

# THE WEEK IN REVIEW

November 16 – November 22, 11 (4), 2015

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# I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

## A. South Asia

### Afghanistan

(November 16-22, 2015)

- **Exchange of fire erupts at Pak-Afghan border in Paktika; Section of Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Tajikistan railway starts; Survey finds two major concerns; Looming threat of terrorism to region.**

An exchange of fire has taken place on Afghanistan-Pakistan border in Paktika province after Pakistani forces opened the gate they had built inside Afghanistan territory. Reports suggest that Pakistani forces have fired indiscriminate shells on border police in Shkin and Barmal district of Paktika province. Nabiullah Peerkhil, spokesperson for the governor of Paktika province said that Afghan forces have been in defence position and waiting for the orders from the headquarters. This comes after Pakistan opened the gate built in Angor Ada area of Barmal District inside Afghan territory on November 15. According to reports, high ranking Pakistani officials attended the opening ceremony of the gate. Meanwhile, Pakistani Army says rockets were received from Afghan side which were responded. "Pakistanis also fired in the direction from which rockets were fired. No loss reported," states a statement released by the Army's media wing *ISPR*.<sup>1</sup>

A section of Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Tajikistan railway construction which falls within the Turkmen soil has been completed, it has been reported. According to a statement released by the government of Turkmenistan, the construction of the railway has been completed up to the border of Afghanistan. The statement further added that the length of the Atamyrat-Imamnazar-Akina section is 88 kilometres. Two railway bridges are under construction along the railway line, the statement, said adding that the work on constructing two railway stations will start there. The construction of the railway network once completed is expected to act as an important link in international transportations between the Asian countries, the statement added. Construction of two railway sections, including 85-kilometer long Atamyrat-Imamnazar on Turkmenistan's territory and 38-kilometer long section running from Imamnazar to Andkhoy settlement in Afghanistan, has been envisaged at the initial stage. On the Afghan territory, the construction work on a 3-kilometer long railway line running from Imamnazar to Akina settlement has also been planned. The statement said "Implementation of a number of joint infrastructure projects in Afghanistan will give a strong impetus to the

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<sup>1</sup> "Exchange of Fire Erupts At Pak-Afghan Border In Paktika After Pakistan Opens Gate Inside Afghanistan Territory", *Khaama Press*, November 16, 2015, at <http://www.khaama.com/exchange-of-fire-erupts-at-pak-afghan-border-in-paktika-after-pakistan-builds-gate-inside-afghanistan-4121>

further development of Afghanistan's economy, will allow to resolve the important social issues and ensure the population's employment."<sup>2</sup>

Afghans are increasingly concerned about the lack of security and the country's economy amid an escalating war with the Taliban and rising unemployment, a survey released on Tuesday showed. The San Francisco-based Asia Foundation found that 36.7 percent of respondents in a nationwide survey conducted in June believe Afghanistan is moving in the right direction - a significant drop from 54.7 percent in 2014. It's the lowest level of optimism recorded by the foundation over the past 10 years. *The Asia Foundation* has been conducting annual surveys in Afghanistan for over 10 years. For this year's survey, it polled 9,586 Afghan citizens across 34 provinces, both men and women. "Over half of the population thinks that Afghanistan is moving in the wrong direction," said Sayed Masood Sadat from the foundation as he presented the report in Kabul. The reasons most often cited are insecurity, unemployment and corruption in the country, he added. The survey shows that 42.7 percent of those polled are concerned about the lack of security, up from 34.1 percent last year and at its highest level since 2007. The poll had a 1.6 percent margin of error.<sup>3</sup>

President Ashraf Ghani said on November 20 in Kazakhstan that the Taliban and Daesh is a real threat for Afghanistan and for the region. Speaking at Nazarbayev University in Astana in Kazakhstan – during a one-day official visit - Ghani went on to say that the recent Taliban attack in Kunduz shows that the Afghan people are not in favour of the Taliban and that if the insurgent group wants the support of the people they need to come up with a democratic plan. "The Taliban is a real threat. This is not a national issue only for Afghans. Afghan and Pakistani Taliban have changed into a threat for South Asian countries. They are problem creators. I am ready to hand over the government to them through a democratic process." He said despite changes within the Taliban following the meeting in Norway with civil society activists earlier this year, the recent attacks in Kunduz by the group has made them extremely unpopular among the people. "Recent attacks in Kunduz reveal that human rights violations by the group were unexpected by the people especially as a number of changes had been detected in the group's views after the Norway meeting." Referring to recent insurgent attacks in Mali, Beirut, Istanbul and Paris, Ghani said the world is faced with another type of insurgency – that of Daesh. "The biggest threat we are faced with is from terrorists that launched attacks in Paris and Istanbul. We are experiencing the biggest type of threat in Afghanistan which is the new terrorist group (Daesh)."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> "Turkmenistan Completes A Section of Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Tajikistan Railway", *Khaama Press*, November 18, 2015, at <http://www.khaama.com/turkmenistan-completes-a-section-of-turkmenistan-afghanistan-tajikistan-railway-1699>

<sup>3</sup> "Afghanistan Survey Finds Security, Economy Major Concerns", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, November 18, 2015, at [http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=13641](http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=13641)

<sup>4</sup> "Ghani Warns Of Terrorism Threat To Region", *Tolo News*, November 21, 2015, at <http://www.tolonews.com/en/afghanistan/22444-ghani-warns-of-terrorism-threat-to-region>

## Pakistan

(November 16-22, 2015)

- **Counter-terror efforts high on agenda; Cricket diplomacy ruled out for; Peace in Afghanistan inevitable for stability in the region; Regional security dominates Raheel's visit; JUD, FIF not banned in Pakistan; No conflict between civil, military leadership; Pakistan, agreed on early resumption of Afghan peace process.**

Countering terrorist threats in the region will feature high on the agenda of the prime minister's two-day visit to Uzbekistan, starting from November 19, "Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif will pay an official visit to Uzbekistan on Nov 17-18," the Foreign Office said in a statement. Newly appointed Adviser on National Security retired Lt Gen Nasser Khan Janjua is in prime minister's delegation which also includes his special assistants on foreign affairs and aviation. Pakistan and Uzbekistan share concerns over the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan and the emergence of the self-styled Islamic State (IS) there. Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, a terrorist group that once had sanctuaries in Pakistan and is now operating from Afghanistan, is a major concern for Tashkent. The group is now aligned with IS. "The two leaders will also review the evolving regional peace and security scenario and discuss ways in which the two countries could work together and better coordinate to confront terrorist threats in the region," a spokesman said.<sup>5</sup>

Tensions between India and Pakistan spilled over into the sporting realm on November 16 when Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan opposed the idea of sending the cricket team across the border. Saying that the Indian government was patronising the terrorist activities of Shiv Sena, the interior minister added, "This is not about money; it's an issue that involves Pakistan's dignity and honour. Though the final decision is to be taken by the prime minister, I will oppose any tour to India under the present circumstances if it comes under discussion at a cabinet meeting or some other forum." The minister said that he would also call for Shiv Sena to be declared a terrorist outfit by international forums. The Indian government and its agents have ridiculed Pakistan sufficiently and the treatment meted out to Shahryar Khan, Najam Sethi, Ghulam Ali and Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri was an example of that, he said. "If the Indian government is not behind this, it should tell the world what action had been taken against such people," he remarked.<sup>6</sup>

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on November 17 said that establishment of peace in Afghanistan was inevitable for peace and stability in the region. Addressing at a banquet hosted by Uzbek President Islam Karimov in his honour at Kuksaroy Presidential Palace, the prime minister said his government desired to maintain good ties with all countries, including India and Afghanistan. Referring to various steps taken by his government against extremism and terrorism, he said Pakistan had initiated operation Zarb-e-Azb against the menace that was

<sup>5</sup> "Counter-terror Efforts High on PM's Agenda in Uzbekistan", *Dawn*, November 17, 2015, at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1220257/counter-terror-efforts-high-on-pms-agenda-in-uzbekistan>

<sup>6</sup> "Nisar Rules Out Cricket Diplomacy For Now", *Dawn*, November 17, 2015, at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1220259/nisar-rules-out-cricket-diplomacy-for-now>

bearing fruit as law and order situation was improving due to the efforts of the law enforcement agencies. He said during the meeting with the Uzbek president, the matters of mutual interest, including cooperation in economy, energy and other sectors, were discussed. Nawaz said there was need to enhance bilateral cooperation in the fields of climate change, agriculture and science and technology. He said his government desired to build an energy infrastructure corridor to enhance connectivity with the Central Asian states. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor had great importance for the region, he added. He also extended an invitation to the Uzbek president to visit Pakistan. President Islam Karimov, in his address, said Pakistan was an important player in the region as well as the world owing to its geographical and geo-political situation.<sup>7</sup>

“Needs and measures for regional security dominated” the one-hour meeting between US Secretary of State John Kerry and Army Chief Gen Raheel Sharif, the army’s press office said on November 18. Secretary Kerry assured the army chief that the US relationship with Pakistan was independent of its relations with other countries, the statement said. In a series of tweets issued after the one-hour meeting at the State Department, Director General of Inter Services Public Relations Lt Gen Asim Bajwa said the talks focused on “regional security”. Within this broader concept of “regional security”, Secretary Kerry and Gen Sharif also tackled specific issues such as the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan’s relations with India, Mr Bajwa said. Gen. Sharif highlighted the need for resolving the Kashmir issue, he added. Secretary Kerry acknowledged Pakistan’s contributions and enormous sacrifices in fight against terror and the COAS “highlighted Pakistan’s perspective of regional security”, Mr Bajwa said.<sup>8</sup>

