

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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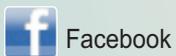
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I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. South Asia

Bangladesh

(November 17-23, 2014)

- **NIA team visits Dhaka; BGB-BSF conference; Bangladesh is at risk of higher levels of terrorism.**

A four-member team of India's National Investigation Agency (NIA) headed by Sharad Kumar went to Dhaka on November 17 to share information about militancy with Bangladesh and find out a mechanism to jointly fight against the menace. The NIA team handed over to intelligence agencies in Dhaka a list of 11 suspected Bangladeshi militants believed to be behind the October 2 Burdwan blast. Bangladesh also handed over to the NIA a list of 51 - 10 militants and 41 top criminals - who are believed to be hiding in India. Bangladesh and India have planned simultaneous raids along the border to nab the hiding members of the outlawed Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB). The Home Ministry of Bangladesh Government formed a six-member committee to work on militancy and extend cooperation to the NIA in the investigation. Additional Home Secretary Kamal Uddin Ahmed heads the committee which will have representatives of intelligence agencies.¹

A four-day conference between the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and Indian Border Security Force (BSF) began at Tamabil on Sylhet-Meghalaya border on November 17. Brigadier General Latiful Haider, commander of BGB North-East region led the 20-member team while Sree Sudesh Kumar, inspector general of BSF's Meghalaya region, led the Indian side at the conference.²

Though not in conflict, Bangladesh is at risk of higher levels of terrorism, according to the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) report. The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), a Sydney-based non-profit research organisation, published the report on November 18, calculating various political, social and violence factors to determine the risk. Bangladesh ranks 23rd among 162 nations in the GTI. Bangladesh is among the 13 countries vulnerable to high terror risk and third South Asian country in such a position besides Sri Lanka and Myanmar.³

¹ "Indian Team Due Today", *The Daily Star*, November 17, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/indian-team-due-today-50707>. "NIA Hands over List of Suspects", *The Daily Star*, November 18, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/nia-hands-over-list-of-suspects-50861>. "Dhaka, Delhi Plan Hunt for JMB Men", *The Daily Star*, November 20, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/dhaka-delhi-plan-hunt-for-jmb-men-51192>.

² "4-Day BGB-BSF Confce Starts at Tamabil Today", *The Daily Star*, November 17, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/country/4-day-bgb-bsf-confce-starts-at-tamabil-today-50688>.

³ "Bangladesh at High Terror Risk", *The Daily Star*, November 19, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/bangladesh-at-high-terror-risk-51054>. Rahman, M., "Dhaka hands over list of 51 criminals", *The Daily Star*, November 19, 2014 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/dhaka-hands-over-list-of-51-criminals-51072>.

Sri Lanka

(November 17-23, 2014)

- **Five Indian Fishermen were pardoned; Presidential election is on January 8, 2015; Mahinda Rajapaksa to contest for the third term; CaFFE receives four incidents of pre-election related violence Government raises objections with UN.**

The five Indian fishermen, who were sentenced to death together with three Sri Lankan fishermen by the Colombo High Court for alleged drug trafficking, were pardoned by President Mahinda Rajapaksa on November 19 following protests in India and the intervention of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. However, the three Sri Lankans are still in jail serving a life sentence. A protest was staged in Jaffna on November 20 calling for the release of the three Sri Lankans.⁴

The Presidential election will be held on January 8, 2015 and nominations will be called for on December 8, the Department of Elections said on November 21 following a meeting with political party representatives.⁵

The Central Committee of Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), the main constituent party of ruling alliance, has unanimously decided to nominate the incumbent President of Sri Lanka as the party's candidate for the upcoming presidential election. The Central Committee has taken this decision at a meeting held on November 19 at the Presidential Secretariat under the chairmanship of the President.⁶

Election monitors reported pre-polls related violence, including shooting incidents in Puttalam and Madampe. The Campaign for a Free and Fair Election (CaFFE) said that the house of a staunch UNP supporter was shot at in Medagama, Madampe on November 23. CaFFE believes that both men were targeted because they lit firecrackers during celebrations by the opposition when former SLFP General Secretary Maithripala Sirisena announced his intention to contest as the common opposition candidate. These are the second and third shooting incidents reported after the Presidential election was formally declared. CaFFE said it has received information on four incidents of pre-election related violence.⁷

The Minister of External Affairs, Professor G L Peiris met the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations, Subinay Nandy on November 17 and conveyed to him, the Government's extreme discontent regarding the unprofessional manner in which the investigation on Sri Lanka is being conducted by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The Minister's protest to the UN Resident Coordinator focused on the unacceptable way in which the deadline

⁴ "Protesters Want 3 Lankans also Freed", *Colombo Gazette*, November 20, 2014 at <http://colombogazette.com/2014/11/20/protesters-want-3-lankans-also-freed/>.

⁵ "Presidential Polls Set for January 8", *Colombo Gazette*, November 21, 2014 at <http://colombogazette.com/2014/11/21/presidential-polls-set-for-january-8/>.

⁶ "Sri Lanka Ruling Party Central Committee Unanimously Decides to Nominate President for a Third Term", *ColomboPage*, November 20, 2014 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_14B/Nov20_1416451294CH.php.

⁷ "Pre-Polls Related Violence Increases", *Colombo Gazette*, November 23, 2014 at <http://colombogazette.com/2014/11/23/pre-polls-related-violence-increases/>.

for submission of evidence to the investigation, 30 October, that had been originally set by the OHCHR had been changed unofficially and re-set once again. As per the OHCHR's call for submissions on its website, the deadline, 30 October, was definite and mandatory. However, the Spokesperson of the OHCHR, in response to a question from the *Colombo Gazette* and *The Sunday Leader* had later stated that, although officially the deadline was 30 October and will not be extended, it is understood that some material may take time to arrive and that submissions arriving late, therefore, will not necessarily be refused. Expressing objection to OHCHR's conduct that is inconsistent with essential standards of objectivity and fair play, Professor Peiris questioned why such irregular behaviour has to be resorted to in carrying out this investigation which claims to be open, candid and fair.⁸

(November 17-23, 2014)

- **Sri Lanka to chair the 2015 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons; High-level parliamentary delegation from the National Assembly of Belarus visits Sri Lanka; Mission Director USAID visits Koslanda landslide victims; Sri Lanka ranks 36 in the GTI**

