continue to be strengthened."³⁰

²⁹ Boeing Integrated Defense Systems, 'C-17 Globemaster III', at [http://www.boeing.co.in/ViewContent.do?id=43782&aContent=C-17 Globemaster III](http://www.boeing.co.in/ViewContent.do?id=43782&aContent=C-17%20Globemaster%20III); Rajat Pandit, 'Govt set to ink record \$2.2bn arms deal with US', *The Times of India*, January 9, 2009; 'India eyes 10 C-17 military transport planes: Boeing', *AFP*, at http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gyiroSs47Jvhi7o4hwoQN2Lc_gUQ

³⁰ Government of Pakistan, Press Information Department, 'DCC Meeting', PR No. 32, January 5, 2009, at <http://www.pid.gov.pk/press05-01-2010.htm>; 'Pak fumes at Indian Army chief's statement', *IBN Live*, December 31, 2009 at <http://ibnlive.in.com/news/pak-fumes-at-indian-army-chiefs-statement/108040-2.html>