Foreign Secretary Aizaz Chaudhry on November 19 informed the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee that Lashkar-e-Taiba (LET) has been declared a proscribed organisation and will not be allowed to operate in the country. However, he said that the Filah-i-Insaniat Foundation (FIF) has not been banned. Jamaat-ud-Dawah (JuD) has been put under observation, but has not been banned so far, he added. The foreign secretary updated the members on the dossiers that have been shared with the US and the UN regarding Indian state agency RAW’s involvement in terrorism in the country. The committee members insisted that details of the dossiers should also be shared with the parliamentary panel. However, the foreign secretary said that the classified documents cannot be made public, but agreed that an in-camera briefing can be arranged in this regard. The secretary said that Pakistan had only shared the narrative part of the dossiers with the UN and the US while the hard evidence has not been provided as yet. He also rejected the impression that the dossiers were prepared in haste, adding the relevant agencies have collected all the evidence with great responsibility.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> “Peace in Afghanistan Inevitable For Stability in the Region: Nawaz”, *Daily Times*, November 18, 2015, at <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/18-Nov-2015/peace-in-afghanistan-inevitable-for-stability-in-the-region-nawaz>

<sup>8</sup> “Need for Regional Security Dominates Kerry-Raheel Talks”, *Dawn*, November 19, 2015, at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1220717/need-for-regional-security-dominates-kerry-raheel-talks>

<sup>9</sup> “JUD, FIF not Banned, Senate Committee Told”, *Daily Times*, November 20, 2015, at <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/20-Nov-2015/jud-fif-not-banned-senate-committee-told>

Interior Minister Nisar Ali Khan on November 20 strongly dispelled rumours, stating that there was no conflict between the civil and the military leadership of the country. Nisar said he is left wondering why people say such things. The interior minister stated that Prime Minister (PM) Nawaz Sharif had shown no divergence on the national stance of the country on his previous visit to the US. Nisar said that army chief's visit to the US was also pre-decided and an important meeting had been held previously in this regard. He said funds have been revived to ensure that the National Counter-terrorism Authority (NACTA) was made a functional organisation within six months. Nisar expressed that no action shall be taken against any innocent individual. He said that various non-government organisations (NGO) had been working in the country, however only nine had been allowed to be active. He stated that all organisations must work within legal boundaries. A potential tension was seen earlier this month when the army chief in a Corps Commander meeting in Rawalpindi had stated that good governance was a must for better results. The statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) was seen by many political leaders and analysts as a hint towards the civil leadership that there was a need to match governance initiatives with military operations to eliminate militancy from the country.<sup>10</sup>

Pakistan and the United States have agreed to work together for an early resumption of the stalled Afghan reconciliation process. The understanding was reached during the recently concluded visit of Army Chief Gen Raheel Sharif to the United States where he held extensive discussions with key figures of the Obama administration, including Vice President Joe Biden. "There is a sort of agreement that there is a need to move on the Afghan reconciliation thing very quickly depending on the conditions," a senior diplomatic source, who had been briefed on the trip, told *Dawn* in a background briefing on November 21. Afghanistan was the focus of Gen Sharif's visit, during which he also discussed Pakistan's strained ties with India, military cooperation, strategic (nuclear) issues and other regional matters. "The general quite candidly conveyed his views on the issue, both the political and the strategic perspective, to his interlocutors," the source said.<sup>11</sup>

## Bangladesh

(November 16-22, 2015)

- **India and Bangladesh held talks at the secretary shipping level in New Delhi; Foreign investments worth \$799 million registered over two years; President ratifies bill on Maldives becoming AIB member; The Tourism and the Economic Development Minister visit Singapore; Saudi Arabian Islamic Affairs Minister visits Maldives; Foreign Minister Dunya Maumoon visits India.**

Secretary Shipping level talks between India and Bangladesh were held in New Delhi on November 16. The Indian delegation was led by Rajive Kumar, Secretary, Ministry of

<sup>10</sup> "No Conflict Between Civil, Military Leadership: Nisar", *Daily Times*, November 21, 2015, at <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/E-Paper/Lahore/2015-11-21/page-1/detail-6>

<sup>11</sup> "Pakistan, US Agree On Early Resumption Of Afghan Peace Process", *Dawn*, November 22, 2015, at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1221445/pakistan-us-agree-on-early-resumption-of-afghan-peace-process>



Shipping, Government of India and Bangladesh delegation was led by Mr. Shafique Alam Mehdi, Secretary, Ministry of Shipping, and Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh. At the outset of the meeting Rajive Kumar appreciated the good pace of the work executed so far and also expressed hope that the MoUs and Agreement signed will result into enhanced movement of vessels and cargo between India and Bangladesh smoothly. Mr. Shafique Alam Mehdi while appreciating the efforts of India for development of inland water transport and coastal shipping movements mentioned that this would ensure improved connectivity and promote trade and commerce between the two countries. The decisions were taken in the meeting of the Secretary level delegation of India and Bangladesh include: a draft MoU on passenger and cruise services on coastal and protocol route was initialled; a highly competitive charge of 192.22 BD Taka per metric tonne for the transshipment operations at Ashuganj for movement of goods to and from North-Eastern part of India; and, Bangladesh agreed to submit a proposal for dredging of rivers in Bangladesh, including the ones under Protocol route, to World Bank for Regional IDA under intimation to the Indian side to enable the Indian side to examine and support the proposal taking a long term perspective under PIWTT.<sup>12</sup>

Ministry of Economic Development has announced that 55 foreign investment projects worth \$799 million have been registered over the past two years. This came in a report highlighting the ministry's achievements on the occasion of the second anniversary of the current government. A total of 47 foreign investment projects in the tourism sector with a total initial investment amount of \$1.056 billion have been registered since December 2014. Other proposed mega foreign investments include the airport development project, worth \$800 million.<sup>13</sup>

President Abdulla Yameen has ratified the bill proposed by the government regarding Maldives becoming a member of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). The purpose of the bill, submitted by Nilandhoo MP Abdulla Khaleel and passed by the unanimous vote of the parliament on November 12, 2015, is to establish a comprehensive law and detailed policies on Maldives' AIIB membership.<sup>14</sup>

Minister of Tourism Moosa Zameer and Minister of Economic Development Mohamed Saeed went to Singapore on an invitation extended by a group of Singaporean investors. Before leaving the country, Tourism Minister Moosa Zameer said to reporters at Ibrahim Nasir International Airport, that many companies from Singapore and South East Asia region have invested in the Maldives, and the purpose of this visit was to provide information about planned mega projects in the tourism industry.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> "India and Bangladesh Initial a Draft MoU on Passenger and Cruise Services on Coastal and Protocol Route", *PIB*, Release ID :130568, November 17, 2015 at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx>

<sup>13</sup> "Foreign Investments Worth \$799 Million Registered Over Two Years", *SunOnline*, November 17, 2015 at <http://english.sun.mv/34654>.

<sup>14</sup> "President Ratifies Bill on Maldives Becoming AIIB Member", *SunOnline*, November 18, 2015 at <http://english.sun.mv/34685>.

<sup>15</sup> "Tourism Minister, Economic Development Minister Depart to Singapore on Investors' Invitation", *SunOnline*, November 20, 2015 at <http://english.sun.mv/34726>.



Minister of Islamic Affairs, Endowment and Dawa of Saudi Arabia, Salih bin Abdul Azeez bin Mohamed made three-day visit to the Maldives on an invitation extended by President Abdulla Yameen. During the three-day visit, the two countries discussed strengthening cooperation in terms of encouraging Islam, increasing religious awareness, and other issues related to Islam. Salih also paid a courtesy call on President Yameen, and participated in the opening ceremony of a religious scholars conference organised by Ministry of Islamic Affairs.<sup>16</sup>

Foreign Minister Dunya Maumoon visited India on November 20, 2015 to strengthen the existing relationship between the two countries. Dunya Maumoon was accompanied by the Joint Secretary of the Foreign Ministry Aishath Azima. During the official visit, the Maldivian Foreign Minister, Dunya Maumoon met with the Indian Minister for External Affairs Sushma Swaraj.<sup>17</sup>

## Sri Lanka

(November 16-22, 2015)

- **Sri Lanka's LAUGFS to build US\$ 80 million LP gas terminal at Hambantota port; Parents of missing in Sri Lanka submit report to the UN Working Group; Sri Lanka, Bhutan to establish air links, deepen bilateral cooperation; Ban on several ex LTTE front groups lifted; Samantha Power visited Jaffna; India funded Mahatma Gandhi International Centre was inaugurated in Matale.**

Sri Lanka's private gas retailer LAUGFS Gas said its wholly owned subsidiary, LAUGFS Terminal Limited has entered into an agreement with the China Huanqiu Contracting and Construction Corporation, a subsidiary of China National Petroleum Corporation to build a Liquefied Petroleum (LP) Gas storage unit near the Hambantota Port in the deep south. In a stock exchange filing the company said the terminal that will be built with a total investment of US\$ 80 million will have storage capacity of 30,000 metric tons at the initial stage with provision to expand the storage capacity by an additional 15,000 metric tons.<sup>18</sup>

An activist organisation representing the parents of the missing persons has submitted a report on the disappearances to the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (UNWGEID). The UNWGEID headed by its Vice President, Bernard Duhaime, was on an official visit to Sri Lanka from November 9 to November 18, 2015, at the invitation of the Sri Lankan Government. They have visited the North and East

<sup>16</sup> "Saudi Arabian Islamic Affairs Minister Concludes Visit to Maldives", *SunOnline*, November 20, 2015 at <http://english.sun.mv/34730>.