Sri Lanka has been designated by acclamation to Chair the 2015 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). Ambassador Ravinatha Aryasinha, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the UN in Geneva, succeeds Ambassador Remigiusz A. Henczel, the Permanent Representative of Poland to the UN in Geneva. Accepting the honour conferred on Sri Lanka by the 118 High Contracting Parties to the convention at the conclusion of the week long CCW sessions in Geneva on November 14, 2014, Ambassador Aryasinha expressed appreciation to the Non Aligned Movement (NAM) for proposing Sri Lanka on behalf of the Group.⁹

Expanding trade relations between Sri Lanka and Belarus was the focus when a high-level parliamentary delegation from the National Assembly of Belarus, led by the Chairman of the House of Representatives Vladimir Andreichenko, met with Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa at Temple Trees on November 20. The discussion focused considerably on trade relations, including the expansion of markets for export products from both countries. This included Sri Lanka's fisheries sector. During the meeting the Chairman of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of Belarus said there is a market for Sri Lankan goods in not only Belarus but also in neighbouring countries with which Belarus has customs union arrangements.¹⁰

Mission Director Sherry Carlin from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) visited the Poonagala Tea Factory camp that houses victims of the recent Koslanda landslide on November 18. She also joined World Vision humanitarian representatives to distribute

⁸ "Government Raises Objections with UN", *Colombo Gazette*, November 17, 2014 at <http://colombogazette.com/2014/11/17/government-raises-objections-with-un/>.

⁹ "SL to Chair 2015 Meeting on the CCW", *The Nation*, 17 November 2014 at <http://www.nation.lk/edition/breaking-news/item/35344-sl-to-chair-2015-meeting-on-the-ccw.html>.

¹⁰ "Sri Lanka and Belarus Explore Expanding Trade Relations", *ColomboPage*, November 20, 2014 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_14B/Nov20_1416495115CH.php.

school kits to children and view the “Child Friendly Space” established with United States Government support through USAID.¹¹

Sri Lanka has been identified as one of the 13 countries that are being at risk of increased terrorist activity from current levels in the 2014 Global Terrorism Index Report released on November 19. The second edition of the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) report, produced by the London-based Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), has ranked Sri Lanka at 36th place with a score of 4.01 out of 10 among 162 countries.¹²

Maldives

(November 17-23, 2014)

- **Indo-Maldives relations would deepen and expand in the coming years; Chinese government provides LED lights and Solar PV systems; IMF supports Green Tax; Maldives calls the international community to take into consideration the hindrances and challenges faced by small nations.**

Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi has expressed his confidence that the close and friendly relations existing between India and the Maldives would deepen and expand in the coming years. The Indian Prime Minister made this comment in his message to President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom, sent on the occasion of the Republic Day of the Maldives.¹³

The government of China has provided LED lights and Solar PV systems to the Maldives. The agreement in this regard was signed at a ceremony at Mookai Suites on November 18, by Minister of Environment and Energy Thorig Ibrahim and Deputy Ambassador of China to Maldives Liu Jiyang. Under the agreement, the Chinese government will provide 125,000 LED bulbs, 75,000 LED tube lights, and ten 80-kW solar PV systems. Speaking at the ceremony, Thorig said that the lights would be used at government offices as part of the government’s efforts to reduce electricity costs. The Chinese government also provided 270,000 LED lights to the Maldivian government in 2013. They have been donated to 509 government institutions in 164 islands.¹⁴

International Monetary Fund (IMF) has said that they were contented about what was being included in the Maldives’ budget projected for the year 2015 and they support the decision of the government to introduce Green Tax next year. In a press conference held on November 20 at auditorium of Regional Bank by the IMF team, which arrived in Maldives to review the economy

¹¹ “USAID Visits Shelter for Koslanda Landslide Victims in Sri Lanka”, *ColomboPage*, November 19, 2014 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_14B/Nov19_1416379996CH.php.

¹² “Sri Lanka at Risk of Increased Terrorist Activity, Ranks 36th in Global Terrorism Index”, *ColomboPage*, November 20, 2014 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_14B/Nov20_1416464646CH.php.

¹³ “Indo-Maldives Relations Would Deepen and Expand in the Coming Years – PM Modi”, *The Presidency, Republic of Maldives*, November 17, 2014 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=14955>.

¹⁴ “Chinese Government Provides LED Lights and Solar PV Systems”, *SunOnline*, November 18, 2014 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/26121>.

of Maldives, Head of the team, Alison Stuart said that expenses and revenue has been included applicably in the projected budget for 2015 in order to decrease the physical deficit.¹⁵

The Maldives has called the international community to take into consideration the hindrances and challenges faced by small nations in eliminating substances that harm the ozone layer. Speaking at the 10th Conference of Parties under the Vienna Convention, Tariq Ibrahim, the Maldivian Minister of Environment, said that these measures must be taken under the Montreal Protocol. The Minister said that the Maldives had begun the implementation of plans designed to stop use of HCFC gases in fisheries vessels and equipment. However, he expressed concern that HFC gas, used as a substitute, is also harmful to the environment and plays a significant role in bringing about undesirable climate changes, necessitating serious attention. According to the Minister, the Maldives had, in union with the Federated States of Micronesia, proposed amendments to the Montreal Protocol so that work on minimizing the usage of HFC gases. The 10th Conference of the Parties under the Vienna Convention, and the 26th Meeting of the Montreal Protocol took place from 17th to 21st of this month in Paris, France.¹⁶

(November 17-23, 2014)

- **GMIAL claims \$803 million from the Maldivian government as compensation; President meets the Director of Mauritius Commercial Bank; Former President Mohamed Nasheed meets with South Korean President.**

GMR Male' International Airport Private Limited (GMIAL), a subsidiary of GMR Infrastructure Limited (GMR), has claimed \$803 million from the Maldivian government as compensation for terminating the agreement to manage Ibrahim Nasir International Airport (INIA). The initial amount sought by GMR in damages from the Maldivian government, when it filed the case to the Singapore tribunal, was \$1.4 billion. In June 2014, after 18 months of detailed proceedings, the tribunal's verdict stated that the Maldivian government and MACL were jointly liable in demands to GMIAL "for loss caused by wrongful repudiation of the agreement as per the concession agreement". The tribunal directed the Maldivian government and MACL to pay \$4 million to GMIAL as compensation for legal costs within 42 days. However, the tribunal did not declare the compensation amount for the unlawful termination of the contract.¹⁷

Former President Mohamed Nasheed has met with South Korean President Park Geun-hye while visiting the country for the International Democratic Union's (IDU) Party Leaders Meeting (PLM) in Seoul. Taking place just once every three years, PLM is the most prestigious event on the IDU Calendar bringing together a number of heads of government and party leaders from around the world. The IDU is a collection of over 54 centre-right political parties from around the globe who

¹⁵ "IMF: Budget is Appropriate, We Support for Green Tax", *SunOnline*, November 21, 2014 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/26157>.

¹⁶ "Maldives Calls for Consideration of Challenges Faced by Small Nations in Protecting the Ozone Layer", *SunOnline*, November 22, 2014 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/26177>.

¹⁷ "GMR Claims \$803 Million for Terminating Agreement", *SunOnline*, November 21, 2014 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/26167>.

meet to discuss and exchange policy ideas. The group's leadership includes former Australian Prime Minister John Howard and former UK Foreign Secretary William Hague.¹⁸

President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom met with the Director of Mauritius Commercial Bank (MCB), Mr. Raoul Gufflet. The meeting was held on November 23 at the President's Office. Discussions at the meeting were focused on the investment opportunities available in the Maldives. They also explored avenues to further expand trade and investment sectors of the country.¹⁹

B. East Asia

China

(November 17-23, 2014)

- **China asserts its friendship and cooperation with the Pacific Island countries; China and New Zealand discuss ways to improve bilateral relationship; China calls for better and safe cyberspace; Chinese President appoints new ambassadors; China and Australia discuss ways to improve relationship.**

On November 22, Chinese President Xi Jinping reasserted the friendship which China shares with the Pacific Island countries. He further added that China regards all countries as equal and believes that every country should respect each other. This was the first visit of the Chinese President to Fiji. He further stated that China is willing to help the countries improve their infrastructure and also in tackling climate change issues.²⁰

On November 21, the Chinese President Xi Jinping and the Prime Minister of New Zealand John Key attended the launching ceremony of Chin-New Zealand Mayor Forum. Xi argued during the meeting that the China-New Zealand relations were "highly complementary". While comparing the relationship to an oil painting, Xi stated that, "How spectacular such an oil painting can be depends not only on the overall structure but also on its detailed elements".²¹

On November 20, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang argued in favour of establishing China's own rules for cyberspace. This is being considered in order to have the Chinese voice heard. At an Internet-themed meeting Li said that, "Dynamics and order are the two faces of the Internet. Without

¹⁸ "Nasheed Meets South Korean President While Attending IDU Meeting", *Minivan News*, November 22, 2014 at <http://minivannews.com/category/news-in-brief>.

¹⁹ "President Meets With the Director of Mauritius Commercial Bank", *The Presidency, Republic of Maldives*, November 23, 2014 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=14977>.

²⁰ "China Reaffirms Friendship, Co-Op With Pacific Island Countries", *China Daily*, November 23, 2014 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2014xiattendg20/2014-11/23/content_18962947.htm, accessed on November 24, 2014

²¹ "China, New Zealand 'Usher in New Cooperative Era': Xi", *China Daily*, November 21, 2014 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2014xiattendg20/2014-11/21/content_18953388.htm, accessed on November 24, 2014

dynamics, the internet will lose its vitality, while without order, the Internet is not secure". He further added that China is in favour of creating and promoting an interconnected world and also establish common code of rules which will make the competition fairer.²²

According to a statement issued by the Chinese Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) on November 19, the Chinese President has appointed six new ambassadors. The countries to which new ambassadors have been appointed are Eritrea, Suda, Seychelles, Oman, Armenia and Mali.²³

Chinese President Xi Jinping met the Governor-General of Australia Peter Cosgrove on November 17. During the meeting both sides agreed that the bilateral relations had improved tremendously and was on the way to become stronger. Xi also stated that China was keen on improving its military relationship with Australia. Xi further said that, "I am looking forward to deepening understanding about Australia through this visit".²⁴

C. Russia

Russia

(November 17-23, 2014)

- **Russia signs a military cooperation agreement with Pakistan; President Putin receives North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's special envoy in Moscow; Russia refuses to support UN resolution on Syria; Foreign Minister Lavrov says that resolution of Iranian nuclear issue will stabilize the Middle East; Russia and South Ossetia prepare a new integration treaty.**

Russia has signed a military cooperation agreement with Pakistan during the visit of Russian Defence Minister Sergey Shoigu to Islamabad on November 20, 2014. The last such visit took place in 1969 when USSR Defence Minister Andrei Grechko made a trip to Pakistan. According to the agreement, the two countries will 'pool efforts' in the struggle against terrorism and drug trafficking emanating from Afghanistan and the region as a whole. It was stated that 'bilateral military cooperation should have a great practical focus and contribute to increasing combat efficiency of their armed forces.' The Minister also expressed confidence that the implementation of this agreement will give an additional impetus to all the aspects of Russia-Tajikistan cooperation as well.²⁵

²² "China Wants Its Voice Heard in Cyberspace", by Zhao Yinan in Hangzhou and Cao Yin in Wuzhen, Zhejiang, *China Daily*, November 21, 2014 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-11/21/content_18956125.htm, accessed on November 24, 2014

²³ "Chinese President Appoints Six New Ambassadors" *China Daily*, November 19, 2014 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-11/19/content_18944244.htm, accessed on November 24, 2014

²⁴ "China-Australia Ties Have Bright Prospects: Xi" *China Daily*, November 17, 2014 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2014xiattendg20/2014-11/17/content_18930088.htm, accessed on November 24, 2014

²⁵ "Russia, Pakistan Sign Agreement on Military Cooperation", *Itar-Tass*, Moscow, November 20, 2014, <http://en.itar-tass.com/russia/760805> Accessed on November 21, 2014

President Putin has received North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's special envoy, Choe Ryong Hae in Moscow on November 18. A range of topics, from the nuclear programme to security in north-east Asia and bilateral relations between the two countries was discussed. This is a third visit by a top-ranking North Korean official to Moscow in 2014. Earlier this year, President of the Supreme People's Assembly Presidium Kim Yong Nam and Foreign Minister Ri Su Yong had paid a visit to Russia.²⁶

Russia has not supported the resolution passed, on November 19, by U.N. General Assembly Third Committee that accused Syria of gross violation of human rights. The resolution was presented by Saudi Arabia and was approved by majority of votes: it was supported by 125 countries while 13 states voted against it and 47 abstained.²⁷