<sup>17</sup> "Foreign Minister Dunya has Met with MEA Shushma", *SunOnline*, November 21, 2015 at <http://english.sun.mv/34752>.

<sup>18</sup> "Sri Lanka's LAUGFS To Build US\$ 80 Million LP Gas Terminal at Hambantota Port", *ColomboPage*, November 17, 2015 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_15B/Nov17\\_1447779463CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Nov17_1447779463CH.php).

during their visit to gather information on the missing and disappeared during and after the war.<sup>19</sup>

Sri Lanka and Bhutan agreed to deepen bilateral cooperation in education, health, aviation, trade and tourism among others as the two countries concluded the first session of Foreign Office Consultations in Colombo on November 16. The parties also agreed on the need to explore opportunities to enhance trade and economic cooperation. Both sides agreed to work within the existing regional framework of SAARC such as SAFTA and SATIS as well as BIMSTEC and to establish stronger links between Chambers of Commerce of Sri Lanka and Bhutan. The two sides decided to finalize a bilateral Air Services Agreement at the earliest, paving the way for air connectivity between Sri Lanka and Bhutan. The Bhutan delegation was led by Foreign Secretary Tshering Dorji while Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ms. Chitranganee Wagiswara, led the Sri Lanka delegation.<sup>20</sup>

The government has lifted the ban on several former LTTE front groups through a gazette notification published by the Government Printer on November 20, 2015. Signed by the Secretary to the Ministry of Defence as the Competent Authority, the gazette notification repeals the gazette issued by the former government listing at least 15 organizations over alleged links with the LTTE. The amended list issued on Friday removes the ban on the Global Tamil Forum (GTF), the British Tamil Forum (BTF), Australian Tamil Congress (ATC) and the Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC), among others. The new gazette notification has also lifted the ban on the head of the Global Tamil Forum, Father S.J. Emmanuel. However, the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE) and its leader, former LTTE negotiator V. Rudrakumaran, remain on the list as proscribed organizations and individuals.<sup>21</sup>

The US Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power visited Jaffna today and had talks with Northern Province Chief Minister C V Wigneswaran and several others. She discussed the current human rights situation in the North and other related matters. She also met the Northern Province Governor and discussed development plans for the North. She also met with members of the local press corps, including by visiting the headquarters of *Uthayan newspaper*, which was targeted during the war. Ambassador Power also participated in the inauguration of a new wing of Osmania College, which suffered significant damage during the conflict, as well as tour the Jaffna Library, where she announced U.S. support for the local restoration of ancient Tamil manuscripts.<sup>22</sup>

The Sri Lankan Government thanked India for funding several projects, including the Mahatma Gandhi International Centre in Matale. President Maithripala Sirisena and the High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka, Y. K. Sinha inaugurated the Mahatma Gandhi

<sup>19</sup> "Parents of Missing In Sri Lanka Submit Report to the UN Working Group", *ColomboPage*, November 17, 2015 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_15B/Nov17\\_1447744247CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Nov17_1447744247CH.php).

<sup>20</sup> "Sri Lanka, Bhutan to Establish Air Links, Deepen Bilateral Cooperation", *ColomboPage*, November 16, 2015 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_15B/Nov16\\_1447689627CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Nov16_1447689627CH.php).

<sup>21</sup> "Ban on Several Ex LTTE Front Groups Lifted", *Colombo Gazette*, November 22, 2015 at <http://colombogazette.com/2015/11/22/ban-on-several-ex-ltte-front-groups-lifted/>.

<sup>22</sup> "Power in Jaffna, Holds Talks with Wigneswaran", *Colombo Gazette*, November 22, 2015 at <http://colombogazette.com/2015/11/22/power-in-jaffna-holds-talks-with-wigneswaran/>.

International Centre in Matale on November 22. In his remarks, President Sirisena, while thanking the Government of India for funding the Mahatma Gandhi International Centre in Matale, and for various projects in different parts of the Sri Lanka, highlighted the contribution of Mahatma Gandhi to humanity and the continuing relevance of his principles and philosophy to mankind. The Mahatma Gandhi International Centre, which was built at a cost of SLR 88.6 million, was funded under the Government of India's Development Cooperation Partnership with Sri Lanka.<sup>23</sup>

## Maldives

(November 16-22, 2015)

- **Foreign investments worth \$799 million registered over two years; President ratifies bill on Maldives becoming AIIB member; The Tourism and the Economic Development Minister visit Singapore; Saudi Arabian Islamic Affairs Minister visits Maldives; Foreign Minister Dunya Maumoon visits India.**

Ministry of Economic Development has announced that 55 foreign investment projects worth \$799 million have been registered over the past two years. This came in a report highlighting the ministry's achievements on the occasion of the second anniversary of the current government. A total of 47 foreign investment projects in the tourism sector with a total initial investment amount of \$1.056 billion have been registered since December 2014. Other proposed mega foreign investments include the airport development project, worth \$800 million.<sup>24</sup>

President Abdulla Yameen has ratified the bill proposed by the government regarding Maldives becoming a member of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). The purpose of the bill, submitted by Nilandhoo MP Abdulla Khaleel and passed by the unanimous vote of the parliament on November 12, 2015, is to establish a comprehensive law and detailed policies on Maldives' AIIB membership.<sup>25</sup>

Minister of Tourism Moosa Zameer and Minister of Economic Development Mohamed Saeed went to Singapore on an invitation extended by a group of Singaporean investors. Before leaving the country, Tourism Minister Moosa Zameer said to reporters at Ibrahim Nasir International Airport, that many companies from Singapore and South East Asia region have invested in the Maldives, and the purpose of this visit was to provide information about planned mega projects in the tourism industry.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>23</sup> "Sri Lanka Thanks India For Funding Several Projects", *Colombo Gazette*, November 22, 2015 at <http://colombogazette.com/2015/11/22/sri-lanka-thanks-india-for-funding-several-projects/>.

<sup>24</sup> "Foreign Investments Worth \$799 Million Registered Over Two Years", *SunOnline*, November 17, 2015 at <http://english.sun.mv/34654>.

<sup>25</sup> "President Ratifies Bill On Maldives Becoming AIIB Member", *SunOnline*, November 18, 2015 at <http://english.sun.mv/34685>.

<sup>26</sup> "Tourism Minister, Economic Development Minister Depart to Singapore on Investors' Invitation", *SunOnline*, November 20, 2015 at <http://english.sun.mv/34726>.

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Foreign Minister Dunya Maumoon visited India on November 20, 2015 to strengthen the existing relationship between the two countries. Dunya Maumoon was accompanied by the Joint Secretary of the Foreign Ministry Aishath Azima. During the official visit, the Maldivian Foreign Minister, Dunya Maumoon met with the Indian Minister for External Affairs Sushma Swaraj.<sup>28</sup>

## B. East Asia

### Japan

(November 16-22, 2015)

- **Japan-ASEAN Summit Meeting held in Kuala Lumpur; Prime Minister Shinzo Abe attended the 23rd Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting in Manila; Resolution on the Situation of Human Rights in the DPRK adopted; US-Japan Extended Deterrence Dialogue was held in California.**

The 18th Japan-ASEAN Summit Meeting on November 22 in Kuala Lumpur where Prime Minister Shinzo Abe welcomed the establishment of the ASEAN Community. Japan agreed to lessen the period needed for processes of ODA Loans to 18 months, and increase investment and finance in cooperation with the ADB; support industrial human resource development of 40,000 people over the next three years; and assist by micro-financing of small industries by women and establish Japan-ASEAN Women Empowerment Fund. Moreover, Abe stressed that as the regional security environment is becoming severe and that Japan will contribute as a Proactive Contributor to Peace and will support ASEAN member states in strengthening maritime.<sup>29</sup>

On November 18 and November 19, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe attended the 23rd Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting in Manila where participants discussed several issues including APEC Growth Strategy, supporting the multilateral trading system, the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP), connectivity, global value chain cooperation, and cooperation in the services field. Prime Minister Abe stressed that to attain the 2020 Bogor target, it is important to ensure quality growth

<sup>27</sup> "Saudi Arabian Islamic Affairs Minister Concludes Visit to Maldives", *SunOnline*, November 20, 2015 at <http://english.sun.mv/34730>.

<sup>28</sup> "Foreign Minister Dunya has Met with MEA Shushma", *SunOnline*, November 21, 2015 at <http://english.sun.mv/34752>.