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has said that an early resolution of the status of Iran's nuclear programme can promote stability in the Middle East. He further stated that 'Russia's initiatives to resolve the issue on the principles of a phased approach and reciprocity have gained broad international recognition and provide the basis for the current initiative.'²⁸

South Ossetia and Russia are preparing a new integration treaty to develop bilateral relations with principal focus on the military sphere.²⁹

(November 17-23, 2014)

- **Russia cuts investments in US government securities to US\$ 117.7 billion; CSTO members discuss setting up joint air and missile defence systems; Moscow hopes ties with EU can be restored; Russian lawmaker talks about free trade zone agreements with Eurasian Economic Union; EU to focus on Crimea after the Ukrainian crisis is resolved; German Foreign Minister pays a visit to Moscow; Hungary expresses support to develop South Stream gas pipeline project.**

Russia has reduced its investment in US government securities by US\$ 400 million to US\$ 117.7 billion. It stood at 12th position in the list of major foreign holders of American securities.³⁰

Chiefs of General Staff of Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) member states have met in Yekaterinburg on November 17, 2014 wherein they discussed the emerging security challenges in the region. This includes establishment of a joint air and missile defence system of CSTO, regular monitoring of the military-political situation and improving coordination while conducting military exercises.³¹

²⁶ "North Korean Leader Kim Jong UN'S Special Envoy Arrives in Moscow", *Itar-Tass*, Moscow, November 20, 2014, <http://en.itar-tass.com/russia/760166> Accessed on November 21, 2014

²⁷ "Russia Refuses To Support UN Resolution Accusing Syria of Gross Violations Of Human Rights", *Itar-Tass*, Moscow, November 19, 2014, <http://en.itar-tass.com/world/760452> Accessed on November 20, 2014

²⁸ "Solution to Iranian Nuclear Issue Will Stabilize Middle East — Lavrov", *Itar-Tass*, Moscow, November 20, 2014, <http://en.itar-tass.com/world/760511> Accessed on November 20, 2014

²⁹ "South Ossetia, Russia Prepare New Integration Treaty", *Itar-Tass*, Moscow, November 20, 2014, <http://en.itar-tass.com/russia/760668> Accessed on November 20, 2014

³⁰ "Russia Cuts Investments In US Government Securities to \$117.7 billion", *Itar-Tass*, Moscow, November 20, 2014, <http://en.itar-tass.com/economy/760467> Accessed on November 20, 2014

³¹ "Post-Soviet Security Bloc To Discuss Setting Up Joint Air, Missile Defense System", *Itar-Tass*, Moscow, November 17, 2014, <http://en.itar-tass.com/world/760029> Accessed on November 20, 2014

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has hoped that the “point of no return” in relations between Russia and the European Union has not yet been passed. He stressed that Russia considers the EU as its major partner and is interested in a progressive development of cooperation on an equal and mutually beneficial basis.³²

The speaker of State Duma (Russia’s lower house of parliament) Sergey Naryshkin has declared that approximately 40 states plan to establish a free trade zone with the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). He stated that the organisation offers a unique chance for cooperation between Western Europe and the Asia-Pacific Region.³³

Italy’s Foreign Minister Paolo Gentiloni has said that the EU will discuss Crimea’s reunification with Russia once the current crisis in Ukraine is resolved.³⁴

Germany’s Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier has paid a visit to Moscow on November 18 wherein he met President Putin and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. The main theme of discussion involved developments in Ukraine with both sides calling on the need to implement the Minsk agreements and restoring the economy of Donbass region.³⁵

Hungary’s Foreign Minister Peter Sijarto, during a visit to Moscow on November 19, has expressed support to the South Stream gas pipeline project that aims to deliver Russian gas to Europe through a southern route bypassing Ukraine. The European Commission had launched an anti-monopoly investigation of South Stream in 2013 on the suspicion that it flouted EU’s third energy package rule that calls for separation of companies’ generation and sale operations from their transmission networks.³⁶

(November 17-23, 2014)

- **President Putin says Ukrainian crisis can be resolved through greater political autonomy for south-eastern Ukraine; EU to reform and rebuild Ukraine’s police system; Russia and Poland expel each-others diplomats; Ukrainian President says it is too early for it to join NATO; Ukraine rules out plans to resume military offensive in the east; Russia’s Defence Minister pays a visit to Beijing; Russia and China agree on joint modernization of RD-93 engines for fighter jets.**

President Putin has declared that the Ukrainian crisis can be resolved if ‘federalisation’ takes place in the south-eastern part of the country.³⁷

³² “Moscow Hopes “Point Of No Return” Not Passed In Relations with EU — Lavrov”, *Itar-Tass*, Moscow, November 18, 2014, <http://en.itar-tass.com/russia/760249> Accessed on November 20, 2014

³³ “Some 40 States Plan To Create Free Trade Zone with Eurasian Economic Union — lawmaker”, *Itar-Tass*, Moscow, November 23, 2014, <http://en.itar-tass.com/economy/761312> Accessed on November 23, 2014

³⁴ “EU to Return To Crimea’s Reunification With Russia After Ukrainian Crisis Is Settled”, *Itar-Tass*, Moscow, November 23, 2014, <http://en.itar-tass.com/world/760231> Accessed on November 23, 2014

³⁵ “Russia, Germany Need Constant Dialogue on Ukraine — Russia FM”, *Itar-Tass*, Moscow, November 18, 2014, <http://en.itar-tass.com/russia/760429> Accessed on November 23, 2014

³⁶ “Hungary Vows Commitment To Paused South Stream Gas Pipeline Project”, *Itar-Tass*, Moscow, November 19, 2014, <http://en.itar-tass.com/economy/760569> Accessed on November 23, 2014

³⁷ “Russian President Putin Says Ukraine Needs Federalization To Settle Conflict”, *Itar-Tass*, Moscow, November 17, 2014, <http://en.itar-tass.com/russia/760028> Accessed on November 23, 2014

The European Union and Kiev have signed an agreement on November 17 in Brussels that calls for establishing an EU advisory mission in Ukraine that will carry out reforms of the country's security sector.³⁸

Russia has said that several of its diplomats had been expelled from Poland on November 17 and that a number of Polish diplomats had left Russia after Moscow took "adequate" measures in return. Ties between Russia and European Union member states have been strained by the crisis in Ukraine. Poland, for decades under communist rule and dominated by Moscow, has been one of Moscow's most outspoken critics.³⁹