<sup>29</sup> "The 18th Japan-ASEAN Summit Meeting", *MOFA Japan*, November 22, 2015 at [http://www.mofa.go.jp/a\\_o/rp/page3e\\_000422.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/rp/page3e_000422.html)

accompanied by regional economic integration. He further argued that supporting the rule of law in the economic arena is critical in terms of quality growth. Furthermore, the leaders also exchanged views on women empowerment, rural development, energy resilience, and emergency preparedness.<sup>30</sup>

On November 20, Japan and the European Union (EU) put the Resolution on the Situation of Human Rights in the DPRK to vote in Third Committee of the UN General Assembly. It was adopted by 112 affirmative votes. The resolution condemns North Korea's violations of human rights and urges the UNSC to undertake suitable action, along with referral to ICC. It welcomed the instituting of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Seoul Office.<sup>31</sup>

On November 17-19, US-Japan Extended Deterrence Dialogue was held in California where both countries discussed securing alliance deterrence and strengthening understanding on mechanism to coordinate security policy. US-Japan Extended Deterrence Dialogue is held since 2010.<sup>32</sup>

## South Korea

(November 16-22, 2015)

- **South Korean President Park Geun-hye attends the G-20 summit; President Park attended the 2015 APEC meetings in Philippine; In the 10th East Asia Summit (EAS) in Kuala Lumpur, President Park focused on the security issues related to North Korean nuclear weapons and territorial disputes in the South China Sea; North Korea proposed a preparatory meeting before the high-level inter-Korea talks.**

South Korean President Park Geun-hye went to Antalya to attend the G-20 summit where she underscored a structural restructuring is important for inclusive and robust growth. She further called on the leaders to cooperate more and invest in infrastructure across Northeast Asia including in North Korea. President Park proposed setting up a differentiated Northeast Asian development bank which will cooperate with the ADB and AIIB.<sup>33</sup>

President Park attended the 2015 APEC meetings in Philippine on November 19 where she stressed on innovative strategies to facilitate economic growth across the Asia-Pacific and drew attention to Korea's policy to push innovation. She urged that governments needs to help SMEs to join the global value chain, and establish cooperative partnerships with

<sup>30</sup> "The 23rd APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in the Philippines", *MOFA Japan*, November 20, 2015 at [http://www.mofa.go.jp/ecm/apec/page24e\\_000122.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/ecm/apec/page24e_000122.html)

<sup>31</sup> "Nations General Assembly (Statement by Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida)", *MOFA Japan*, November 20, 2015 at [http://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e\\_000945.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e_000945.html)

<sup>32</sup> "Japan-U.S. Extended Deterrence Dialogue", *MOFA Japan*, November 17, 2015 at [http://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e\\_000920.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e_000920.html)

<sup>33</sup> "President Park Geun-hye and Other G-20 Leaders Attend the G-20 Summit in Antalya, Turkey, on November 15, the Republic of Korea Cheong Wa Dae, at [http://english1.president.go.kr/activity/headlines.php?srh%5Bboard\\_no%5D=22&srh%5Bpage%5D=2&srh%5Bview\\_mode%5D=detail&srh%5Bseq%5D=13032&srh%5Bdetail\\_no%5D=552#sthash.nPZlPpBR.dpuf](http://english1.president.go.kr/activity/headlines.php?srh%5Bboard_no%5D=22&srh%5Bpage%5D=2&srh%5Bview_mode%5D=detail&srh%5Bseq%5D=13032&srh%5Bdetail_no%5D=552#sthash.nPZlPpBR.dpuf)

conglomerates. Besides, efforts towards deregulation aimed at increasing the service industry competitiveness were highlighted.<sup>34</sup>

On November 22, in the 10th East Asia Summit (EAS) in Kuala Lumpur, South Korean President Park focused on the security issues related to North Korean nuclear weapons and territorial disputes in the South China Sea. President Park emphasized that South Korea “has a strategic interest in the disputed region as the South China Sea is a key shipping lane through which more than 90 percent of Korea’s energy shipments and 30 percent of its overall exports pass.” Besides, the leaders adopted a joint statement on dealing with violent extremism.<sup>35</sup>

North Korea Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea has reportedly suggested a preparative meeting in Panmunjom for high-level inter-Korea talks.<sup>36</sup> South Korea has agreed to North Korea’s suggestion to hold such a meeting to improve inter-Korea relations following the August 25 agreement.

## C. Russia

### Russia: National

(November 16-22, 2015)

- **FSB Chief says Russian A321 plane blown up by homemade explosive device; Putin sets up a Commission to counter financing of terrorism; Sberbank assesses the current situation in Russia’s banking sector as a ‘massive crisis’; Russia’s national rating agency Akra to initially focus on domestic market; Russia tests ballistic missile Topol with advanced warhead; Russia’s oil production may decline by 10 million tons in 2017; Chechen leader says 480 Chechens have joined the Islamic State; ISIS pledges attacks on Russia ‘very soon’; Russia to develop weapons to overwhelm U.S. missile defences.**

Federal Security Service (FSB) chief Alexander Bortnikov has said, on November 17, that the Russian A321 plane was blown up over Sinai by a homemade explosive device that was equivalent to one kg of TNT. The Federal Security Service has declared a US\$ 50 million reward for information about those responsible for this terrorist act.<sup>37</sup>

Russian President Vladimir Putin has, on November 18, signed a decree outlining the launch of an inter-departmental commission that will counter the financing of terrorism. The

<sup>34</sup> “President Stresses Growth Through Innovation”, *the Republic of Korea Cheong Wa Dae*, November 20, 2015 at [http://english1.president.go.kr/activity/headlines.php?srh%5Bboard\\_no%5D=22&srh%5Bpage%5D=2&srh%5Bview\\_mode%5D=detail&srh%5Bseq%5D=13189&srh%5Bdetail\\_no%5D=557](http://english1.president.go.kr/activity/headlines.php?srh%5Bboard_no%5D=22&srh%5Bpage%5D=2&srh%5Bview_mode%5D=detail&srh%5Bseq%5D=13189&srh%5Bdetail_no%5D=557)

<sup>35</sup> “President Calls ASEAN Driving Force For Regional Integration”, *The Republic of Korea Cheong Wa Dae*, November 23, 2015 at [http://english1.president.go.kr/activity/headlines.php?srh%5Bboard\\_no%5D=22&srh%5Bpage%5D=2&srh%5Bview\\_mode%5D=detail&srh%5Bseq%5D=13191&srh%5Bdetail\\_no%5D=558](http://english1.president.go.kr/activity/headlines.php?srh%5Bboard_no%5D=22&srh%5Bpage%5D=2&srh%5Bview_mode%5D=detail&srh%5Bseq%5D=13191&srh%5Bdetail_no%5D=558)

<sup>36</sup> “Pyongyang Offers To Hold Inter-Korean Talks Next Week”, *The Korea Herald*, November 20, 2015 at <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20151120000498>

<sup>37</sup> “FSB Chief: Russian A321 Plane Blown Up By Homemade Explosive Device”, *Itar-Tass*, November 17, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/politics/837087>



commission will rule on “freezing funds or other property” of organizations and individuals suspected of being involved in terrorism. It will also be responsible for coordinating the work of other institutions engaged in fighting terrorism.<sup>38</sup> Meanwhile, both the upper and lower houses of the Russian Parliament — Federation Council and State Duma — have met for a joint session on November 20 in order to discuss the terror threats faced by the country. During the session, Federation Council Chairwoman Valentina Matviyenko proposed creating an international tribunal for terrorists and giving the special law enforcement services more power. Her deputy Ilyas Umakhanov suggested that special penal colonies for terrorists be created.<sup>39</sup>

The Chief Executive Officer of Russia’s leading bank Sberbank, Herman Gref has labelled the situation in the domestic banking sector as a massive crisis. The sector has been facing problems like zero profits and Mr. Gref asserted that it will take several years for the economy to recover.<sup>40</sup> Meanwhile, RBC news agency has reported on November 19 that more than 25,000 bank employees have been laid off in the first nine months of 2015. The firings come as the ongoing recession has reduced demand for new loans and worsened the quality of existing debt, as more people struggle to repay. A sharp rise to the cost of borrowing from the Central Bank has also reduced the banks profitability, leaving the banking sector struggling to break even.<sup>41</sup>

The Chief Executive Officer of Russia’s national analytical credit rating agency AKRA, Ekaterina Trofimova has said that the Russian market will be the agency’s exclusive focus at the initial development stage. It will then expand to the markets of Eurasian Economic Union.<sup>42</sup>

Russia’s strategic missile force has, on November 17, successfully tested an inter-continental ballistic missile Topol with an advanced warhead. This was the second test-launch of the missile in 2015.<sup>43</sup>

First Deputy Minister Alexey Teksler has said, on November 17, that Russia’s oil production decline can decline by 10 million tons in 2017. He stated that ‘oil production will be 533

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<sup>38</sup> “Putin Creates Commission to Counter Financing of Terrorism”, *The Moscow Times*, November 18, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/putin-creates-commission-to-counter-financing-of-terrorism/549988.html>

<sup>39</sup> “Both Chambers of Russian Parliament Discuss Terrorism During Joint Meeting”, *The Moscow Times*, November 18, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/both-chambers-of-russian-parliament-discuss-terrorism-during-joint-meeting/550108.html>

<sup>40</sup> “Sberbank Assesses Current Situation In Russia’s Banking Sector As Massive Crisis”, *Itar-Tass*, November 17, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/837211>

<sup>41</sup> “25,000 Employees Fired From Russian Retail Banks This Year”, *The Moscow Times*, November 19, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/business/article/25-000-employees-fired-from-russian-retail-banks-this-year/550069.html>

<sup>42</sup> “Russia’s National Rating Agency Akra To Focus Initially On Domestic Market — CEO”, *Itar-Tass*, November 20, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/838163>

<sup>43</sup> “Strategic Missile Force Tests Ballistic Missile Topol With Advanced Warhead”, *Itar-Tass*, November 17, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/defense/837204>

million tons in 2015 and the plan is to produce the same volume in the next year. However, production may decline by up to 10 million tons in 2017.<sup>44</sup>

Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov has said that nearly 500 Chechens have joined the Islamic State out of which 200 have already been killed while fighting for it. He also accused Western governments and their allies of supporting “terrorists” in the Middle East. Kadyrov stated “today, Western countries, Europe and other Arab nations, which finance terrorists, have no interest in seeing Syria recover. They have their own interests.”<sup>45</sup>