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko has said that it is too early for Ukraine to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). However, he did not rule out such a possibility in the future. Earlier, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov had said that Ukraine's non-aligned status remains the core issue for Moscow in the ongoing standoff.⁴⁰

Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin has said that Ukraine does not plan to resume military operations in the east but the country expects military and technical assistance from the European Union. He also stressed that Kiev "will continue energy supplies to the region in full."⁴¹

Russian Defence Minister Sergey Shoigu, who paid an official visit to Beijing during November 17-19, has stressed on the importance of a Russia-China military-technical cooperation in the evolving global security situation and the need to form a regional collective security system in the Asia-Pacific region. He also stated that the two partners should stand against 'colour revolutions' that both countries face. It was announced that they will hold joint naval drills in the Pacific and in the Mediterranean in 2015.⁴²

Russia's United Engine-building Corporation (a part of Rostec) and China National Aero-Technology Import & Export Corporation (CATIC) have agreed, on November 18, to jointly modernize the RD-93 turbojet engine developed by Russia's St. Petersburg-based company Klimov. These will be used for the Chinese J-31 and JF-17 fighter jets.⁴³

³⁸ "EU to Rebuild Ukraine's Police System After Failure at Maidan Events", *Itar-Tass*, Brussels, November 17, 2014, <http://en.itar-tass.com/world/760050> Accessed on November 23, 2014

³⁹ "Russia Orders Out Polish Diplomats In Tit-For-Tat Expulsions", *Reuters*, November 17, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/11/17/us-russia-poland-diplomats-idUSKCN0J10LH20141117> Accessed on November 23, 2014

⁴⁰ "Poroshenko Says Too Early For Ukraine To Join NATO", *Itar-Tass*, Berlin, November 17, 2014, <http://en.itar-tass.com/world/760088> Accessed on November 23, 2014

⁴¹ "Ukraine Says No Plans To Resume Offensive In East, But Seeks EU Military Aid", *Itar-Tass*, Brussels, November 17, 2014, <http://en.itar-tass.com/world/760177> Accessed on November 23, 2014

⁴² "Russia, China Seek To Form Asia-Pacific Collective Security System — Defense Minister", *Itar-Tass*, Beijing, November 18, 2014, <http://en.itar-tass.com/russia/760322> Accessed on November 23, 2014

⁴³ "Russia, China Agree On Joint Modernization Of Rd-93 Engines For Fighter Jets", *Itar-Tass*, Moscow, November 18, 2014, <http://en.itar-tass.com/economy/760229> Accessed on November 23, 2014

D. Iran, Iraq and the Gulf

Iran

(November 17-23, 2014)

- **U.S. proposes extending talks with Iran as hope to reach final deal looms away; Iranian-British woman jailed for attending Iran volleyball match gets bail; Iran commander says it is expanding Air Defence Network.**

The United States proposed extending an interim agreement with Iran in a recognition that talks to settle deep differences over Tehran's nuclear programme were unlikely to succeed on deadline. President Obama said, the interim agreement had successfully rolled back Iran's nuclear capacity, but he expressed doubt about whether the "significant" gaps could be bridged to achieve a permanent accord. A delay carries political complications for Washington and Tehran. It could hamper the Obama administration's ability to get congressional approval for easing sanctions against Iran. It also could embolden Iranian hard-liners opposed to any agreement involving the United States.⁴⁴

An Iranian-British woman jailed for trying to attend a men's volleyball game in Iran was released on bail. She was detained in June 2014 at a Tehran stadium after trying to attend a men's volleyball match between Iran and Italy.⁴⁵

Commander of Khatam ol-Anbia Air Defence Base Esmayeeli said in a press conference on the occasion of the Air Defence Day in Iran that "Arash 2 radar system with the capability of discovering small flying objects which is based on the world's state-of-the-art technology is one of the latest achievements" of Iran's air defence.⁴⁶

Iraq

(November 17-23, 2014)

- **US aid worker Peter Kassing beheaded by ISIS; Iraq and Kurds Reach Deal on Oil ; Iraqi forces drive out ISIS from strategic baiji oil refinery; ISIS has not come out of thin air.**

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria released a graphic video of beheading U.S. aid worker Peter Kassing, who was captured in 2013. "This is Peter Edward Kassig, a U.S. citizen, of your country; Peter who fought against the Muslims in Iraq, while serving as a soldier," the militant says near

⁴⁴ "U.S. Proposes Extending Talks With Iran As Pessimism About Nuclear Deal Grows", by Carol Morello, *The Washington Post*, November 23, 2014 at http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/deadline-for-iran-nuclear-deal-looms-russia-china-could-join-talks/2014/11/23/a29a8a12-7309-11e4-a5b2-e1217af6b33d_story.html

⁴⁵ "Iranian-British Woman Jailed For Attending Iran Volleyball Match Bailed", *The Guardian*, November 23, 2014 at <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/23/iranian-british-woman-jailed-attending-iran-volleyball-match-bailed>

⁴⁶ "Commander: Iran Expanding Air Defense Network," *Fars news agency*, November 23, 2014 at <http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13930902001526>

the end of the nearly 16-minute video.⁴⁷ This beheading comes subsequent to the killing of several western journalists by the ISIS.

Iraq's central government and the autonomous region of Kurdistan reached an interim agreement over oil exports and budget payments. The conflict began when Iraq government claimed that Kurdistan is exporting oil directly to Turkey not through Iraq's oil Ministry. So the central government stopped sending to Kurdistan 17 percent of the national budget allotted to the regional government. Under the agreement, the central government will pay \$500 million to the Kurdistan Regional Government, or K.R.G., from the national budget while the Kurds will let the Iraqi government sell 150,000 barrels per day of the oil exported by the Kurds.⁴⁸

Iraqi security forces have re-entered the country's biggest oil refinery at Baiji, the recapture of which would be the Baghdad government's most important military success since ISIS seized most of northern and western Iraq during the summer. This important oil refinery produces 3,000,000 barrels oil per day⁴⁹. This oil refinery was one of the significant sources of revenue for the terror group as they earned billions of dollars by oil smuggling.