The Islamic State terrorist group has released an Internet video promising to attack Russia ‘very soon’. The video was posted by the Islamic State’s foreign media outlet, and warned Russians that it planned to “make their wives concubines and their children slaves.” The video comes just two weeks after a Russian airliner went down over Egypt’s Sinai peninsula in what is Russia’s worst civilian air disaster.<sup>46</sup>

President Vladimir Putin has said that Russia will develop weapons with the ability to penetrate any missile shields deployed across the globe. He told Russian military leaders that the country will in time develop its own anti-ballistic missile defence systems, but “at this first stage ... we will work on strike systems able to overcome any missile defence system”. Putin also restated Russia’s long-held position that the U.S. claims of missile defences being aimed at deterring Iranian and North Korean nuclear threats ‘only cover up [their] true plans...their true aim is to neutralize the strategic nuclear potential of other nuclear countries ... especially our country.’<sup>47</sup>

## Russia: International

(November 16-22, 2015)

- **Russia to intensify air strikes in Syria; Russia to cooperate with the West and Syrian opposition groups; Russia suggests military cooperation with Jordan be coordinated with the centre in Baghdad; Foreign Minister Lavrov says US deliberately sparing the Islamic State in order to weaken Assad; Russia says Hezbollah and Hamas are not terrorist groups; Lavrov says Russia’s and foreign partners list of terrorists largely coincide; Russia submits revised draft resolution on terrorism to the UNSC; Russia to impose food embargo against Ukraine; Russia signs contract with China on Su-35 deliveries; Russia and Georgia discuss joint efforts to fight terrorism; Volume of trade between Russia and Japan down by 38 per cent in 2015; Russia and Egypt sign agreement for construction of nuclear power plant; Transdnistria says its ties with**

<sup>44</sup> “Russia’s Oil Production May Decline By 10 Mln Tons in 2017 — Ministry of Energy”, *Itar-Tass*, November 17, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/837175>

<sup>45</sup> “Kadyrov Says 480 Chechens Have Joined Islamic State”, *The Moscow Times*, November 16, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/kadyrov-says-480-chechens-have-joined-islamic-state/549123.html>

<sup>46</sup> “ISIS Pledges Attacks on Russia ‘Very Soon’”, *The Moscow Times*, November 12, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/isis-pledges-attacks-on-russia-very-soon/548939.html>

<sup>47</sup> “Russia To Develop Weapons To Overwhelm U.S. Missile Defences”, *The Moscow Times*, November 11, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russia-to-develop-weapons-to-overwhelm-us-missile-defenses/548771.html>

**Moldova are deteriorating; Prime Minister Medvedev says preferential bilateral agreements should not replace global trade system; Russia and Philippines sign economic and anti-drug agreements.**

President Vladimir Putin has demanded that Russia's air force operation in Syria be intensified. He made the statement following the emergence of concrete evidence that the crash of Russian civilian airline over Sinai had been caused by a terrorist act. Putin also instructed the Defence Ministry "to turn to all our partners." He stated "we count on all our friends in the course of this work, including the search for and the punishment of criminals."<sup>48</sup> Meanwhile, Defence Minister Sergey Shoigu has said that ten ships of the Russian Navy are also involved in the anti-terrorism operation in Syria. This includes ships bases in the Caspian and Mediterranean Seas.<sup>49</sup>

Russian President Vladimir Putin has said, during the G20 summit, that there has been a decline in tensions between Russia and the West in the face of new international threats and challenges. He added that joint efforts from all G20 members are needed to defeat Islamic State (IS), and that discussion of Syria's political reforms should be put aside for the moment. He also stressed that Russia is ready to cooperate with Syrian armed opposition groups in fighting the IS.<sup>50</sup> Meanwhile, President Putin has issued orders to the command of cruiser ship Moskva (based in the Mediterranean) to establish cooperation with the French military. He stated that 'a French aircraft carrier task force is to approach your area soon. You are to establish direct contact with the French counterparts and cooperate with them as with allies.'<sup>51</sup>

Russian President's aide Yuri Ushakov has spoken about Russia's suggestion to Jordan that their military cooperation be coordinated with the Baghdad-based coordination centre. He added that developments in Syria will be the key focus of President Putin's talks with the King of Jordan Abdallah II, scheduled to be held in Sochi on November 24. They are also slated to discuss military-technical cooperation between their countries.<sup>52</sup>

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has said that United States and its coalition partners seem to be sparing the Islamic State in order to weaken Syrian President Bashar Assad. Mr. Lavrov stressed that Russia is waging consistent and resolute fight against all those who profess and preach terrorist ideology.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> "Putin Orders To Intensify Russian Air Strikes in Syria", *Itar-Tass*, November 17, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/politics/837107>

<sup>49</sup> "Ten Russian Navy Ships Involved In Anti-Terrorist Operation in Syria — Defence Minister", *Itar-Tass*, November 20, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/defense/838168>

<sup>50</sup> "Russia to Cooperate With West and Syrian Opposition Groups — Putin", *The Moscow Times*, November 17, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russia-to-cooperate-with-west-and-syrian-opposition-groups--putin/549846.html>

<sup>51</sup> "Putin Instructs Russian Navy's Moskva Missile Cruiser To Cooperate with French Navy", *Itar-Tass*, November 17, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/defense/837240>

<sup>52</sup> "Russia Suggests Military Cooperation With Jordan Be Coordinated With Centre In Baghdad", *Itar-Tass*, November 20, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/politics/838093>

<sup>53</sup> "Russian FM: US Deliberately Sparing Islamic State Seeking To Weaken Assad", *Itar-Tass*, November 17, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/politics/837181>

Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov has said that Russia does not consider Hezbollah as a terrorist organization. He stated ‘we maintain contacts and relations with [Hezbollah] because we do not consider them a terrorist organization. They have never committed any terrorist attacks on Russian territory.’ Bogdanov added that Hezbollah and Hamas had both been democratically elected and were “legitimate societal-political forces.”<sup>54</sup>

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has said, on November 18 that the proposals of Russia, United States and other countries as to who should be considered terrorists in Syria coincide to a large extent, and the final list will be drawn up by Jordan.<sup>55</sup>

Russia’s Permanent Representative at UN Vitaly Churkin has said that Russia has, on November 19, submitted a revised draft resolution on coordination of efforts in the fight against terrorist organisations (particularly the Islamic State group) to the UN Security Council. He added that the document calls for both coordination and joint work to locate and bring to justice those responsible for terror acts and it also articulates the concept of self-defence and Article 51 of the UN Charter.<sup>56</sup>

Economy Minister Alexei Ulyukaev has said, on November 18, that Russia will impose a food embargo against Ukraine following Kiev’s decision to join in the sanctions against Russia. The ban is scheduled to come into effect on January 2016. Meanwhile, the Ukraine-EU Association Agreement, establishing “deep and comprehensive” free trade between Ukraine and the 28 member states, is set to fully come into force on January 2016. Ulyukaev stated that ‘it is highly likely that we will need to unilaterally protect our market from an uncontrolled inflow of goods from third countries, especially the EU, via the customs territory of Ukraine.’<sup>57</sup> Meanwhile, Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk has said that the country’s losses as a result of the Russian embargo are expected to be US\$ 600 million.<sup>58</sup>

Russia and China have, on November 19, signed a contract on sale of 24 Sukhoi Su-35 fighter jets worth an estimated US\$ 2 billion. This makes China the first foreign buyer of the Su-35 aircraft.<sup>59</sup>

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin has met with Georgian Prime Minister’s special representative for relations with Russia Zurab Abashidze in Moscow on November 20. They discussed cooperation in fighting terrorism. Mr. Karasin stated that ‘we noted that our

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<sup>54</sup> “Russia Says Hezbollah, Hamas Aren’t Terrorist Groups”, *The Moscow Times*, November 16, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russia-says-hezbollah-hamas-arent-terrorist-groups/549136.html>

<sup>55</sup> “Russian, Foreign Partners’ Lists Of Terrorists In Syria Largely Coincide — Lavrov”, *Itar-Tass*, November 18, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/politics/837462>

<sup>56</sup> “Russian UN Envoy: Russia Submits To UN SC Revised Draft Resolution On Terrorism”, *Itar-Tass*, November 19, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/politics/837646>

<sup>57</sup> “Russia To Impose Food Embargo Against Ukraine – Economy Minister”, *The Moscow Times*, November 18, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/business/article/russia-to-impose-food-embargo-against-ukraine--economy-minister/549972.html>

<sup>58</sup> “Ukraine Estimates Potential Losses Of Russia’s Food Embargo At \$600 Mln in 2016”, *Itar-Tass*, November 18, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/837543>

<sup>59</sup> “Russia Inks Contract With China On Su-35 Deliveries”, *Itar-Tass*, November 19, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/defense/837662>

security services accumulated fairly good experience during the Olympic Games. Perhaps, we should continue to develop this practice.<sup>60</sup>

The volume of trade between Japan and Russia in the first 10 months of 2015 has declined by 38 per cent due to the fall of the rouble and oil prices. Trade turnover between the two countries was US\$ 17.7 billion as compared to US\$ 28.3 billion in 2014. About 70 per cent of Russian exports comprise energy products. Russia has a favourable trade balance of US\$ 9 billion.<sup>61</sup>

Egypt and Russia have, on November 19, struck an agreement on extending the export credit loan for construction of the first nuclear plant in Egypt. The plant is scheduled to be built within 12 years in Dabaa and will have four power-generating units - each with a capacity of 1,200 megawatts. The intergovernmental agreement also covers issues like nuclear fuel, obligations for exploitation, maintenance works and repair of the plant's units.<sup>62</sup>

Transdniestria's acting Foreign Minister Vitaly Ignatyev has said, on November 17, that relations between Moldova and Transdniestria have been deteriorating. He said the two sides have accumulated a lot of problems in their relations. The most pressing of them, were Moldova's and Ukraine's decision to install joint customs control at the border with Transdniestria and criminal prosecution of Transdniestrian officials.<sup>63</sup>

Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev has said that preferential bilateral agreements must not replace the global trade system. He stated 'Russia has consistently advocated the deepening regional integration. All preferential trade agreements reached within its framework are important, of course, but, nevertheless, they should not replace the multilateral trade system. Moreover, they should not destroy the existing economic ties, they should only enrich them.' He added that world trade rules must be universal and should be developed within the framework of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Medvedev made these statements during the APEC CEO summit held in Manila on November 18.<sup>64</sup>

Russia and the Philippines have signed an economic cooperation agreement as well as an agreement on the fight against new psychoactive drugs. The documents were signed in the presence of Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and President of the Philippines Benigno Aquino after their talks within the framework of an APEC summit in Manila on November 18.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> "Russia and Georgia Discuss Joint Efforts To Fight Terrorism — Diplomat", *Itar-Tass*, November 20, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/politics/838205>

<sup>61</sup> "Volume of Trade Between Russia And Japan Down By 38% In 10 Months 2015", *Itar-Tass*, November 19, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/837667>

<sup>62</sup> "Egypt, Russia Sign Agreement On Loan For Construction Of Country's First NPP", *Itar-Tass*, November 19, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/837875>

<sup>63</sup> "Transdniestria Says Its Relations With Chisinau Keep On Deteriorating", *Itar-Tass*, November 17, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/world/837336>

<sup>64</sup> "Preferential Bilateral Agreements Should Not Replace Global Trade System — Russian PM", *Itar-Tass*, November 18, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/837388>

<sup>65</sup> "Russia and the Philippines Sign Economic, Anti-Drug Agreements", *Itar-Tass*, November 18, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/837394>

## India-Russia Relations

(November 16-22, 2015)

- **India and Russia joint military exercise INDRA-2015 is underway at the Mahajan Field Firing Ranges.**

The joint military exercise between India and Russia, INDRA-2015 is presently underway at the Mahajan Field Firing Ranges since November 8, 2015. The exercise is focussed towards 'Counter Terrorism Operations in the backdrop of desert terrain under a United Nations Mandate'. The exercise is being conducted in two phases. The first phase of combat conditioning and tactical training was completed successfully by the both the contingents. The training received by both the armies in the first week was put into practice in the second phase which is termed as validation stage. Both the contingents jointly took part in the validation exercise which included Clearing of an Axis, Establishment of Observation Post, Cordon & Search Operations and House Clearing Drills. The aim of the exercise is to achieve inter-operability by acquainting with each other's operational procedures, drills and understand the functioning of each other in such situations.<sup>66</sup>

## D. The United State of America

### National

(November 16-22, 2015)

- **Unemployment rates fell in 32 U.S. states in October 2015; Dunford announces Troxell as the 3rd senior enlisted advisor to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Trump is under criticism for saying he would "absolutely" implement a database of American Muslims; Obama is pressing ahead with his plan to close the U.S. prison at Guantanamo Bay; Carter says future programme is necessary to ensure the Defence Department continues to attract the best people; Obama defends TPP pact for keeping largely under wraps; US Senators warn terrorists could exploit visa waiver programme; House planning to vote on a bill sponsored by the Republican majority to resettle Iraqi and Syrian refugees.**

Unemployment rates fell in 32 U.S. states in October 2015 as employers nationwide added the most jobs of any month this year. Jobless rates rose in just three states in October and were unchanged in 2015. The unemployment rate has tumbled below 4.5 percent in 21 states, including Texas, Colorado and Virginia. That's a historically low level that may help push up pay in the coming months. A hiring rebound in October added 271,000 jobs, the most this

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<sup>66</sup> "India Russia Joint Military Exercise in Progress", *PIB*, Release ID :130559, November 17, 2015 at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx>



year. The national unemployment rate fell to 5 percent from 5.1 percent. Steady spending by consumers has offset slower growth overseas and encouraged businesses to add workers.<sup>67</sup>

On November 18, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr. announced that Army Command Sgt. Maj. John W. Troxell has been selected to replace Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Bryan B. Battaglia as the 3rd senior enlisted advisor to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Dunford said, "All of the candidates epitomize senior enlisted leadership...Sergeant Major Troxell is someone soldiers, airmen, Marines and sailors can look up to. He can inspire people, and he is someone I trust to tell me things straight." Troxell is currently serving as the command senior enlisted leader of the United Nations Command, Combined Forces Command and United States Forces Korea, stationed in Yongsan, South Korea. Troxell, as the SEAC, will serve as the armed forces' most senior non-commissioned officer and the principal military advisor to the chairman and the secretary of defence on all matters involving joint and combined total force integration, utilization, health of the force and joint development for enlisted personnel.<sup>68</sup>

Republican presidential frontrunner Donald Trump is coming under criticism for saying on November 19 that he would "absolutely" implement a database of American Muslims, and that he would not rule out giving them special identification cards that note their religion. In the wake terrorist attacks in Paris, Trump has sharpened his rhetoric, calling for tougher security measures to prevent terrorist attacks on U.S. soil. At a campaign event in Newton, Iowa, on November 19, an *NBC news* reporter pressed Trump on whether all Muslims in the United States would be forced to register. Trump answered: "They have to be." Earlier in the week, Trump had suggested it might be necessary to close down mosques in the United States and to increase surveillance of Muslims.<sup>69</sup>

U.S. President Barack Obama is pressing ahead with his plan to close the U.S. prison at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, which holds 107 suspected terrorists, many of whom have been there for more than a decade. Speaking at a news conference in Manila on November 19, Obama acknowledged that in the wake of the terrorist attacks in Paris there will be strong resistance to his plan from Republican lawmakers, many of whom also oppose his effort to allow 10,000 Syrian refugees to settle in the United States in the next year. The president said he expects the number of prisoners held at Guantanamo could fall below 100 early in 2016, a year before he leaves office in January 2017. The prison was opened after the 2001 terrorist

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<sup>67</sup> "Jobless Rates Fall in 32 US States", *Associated Press*, November 20, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/jobless-rates-fall-thirty-two-states/3067171.html>

<sup>68</sup> "Dunford Announces Troxell as Third SEAC", *DoD News*, Release No: NR-441-15, November 18, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/News/News-Releases/News-Release-View/Article/630367/dunford-announces-troxell-as-third-seac>

<sup>69</sup> Saine, Cindy, "Trump, Carson Ratchet Up Heated Rhetoric About Muslims", *VOA News*, November 20, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/trump-carson-ratchet-up-heated-rhetoric-about-muslims/3066860.html>

attacks on the United States; nearly 800 prisoners have been held there at one time or another.<sup>70</sup>

On November 19, Defence Secretary Ash Carter said his Force of the Future programme is necessary to ensure the Defence Department continues to attract the best people America has to offer. Carter told students at George Washington University's Elliot School of International Affairs that one of his core commitments "is to help more of our fellow citizens make that difference in the world and in as many ways as possible." He emphasized his starting point is today's force. He said, "George Washington, launched what has arguably become the most successful start-up in world history: the United States military... It secured freedom from an empire and sustained our union. It vanquished fascism, fought for freedom around the globe, won the Cold War, and went after the terrorists who attacked us on 9/11." But it was more than a fighting machine. American Army engineers harnessed rivers; explored the West; built canals; and eradicated disease. More recently, the military helped create the Internet and the global-positioning system.<sup>71</sup>

On November 20, U.S. President Barack Obama launched a defence of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) pact kept largely under wraps and said the public would get its say before legislators in each country debate the full details. The TPP, a "mega-regional accord" covering four-tenths of global GDP, was so complex it would not have materialized if all interest groups were involved in the protracted talks, Obama said during a town hall at a Kuala Lumpur University. He said, "If you are negotiating with 12 countries and there's no space for everyone to agree on the deal ... then it would never get done". He added, "The nature of the trade agreement is so many interests are involved, so what we've done instead is close the initial deal, it's subject to review .... each country then has to ratify and it's subject to the legislatures."<sup>72</sup>

Amid furore in Washington over the admission of Syrian refugees, senators of both parties say that the easiest path for foreign terrorists to enter the United States is the visa waiver programme. Without visas, nationals from dozens of countries in Europe and elsewhere need only a passport to pass through U.S. customs at airports and other entry points, bypassing the screening process to which visa applicants are subjected. The top Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, Feinstein has introduced legislation to block visa waivers for foreign nationals who have travelled to Syria or Iraq in the last five years.<sup>73</sup> The U.S. House of

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<sup>70</sup> Bredemeier, Ken, "White House Reiterates Vow to Close Guantanamo Prison", *VOA News*, November 19, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/obama-guantanamo-prison/3065066.html>

<sup>71</sup> Garamone, Jim, "Carter Details Force of the Future Initiatives", *DoD News*, November 19, 2015 at <http://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/tabid/5693/Article/630600/carter-details-force-of-the-future-initiatives.aspx>

<sup>72</sup> "Obama Defends TPP Secrecy, Says Now is Chance for Debate", *Reuters*, November 20, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/obama-defends-tpp-secrecy-says-now-is-chance-for-debate/3066725.html>

<sup>73</sup> Bowman, Michael, "US Senators Warn Terrorists Could Exploit Visa Waiver Programme", *VOA News*, November 19, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/us-senators-warn-terrorists-could-exploit-visa-waiver-program/3065590.html>; and, Saine, Cindy, "US Lawmakers Set for Showdown Vote on Refugees", *VOA News*, November 18, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/us-lawmakers-set-for-showdown-vote-on-syria-iraq-refugees/3064540.html>

Representatives is also planning to vote on a bill sponsored by the Republican majority that would pause the Obama administration's programme to resettle Iraqi and Syrian refugees to the United States. The president is threatening to veto it.