The Syrian President al-Assad told a meeting of ruling Baath Party that "ISIS has not come out of thin air". President al-Assad considered that the international situation 'lacks vision in the current stage' in light of the atrocities of terrorist organizations, namely the Islamic state in Iraq and Syria, known as ISIS. "ISIS came to cap accumulating wrong-headed policies by parties involved in the war against Syria that have supported, armed and funded terrorist and militant organizations to undermine Syria," he added, referring to countries that have backed the Syrian armed rebel.⁵⁰

The Gulf

(November 17-23, 2014)

- **Shia boycotts the disputed Bahrain Election; UAE lists 80 organizations as terrorists including Muslim Brotherhood, ISIS; The Riyadh Summit Saves the GCC From Disintegration; Indian PM Narendra Modi meets Saudi FM.**

The Bahraini government called for high turnout in the disputed Bahrain legislative elections but the Shia led opposition boycotted the election calling them an attempt to entrench "absolute rule".⁵¹

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has formally designated scores of groups, including the Muslim

⁴⁷ "Peter Kassig Killed By ISIS, Obama Confirms ", *CBS*, November 16, 2014 at <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/isis-video-claims-us-aid-worker-peter-kassig-beheaded-in-syria/>

⁴⁸ "Iraq and Kurds Reach Deal on Oil Exports and Budget Payments", by Ben Hubbard, *The New York Times* November 13, 2014 at http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/14/world/middleeast/iraq-and-kurds-reach-deal-on-oil-exports-and-budget-payments.html?_r=0

⁴⁹ "Iraqi Forces Drive ISIS Out Of Baiji And Begin Siege Of Its Oil Refinery In One Of The Biggest Victories Of The Conflict So Far ", *Daily Mail* , November 16, 2014 <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2834594/Iraqi-forces-retake-strategic-town-Baiji.html>

⁵⁰ "Al-Assad: ISIS has Not Come Out of Air" , *Al-Alam English*, November 21, 2014 at <http://en.alalam.ir/news/1651177>

⁵¹ "Bahrain Holds Disputed Election Amid Shia Boycott Calls", *BBC* , 22 November 2014 <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-30151786>

Brotherhood and local affiliates as “terrorist groups”. Al-Qaeda, al-Nusra Front, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), al-Islah Yemen’s Houthi rebels, Nigeria’s Boko Haram and Afghanistan’s Taliban are among the groups listed by the UAE. The list includes the Federation of Islamic Organisations in Europe, as well as several other Muslim groups - for example Islamic Relief, a UK-registered charity that is working with the British government.⁵²

Riyadh summit chaired by Saudi King led to announcing the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit would convene in Doha early in December 2014, rescued GCC from fragmentation, and increased the odds for establishing a GCC Plus with Egypt, Jordan, and Morocco. It also suggested that Qatar has decided to adopt a markedly new policy vis-à-vis Egypt, GCC countries, and the Muslim Brotherhood organization. These are extremely important developments that have many implications for the GCC, regional security, the international coalition against ISIS and similar groups, and the identity of moderation declared by the leaderships of the GCC countries against extremism and terrorism. Recently the Gulf States have returned their ambassadors ending 8 months row.⁵³

India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with the Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud on the side-lines of G-20 summit.⁵⁴

Egypt and Libya

(November 17-23, 2014)

- **Muslim Brotherhood to support Salafi protests; Libya marred with violence as Libya forces clash with Islamists.**

On November 23, the Muslim Brotherhood published a statement on their official website in support of the Salafi Front’s call for protests. The Salafi Front – an Islamist political organisation – has called for protests under the name “the Muslim Youth Uprising”, to take place on November 28. The group said that the protests come in response to “secular attempts to weaken the Islamic identity and Sharia”⁵⁵ The Muslim Brotherhood has been recently designated as terrorist organization by UAE.

Deadly fighting between Islamist militias and forces backed by Libya’s internationally recognised government forced the closure of an airport in eastern Tripoli. At least four people were killed and 10 wounded in clashes between the Islamist Fajr Libya (Libya Dawn) and fighters loyal to the government around the Mitiga air base. The Libya has been embroiled in the conflict after the uprising that begun four years ago that killed Gaddafi.⁵⁶

⁵² “UAE Lists Scores Of Groups As ‘Terrorists’”, *Aljazeera*, November 16, 2014 <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/11/uae-lists-scores-groups-as-terrorists-2014111517644316294.html>

⁵³ “The Riyadh Summit Saves the GCC From Disintegration”, by Raghida Dergham, *Al Hayat*, November 21, 2014 at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/raghida-dergham/the-riyadh-summit-saves-t_b_6196816.html

⁵⁴ “G20 Summit: PM Narendra Modi meets Saudi Arabia Prince”, *DNA*, India, November 15, 2014 <http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-g20-summit-pm-narendra-modi-meets-saudi-arabia-prince-2035387>

⁵⁵ “Muslim Brotherhood Expresses Support for 28 November Protests”, *Daily News Egypt*, November 23, 2014 at <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2014/11/23/muslim-brotherhood-expresses-support-28-november-protests/>

⁵⁶ “Deadly Clashes Force Tripoli Airport Closure”, *Middle East Online*, November 17, 2014, at <http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=68954>

E. The United States of America

National

(November 17-23, 2014)

- **Deputy Secretary of Defence Robert Work Looks to Industry to Maintain Technology Edge; Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Dempsey Calls for defence budget increase, flexibility; undersecretary of defence for intelligence Chief Vickers describes national security challenges; Department of Defence releases revised FY 2015 MIP request; President Obama chose confrontation over conciliation to reshape the nation's immigration system; Obama Defends use of executive authority on immigration reform.**

In remarks at the "Defence One Summit" in Washington on November 19, Deputy Secretary of Defence Robert O. Work stressed the importance of engaging industry, services and the Defence Business Board in maintaining the United States' technological edge in coming years. Work noted the challenge of balancing resources and requirements against the landscape of what he called an "especially chaotic" drawdown and a persistent continuing resolution over the past five years.⁵⁷

The American military is being asked to do more in an increasingly volatile world and Congress needs to increase its budget and give the department spending flexibility, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin E. Dempsey said on November 19. "I have run out of adjectives to describe" what the budget uncertainty and lack of flexibility is doing to the United States military, Gen. Dempsey told journalist Kevin Baron at the "Defence One Summit" in Washington. The military needs more money because there are new requirements – reassurance to Europe, operations in Iraq and Syria as well as support for stopping Ebola in West Africa. Defence Secretary Chuck Hagel's nuclear posture review also has costs, Dempsey noted.⁵⁸

Protecting military networks is among many national security challenges the nation faces, the undersecretary of defence for intelligence, Michael G. Vickers said in Washington on November 20. In remarks at the "Defence One Summit", Vickers said the challenges, both unconventional and novel are likely to be enduring and will require the attention of both the government and the private sector. Vickers emphasized the importance of cybersecurity to defend the nation's critical infrastructure and in supporting combatant commanders in the new warfare domain. And adversaries can use cyber to their advantage, he noted.⁵⁹