## International: Asia

(November 16-22, 2015)

- **USAF officer trains Afghan Air Force meteorologists; Department of Defence announces the death of Castaneda; Coalition military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria and Iraq; United States has invested more than \$280 million on conventional weapons destruction in Iraq since 2003; Obama delivers a strong message against terrorism at the ASEAN and the adjoining EAS; U.S. Air Forces CENTCOM completes Iraq civilian casualty investigation; Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Stethem (DDG 63) arrives in Shanghai, China; USS Fitzgerald conducts a routine patrol in the SCS; Obama attends a maritime security event aboard the BRP Gregory del Pilar at Pier; Sailors and units with the US RRCSG along with the Japan (MSDF) began their annual exercise; Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Stengel travels to Japan and Malaysia; Marine Wing Support Squadron 171 executes operational decontamination exercise; US and Japan held the bilateral Extended Deterrence Dialogue.**

Building the Afghan Air Force from the ground-up takes time, equipment, and capable and professional people to sustain it. Capt. Haley Homan, Train, Advise, Assist Command – Air (TAAC-Air) weather adviser, is deployed in Kabul, Afghanistan from Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska, to advise the AAF meteorologists and weather forecasters on how to provide weather support to the Afghan National Defence Security Forces. Her advisory duties include daily planning forecasts for various locations throughout the country, specialized flight weather briefings for aviators, and issuing watches, warnings, and advisories to warn Airmen and soldiers of impending inclement weather. Language barriers have been the most challenging part of her job.<sup>74</sup>

On November 20, the Department of Defence announce the death of Pvt. Christopher J. Castaneda, of Fripp Island, South Carolina, who was supporting Operation Inherent Resolve. Castaneda died November 19, on Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, in a non-combat related incident. Castaneda was assigned to 3rd Squadron, 71st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, New York.<sup>75</sup>

On November 21, coalition military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria and Iraq. In Syria, coalition military forces conducted nine strikes using ground-attack, attack, fighter, bomber and remotely piloted aircraft. Separately in Iraq, coalition military forces conducted

<sup>74</sup> Sakura, Edith, "USAF Officer Trains Afghan Air Force Meteorologists", *US Central Command*, November 18, 2015 at <http://www.centcom.mil/en/news/articles/usaf-officer-trains-afghan-air-force-meteorologists>

<sup>75</sup> "DoD Identifies Army Casualty", *DoD News*, Release No: NR-444-15, November 20, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/News/News-Releases/News-Release-View/Article/630811/dod-identifies-army-casualty>

16 strikes coordinated with and in support of the Government of Iraq using bomber, attack, ground-attack, fighter, and remotely piloted aircraft against ISIL targets.<sup>76</sup>

The US Department of State in a fact sheet released on November 19 stated that the United States has invested more than \$280 million in Iraq since 2003 toward the clearance and safe disposal of landmines, unexploded ordnance, and excess conventional weapons and munitions. This assistance, directed through several Iraqi and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), has made significant progress toward protecting communities from potential risks, restoring access to land and infrastructure, and developing Iraqi capacity to manage weapons abatement programmes independently over the long term.<sup>77</sup>

On November 22, U.S. President Barack Obama delivered a strong message against terrorism at the closing of the annual meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the adjoining East Asia Summit (EAS). Before departing Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia where he touted progress in America's bid to deepen ties with the region, the president said much of his work there was spent "focused on the urgent threat of terrorism."<sup>78</sup>

The finding and recommendations of a U.S. Air Forces Central Command investigation into allegations that coalition airstrikes against an ISIL checkpoint on March 13, 2015, near al Hatra, Iraq, resulted in civilian casualties was released on November 20 by U.S. Central Command. The preponderance of the evidence gathered during the investigation indicates that the airstrikes likely resulted in the deaths of four non-combatants. According to the report, one of the non-combatants may have been a child. However, no positive identification can be made with reasonable certainty as to gender or age without further forensic examination or other evidence that is not available to the Coalition. Lt. Gen. John Hesterman III, then U.S. Air Forces Central Command commander, directed an investigation into the allegations on April 20, 2015, and approved the findings of the investigation on June 28, 2015. It stated that prior to the strike, the target was thoroughly reviewed and validated as an ISIL checkpoint.<sup>79</sup>

Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Stethem (DDG 63) arrived in Shanghai, China, November 16 for a scheduled port visit. Stethem's visit promotes maritime cooperation and reinforces a positive naval relationship with the People's Liberation Army Navy PLA (N) East Sea Fleet. Stethem's commanding officer, Cmdr. Harry L. Marsh said that "We look forward to this opportunity to strengthen the existing relations between our navies". During the visit to Shanghai, Stethem will attend a reception and ship visits hosted by the PLA (N)

<sup>76</sup> "Military Airstrikes Continue Against ISIL Terrorists in Syria and Iraq", *US Central Command*, November 22, 2015, Release # 20151122-01 at <http://www.centcom.mil/en/news/articles/nov.-22-military-airstrikes-continue-against-isil-terrorists-in-syria-and-i>

<sup>77</sup> "Iraq: U.S. Conventional Weapons Destruction Efforts Save Lives and Build Capacity", Fact Sheet, *US Department of State*, Washington, DC, November 19, 2015 at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/11/249798.htm>

<sup>78</sup> Salinas, Mary Alice, "Obama's Message on Terror: 'We Do Not Succumb to Fear'", *VOA News*, November 22, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/obama-message-on-terror/3068761.html>

<sup>79</sup> "U.S. Air Forces Central Command Completes Iraq Civilian Casualty Investigation", *US Central Command*, November, 20, 2015, Release #20151120-01 at <http://www.centcom.mil/en/news/articles/nov.-20-u.s.-air-forces-central-command-completes-iraq-civilian-casualty-in>

and reciprocate in kind. The scheduled events will allow Sailors from both nations to interact, exchange experiences and gain an understanding of one another through their shared maritime interests. Stethem Sailors will be afforded the opportunity to explore Shanghai through tours organized by the ship's Morale and Welfare Recreation (MWR) programme and participate in a friendly basketball game with members of the East Sea Fleet.<sup>80</sup> Meanwhile, Crew members assigned to the forward-deployed Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Stethem (DDG 63) joined with members of the PLA (N) in visiting the Shanghai School for the Blind, on November 18.<sup>81</sup>

Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Fitzgerald conducted a routine patrol in the South China Sea (SCS), from November 10 to November 15. Routine operations like this one support regional security, stability and freedom of the seas. Cmdr. Christopher England, Fitzgerald's commanding officer, said that "Fitzgerald's presence in the South China Sea reinforces the United States' commitment to peace and regional stability to our partners and allies in the Indo-Asia-Pacific". Since August 2013, destroyers assigned to Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15 interacted with many regional navies while patrolling international waters, such as the People's Liberation Army Navy PLA (N)). Interactions were safe and professional, including courteous radio conversations. While patrolling the SCS, Fitzgerald continued with normal operations including damage control training and live-fire gunnery exercises as it continues a scheduled fall patrol.<sup>82</sup>

On November 17, United States President Barack Obama attended a maritime security event aboard the BRP Gregory del Pilar at Pier 13 near the National Coast Watch Centre in Manila Harbour. This first event of President Obama's visit included a tour of the ship from Commanding Officer Captain Vincent Sibala, a meet and greet with Philippine defence officials, U.S. sailors from USS Fitzgerald, and Philippine sailors from the Gregorio del Pilar, and remarks from the President to national and international media on the pier. President Obama said, "The United States has been committed to the security of this region for more than 70 years". The event reinforced the U.S. commitment to maritime security in the region, and to the strong standing relationship between the U.S. and the Philippines.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> "USS Stethem Arrives in Shanghai for Port Visit", By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Kevin V. Cunningham, *US Pacific Command*, November 16, 2015 at <http://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/tabid/5693/Article/629066/uss-stethem-arrives-in-shanghai-for-port-visit.aspx>

<sup>81</sup> "Stethem Sailors Reach Out in Shanghai", By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Kevin V. Cunningham, *US Pacific Command*, November 19, 2015 at <http://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/tabid/5693/Article/630609/stethem-sailors-reach-out-in-shanghai.aspx>

<sup>82</sup> "Fitzgerald Patrols South China Sea", By Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Patrick Dionne, *US Pacific Command*, November 16, 2015 at <http://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/tabid/5693/Article/629059/fitzgerald-patrols-south-china-sea.aspx>

<sup>83</sup> "President Obama Attends U.S., Philippines Maritime Security", By Embassy of the U.S., Philippines, *US Pacific Command*, November 18, 2015 at <http://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/tabid/5693/Article/630340/president-obama-attends-us-philippines-maritime-security.aspx>