The Department of Defence released on November 21 its revised FY 2015 Military Intelligence Programme (MIP) request. The total request, which includes both the base budget and Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) appropriations, is \$16.6 billion. This revision includes the MIP

⁵⁷ Amaani Lyle, "Work Looks to Industry to Maintain Technology Edge", *DoD News*, November 19, 2014 at <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=123683>

⁵⁸ Jim Garamone, "Dempsey Calls for Budget Increase, Flexibility", *DoD News*, November 19, 2014 at <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=123682>

⁵⁹ Amaani Lyle, "DoD Intel Chief Describes National Security Challenges", *DoD News*, November 20, 2014 at <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=123686>

elements of the administration's amended FY 2015 OCO request that was submitted to Congress earlier this month.⁶⁰

President Obama chose confrontation over conciliation on November 20 as he asserted the powers of the Oval Office to reshape the nation's immigration system and all but dared members of next year's Republican-controlled Congress to reverse his actions on behalf of millions of immigrants. In an address from the East Room of the White House that sought to appeal to a nation's compassion, Mr. Obama told Americans that deporting millions is "not who we are" and cited Scripture, saying, "We shall not oppress a stranger for we know the heart of a stranger — we were strangers once, too." The prime time speech reflected Mr. Obama's years of frustration with congressional gridlock and his desire to frame the last years of his presidency with far-reaching executive actions. His directive will shield up to five million people from deportation and allow many to work legally, although it offers no path to citizenship.⁶¹

President Obama, in an interview broadcast on November 23, said he rejects Republican criticism that he has exceeded his authority in moving to spare millions of undocumented immigrants from deportation, adding that he has been "very restrained" in his use of executive authority. Earlier angry Republican lawmakers have accused Mr. Obama of unconstitutional, even imperial, overreach. They have pointed to past remarks in which he himself suggested that his powers to act were limited.⁶²

International: Asia

(November 17-23, 2014)

- **DOD chiefs discussed regional security issues with Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff Gen. Raheel Sharif; Defence Secretary Hagel calls Russia's actions in Ukraine "dangerous and irresponsible"; U.S. and partner-nation military forces continued to attack Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant terrorists in Syria and Iraq; Hagel notes progress against ISIL.**

Deputy Secretary of Defence Bob Work and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey met with Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff, Gen. Raheel Sharif on November 18 at the Pentagon. The leaders discussed regional security issues and their commitment to an enduring partnership. They also emphasized the importance of sustained and substantive dialogue as two countries continue to develop the bilateral military-to-military relationship. This was Gen. Sharif's first official visit to the United States since becoming the chief of army staff in November 2013.⁶³

⁶⁰ "DoD Releases Revised Military Intelligence Program Request for Fiscal Year 2015", Release No: NR-584-14, November 21, 2014 at <http://www.defense.gov/Releases/Release.aspx?ReleaseID=17044>. Accessed on November 23, 2014.

⁶¹ Michael D. Shear. "Obama, Daring Congress, Acts to Overhaul Immigration", November 20, 2014 at <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/21/us/obama-immigration-speech.html>. Accessed on November 22, 2014

⁶² Brian Knowlton, "Obama Defends His Use of Executive Authority on Immigration", November 23, 2014 at <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/24/us/politics/obama-immigration.html>. Accessed on November 25, 2014

⁶³ "Readout of Deputy Secretary of Defense Bob Work's and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey's meetings with Gen. Raheel Sharif, Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff", Release No: NR-574-14, November 18, 2014 at <http://www.defense.gov/Releases/Release.aspx?ReleaseID=17034>. Accessed on 5 December 2014

On November 18, US Defence Secretary Chuck Hagel called Russia's actions in Ukraine "dangerous and irresponsible" and said the tensions provoked by Moscow have probably done more to unify NATO than anything else in years. "It has brought the world together in a way where they are isolating themselves by their actions," Hagel said of Russia, as he took questions from Marines during a visit to North Carolina's Camp Lejeune.⁶⁴

U.S. and partner-nation military forces continued to attack Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant terrorists in Syria and Iraq over the last three days, U.S. Central Command officials reported. The strikes were conducted as part of Inherent Resolve, the operation to eliminate the terrorist group ISIL and the threat they pose to Iraq, the region and the wider international community. The destruction of ISIL targets in Syria and Iraq further limits the terrorist group's ability to project power and conduct operations, officials said.⁶⁵

The U.S.-led fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant is showing good signs of progress, and the first of 1,500 additional U.S. troops that President Barack Obama ordered to Iraq should begin arriving there in the next few weeks, Defence Secretary Chuck Hagel said in a PBS interview broadcast on November 19. Since June 2014, ISIL has overrun cities and towns across a swath of territory spanning the Iraqi-Syrian border, and a coalition of nations is working to degrade, and ultimately destroy, the terrorist group.⁶⁶

(November 17-23, 2014)

- **President Obama extends U.S. role in Afghan combat; .US military delivers radar systems to Ukraine; Counter-ISIL Coalition Planning Conference featuring military planners from 33 nations concludes in Florida, US.**

President Obama decided in recent weeks to authorize a more expansive mission for the military in Afghanistan in 2015 than originally planned, a move that ensures American troops will have a direct role in fighting in the war-ravaged country for at least another year. Mr. Obama's order allows American forces to carry out missions against the Taliban and other militant groups threatening American troops or the Afghan government, a broader mission than the president described to the public earlier in 2014, according to several administration, military and congressional officials with knowledge of the decision. The new authorization also allows American jets, bombers and drones to support Afghan troops on combat missions.⁶⁷

The U.S. military delivered three lightweight, counter-mortar radar systems on November 20 to Ukrainian armed forces, Pentagon spokesman Army Col. Steve Warren told reporters November 21. The radar systems are the first few of 20 that will be delivered during the next several weeks

⁶⁴ Nick Simeone, "Secretary Calls Russia's Actions 'Dangerous, Irresponsible'", *DoD News*, November 18, 2014 at <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=123670>

⁶⁵ "Airstrikes Continue Against ISIL in Syria, Iraq", From a U.S. Central Command News Release, *DoD News*, November 19, 2014 at <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=123677>

⁶⁶ Nick Simeone, "Hagel Notes Progress Against ISIL as World Grows More Dangerous", *DoD News*, November 20, 2014 at <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=123688>

⁶⁷ Mark Mazzetti and Eric Schmitt, "In a Shift, Obama Extends U.S. Role in Afghan Combat", *The New York Times*, November 21, 2014 at <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/22/us/politics/in-secret-obama-extends-us-role-in-afghan-combat.html>

and U.S. military members will begin training Ukrainian armed forces in mid-December, Warren said.⁶⁸

A counter- Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant operational planning conference featuring military planners from 33 nations and hosted by U.S. Central Command November 12 to November 21 concluded at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida on November 21. The conference included nearly 200 coalition participants, who worked together to synchronize and refine coalition campaign plans designed to degrade and defeat ISIL. A major focus of the 10-day conference was to further develop coalition plans to help train, advise and assist Iraqi Security Forces so that Iraq is better able to regenerate its combat power, counter ISIL and ultimately provide for its own security. Attendees were able to solidify plans and discuss how best to synchronize and reinforce mutual efforts to aid the Iraqis. The conference also provided a unique opportunity for attendees to share their regional insights and perspectives on how best to combat ISIL and ultimately defeat the terrorist group.⁶⁹

India-US Relations

(November 17-23, 2014)

- **Number of Indian students in the US increased by 6 percent in the academic year 2013-2014; Congresswoman Grace Meng introduces legislation to expedite J-1 visas for physicians.**

The 2014 Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange (IIE), released on November 17 finds the number of international students at colleges and universities in the United States increased by eight percent to a record high of 886,052 students in the 2013/14 academic year, confirming once again that the United States remains the destination of choice for higher education. In 2013/14, there were 66,408 more international students enrolled in U.S. higher education compared to the previous year. The number of Indian students in the United States increased by 6 percent to 102,673 in the academic year 2013-2014, reversing a three-year trend of their declining numbers at American campuses. But Chinese students continued to surge into the US, edging up to 300,000.⁷⁰

Ahead of President Barack Obama's executive action on immigration reform, New York Democrat Congresswoman from Queens, Grace Meng, has introduced legislation on November 19 that would require the State Department to speed-up the visa approval process for Indian and Pakistani physicians who are scheduled to work at hospitals in the United States. Meng, a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, wants to remedy the difficulty that international physicians –

⁶⁸ Terri Moon Cronk, "U.S. Delivers Radar Systems to Ukraine", *DoD News*, November 21, 2014 at <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=123700>

⁶⁹ "Counter-ISIL Coalition Planning Conference Concludes", From a U.S. Central Command News Release, *DoD News*, November 21, 2014 at <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=123702>

⁷⁰ "Open Doors 2014: International Students in the United States and Study Abroad by American Students are at All-Time High", *Open Doors Press Release*, November 17, 2014 at <http://www.iie.org/en/Who-We-Are/News-and-Events/Press-Center/Press-Releases/2014/2014-11-17-Open-Doors-Data>; and, Chidanand Rajghatta, "Indian Students Rediscover Lure of US Degree", *The Times of India*, November 17, 2014 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/us/Indian-students-rediscover-lure-of-US-degree/articleshow/45180349.cms>. Accessed on November 19, 2014

especially doctors from India and Pakistan – have encountered in securing J-1 visas from American embassies in their countries.⁷¹

(November 17-23, 2014)

- **India-US HTCG revived to strengthen the bilateral strategic partnership; US expressed strong interest in enhancing defence ties with India; President Obama will be the first American president to attend India's Republic Day celebrations as the guest of honour.**

On November 20, India and the US held the first meeting of a revived high technology working group to give a fillip to the government's 'Make in India' programme. The High Technology Cooperation Group (HTCG) has been revived to strengthen the bilateral strategic partnership and boost bilateral high technology trade following the US visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Foreign Secretary Sujatha Singh, addressing the HTCG in New Delhi, said that "for the first time, in the true spirit of public-private partnership, the High Technology Cooperation Group will have a working group meeting on high-tech manufacturing which would see joint participation from both government and industry".⁷²

Speaking at the ninth meeting of India-US High Technology Cooperation Group (HTCG) in New Delhi on November 20, Eric L Hirschhorn, Under Secretary for Bureau of Industry and Security, US Department of Commerce, said that "Increased defence trade and cooperation is vital part of advancing our partnership. India now conducts more military exercises with the US than any other country and defence trade has increased over the past decade. He added, "Expanding trade and cooperation provides a win-win for the US and Indian national security interests".⁷³

President Barack Obama will visit India in January 2015 as the guest of honour for the country's symbolically important Republic Day celebrations—a sign of a significant warming of relations between the world's two largest democracies. Mr. Obama will be the first American president to attend India's Republic Day celebrations, which is usually marked by a major military parade. The planned visit is a symbol of improving U.S.-India ties after Mr. Modi travelled to the White House in September 2014. In a summit that officials said gave the two leaders an opportunity to establish a rapport, the two leaders agreed to strengthen security relations.⁷⁴ The White House in a press release stated that during the visit the "President will meet with the Prime Minister and Indian officials to strengthen and expand the U.S.-India strategic partnership."⁷⁵

⁷¹ "Congresswoman Grace Meng Introduces Legislation to Expedite J-1 Visas for Physicians from India, Pakistan", *The American Bazaar*, November 19, 2014 at <http://www.americanbazaaronline.com/2014/11/19/congresswoman-grace-meng-introduces-legislation-expedite-j-1-visas-physicians-india-pakistan/>. Accessed on November 22, 2014

⁷² "India, US Hold Meeting Of High-Tech Working Group", *Business Standard*, New Delhi, November 20, 2014 at http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/india-us-hold-meeting-of-high-tech-working-group-114112001461_1.html. Accessed on November 2014

⁷³ "US for Enhancing Defence Ties with India", *Press Trust of India*, New Delhi, November 20, 2014 at http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/us-for-enhancing-defence-ties-with-india-114112000535_1.html. Accessed on November 22, 2014

⁷⁴ Byron Tau and Niharika Mandhana, "Obama to Visit India in January", *The Wall Street Journal*, November 21, 2014 at <http://online.wsj.com/articles/obama-to-visit-india-in-january-1416586209>. Accessed on November 23, 2014.

⁷⁵ The White House, "Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's Travel to India", November 21, 2014 at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/11/21/statement-press-secretary-president-s-travel-india>. Accessed on November 23, 2014.