The amphibious dock landing ship USS Rushmore (LSD 47), along with the embarked 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), arrived in Bali, Indonesia, on November 16, for a scheduled port visit. From integrated amphibious operations with the Indonesian navy during exercise Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2014, to several interactions during Rushmore's current deployment, building the relationship between the United States and Indonesia is a theme Rushmore Sailors are excited to continue. Rushmore has carried its tradition of working with the Indonesians into their current deployment in port and at sea, starting with their port visit to Manado.<sup>84</sup>

Sailors and units with the Ronald Reagan Carrier Strike Group (RRCSG) along with the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF) began their Annual Exercise (AE) 16, on November 16. AE16 is a bilateral field-training exercise to increase interoperability between the United States Navy (USN) and JMSDF. AE16 is designed to allow the USN and JMSDF to practice and evaluate the coordination and tactics s required to mutually respond to the defence of Japan or to a regional contingency, while building bilateral relationships. Rear Adm. John Alexander, commander of RRCSG said that “The Annual Exercise underscores the strength of the close, long-standing relationship the United States has with Japan and the JMSDF”. Alexander added, “This exercise demonstrates our continuing commitment to deepen our mutual support and friendship.” USN and JMSDF units will conduct maritime training in the air, surface and subsurface warfare areas.<sup>85</sup>

Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Richard Stengel travels to Japan and Malaysia, November 17–21, 2015, to promote public diplomacy and the importance of close ties with the region. The US Pacific Command reported that in Tokyo, Under Secretary Stengel will meet with young leaders from business, social innovation, and government sectors to discuss how their initiatives are working to shape the future of Japan and the bilateral relationship. In Kuala Lumpur, Under Secretary Stengel plans on meeting with youth leaders from the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI).<sup>86</sup>

Meanwhile, Marines with Marine Wing Support Squadron 171 executed an operational decontamination exercise at their motor transportation wash rack at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, November 18, 2015. As reconnaissance, surveillance and decontamination trained personnel, these Marines acted swiftly and donned their personal protective equipment during this simulated chemical attack. Operational decontamination exercises

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<sup>84</sup> “Rushmore Returns to Indonesia”, By Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Chelsea Troy Milburn, *US Pacific Command*, November 18, 2015 at <http://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/tabid/5693/Article/630328/rushmore-returns-to-indonesia.aspx>

<sup>85</sup> “USS Reagan Carrier Strike Group Kicks Off Annual Exercise with Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force to Increase Readiness”, By Commander, Task Force 70 / Carrier Strike Group 5, *US Pacific Command*, November 16, 2015 at <http://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/tabid/5693/Article/629134/uss-reagan-carrier-strike-group-kicks-off-annual-exercise-with-japan-maritime-s.aspx>

<sup>86</sup> “Under Secretary Stengel Travels to Japan and Malaysia”, By Office of the Spokesperson, *US Pacific Command*, November 17, 2015 at <http://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/tabid/5693/Article/630118/under-secretary-stengel-travels-to-japan-and-malaysia.aspx>; “Under Secretary Stengel Travels to Japan and Malaysia”, *US Department of State*, Washington, DC, November 16, 2015 at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/11/249537.htm>



sustain operations, reduce contact hazards and limit the spread of contamination. Lance Cpl. William Hony, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear chief with MWSS-171 said, "Where we are located in the world, we are probably one of the most prone areas where these types of attacks could happen".<sup>87</sup>

The US Department of State reported on November 20 that the United States and Japan held the bilateral Extended Deterrence Dialogue (EDD), from November 17-19, at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. The EDD provides an opportunity for the two governments to frankly exchange views on how to secure Alliance deterrence as part of their security and defence cooperation. The EDD has been held on a regular basis since 2010.<sup>88</sup>

## India-US Relations

(November 16-22, 2015)

- **Various Business Meetings were held as a part of the RPBD; US Director of Policy Planning, David McKean, travels to India; USIBC hosts senior officials from the Ministry of Defence; Pentagon hosts a group of top Indian defence officials for the 14th India-US DPG meeting; Defence department has established a first-ever India Rapid Reaction Cell (IRRC) to speed up defence cooperation; CFR) memo warns a China-India conflict could endanger US interests.**

Various Business Meetings were held as a part of the Regional Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (RPBD) over the last two days at Los Angeles, USA. They included three panel discussions on: i) Investment Opportunities in Clean & Renewable Energy Sector in India; ii) Technology Partnerships, Investments & Innovation through the Digital India Initiative; and, iii) Impact Investments into Social Enterprises in India. These business meetings between Overseas Indians, officials & business delegation from India are expected to pave the way for economic engagement of the Indian Diaspora in the US with India. At the Business Meet, OIFC launched the India Corporate Internship initiative, which would offer 60 paid internships at 23 top Indian corporate firms from summer 2016, by funding students of Indian origin. The internships would be a window to the Indian work culture, an opportunity to connect to roots and experience working in a multi-cultural environment. RPBD provides a unique platform and opportunity for the Government to engage with the Indian Diaspora on issues such as increasing engagement with the Indian Diaspora; Role of Diaspora in the new initiatives of the Government of India (such as Digital India, Make in India, National Mission for Clean Ganga, Swachh Bharat etc); Innovation and Entrepreneurship; Education, Skills and Vocational Training among others.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Quezada, Jessica, "Marine Wing Support Squadron 171 Marines Act Swiftly, Train Against Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Attacks", *US Pacific Command*, November 19, 2015 at <http://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/tabid/5693/Article/630607/marine-wing-support-squadron-171-marines-act-swiftly-train-against-chemical-bio.aspx>

<sup>88</sup> "U.S.-Japan Extended Deterrence Dialogue", *US Department of State*, Washington, DC, November 20, 2015 at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/11/249822.htm>

<sup>89</sup> "Business Meets Held as Part of Regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas on 14-15 November 2015 at Los Angeles, USA", *PIB*, Release ID :130504, November 16, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx>

The Director of Policy Planning, David McKean, travels to India, from November 17–18. The US State Department reported that “In New Delhi, he will hold the first U.S.-India Policy Planning talks with the Indian Ministry of External Affairs. These talks were established at the 2015 U.S.-India Strategic and Commercial Dialogue as part of a New Diplomacy Partnership between the United States and India. While in New Delhi, Director McKean will meet with officials from various Indian government ministries and think tanks.”<sup>90</sup>

The U.S.-India Business Council (USIBC) hosted senior officials from the Ministry of Defence in Washington D.C. on November 18. The delegation is visiting the U.S. for bilateral meetings with the U.S. Department of Defence to discuss progress on joint initiatives such as the U.S.-India Defence Policy Group (DPG) and Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI). USIBC President Dr. Mukesh Aghi welcomed the delegation to Washington D.C. and lauded the Government of India’s recent announcements on FDI policy reforms in defence. He said, “We welcome the government’s recent announcements allowing FDI up to 49% under the automatic route and beyond that through the Foreign Investment Promotion Board’s (FIPB) approval. By doing away with the earlier requirement of mandatory permission from the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) on FDI beyond 49%, the Government of India has once again proven its resolve towards streamlining the decision making process and improving the ease of doing business”.<sup>91</sup>

On November 18, the Pentagon hosted a group of top Indian defence officials for the 14th India-US Defence Policy Group meeting, the first such talks after the signing of the Defence Framework Pact between the two countries. The meeting also comes a day after the day-long US visit of Pakistan Army Chief Gen Raheel, who had met CIA Director John Brennan and US Defence Secretary Ashton Carter. “The 14th US-India Defence Policy Group (DPG) is being held today,” Pentagon spokesman Cmdr Bill Urban told *PTI*. Co-chaired by US Under-Secretary of Defence for Policy Christine Wormuth and Indian Defence Secretary G Mohan Kumar, the meeting was also attended by Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Nisha Desai Biswal. Urban said, “The meeting is our annual senior-level bilateral defence dialogue and is the primary mechanism for guiding the strategic defence relationship”.<sup>92</sup>

In order to speed up its defence ties with India, US defence department has established a first-ever country special cell, which will work as single window to accelerate the process of co-development and co-production of hi-tech military equipment in the country, as part of the

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<sup>90</sup> “Policy Planning Director McKean Travels to India and Burma”, *US Department of State*, Washington, DC, November 16, 2015 at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/11/249547.htm>

<sup>91</sup> “U.S.-India Business Council Hosts Defence Policy Group (DPG) Delegation From India Ahead of Indian Defence Minister Parrikar’s Visit to the U.S. in December”, *U.S.-India Business Council (USIBC)*, November 19, 2015 at <http://www.usibc.com/press-release/us-india-business-council-hosts-defense-policy-group-dpg-delegation-india-ahead-indian>; and, “USIBC Hosts Defence Policy Group Delegation Ahead of Parrikar’s US Visit”, November 19, 2015 at <http://www.india.com/business/usibc-hosts-defence-policy-group-delegation-ahead-of-parrikars-us-visit-719964/>

<sup>92</sup> “Pentagon Hosts India-US Defence Policy Group Meeting”, *PTI*, November 18, 2015, at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/pentagon-hosts-india-us-defence-policy-group-meeting/articleshow/49836357.cms>

DTTI. The special arrangement, which has been named as India Rapid Reaction Cell (IRRC) is headed by Mr Keith Webster, Director, and International Cooperation Office of the Under Secretary of Defence for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, sources in the Defence Ministry said in New Delhi. The development comes at time when the US-India bilateral defence relationship has grown in a robust manner from a mere \$200 million in defence trade in 2000 to over \$14 billion.<sup>93</sup>

In a memo, Daniel Markey, Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) adjunct senior fellow for India, Pakistan, and South Asia, warns a China-India conflict could endanger US interests. It suggested that the US should expand India's access to its high-tech weapons systems to help the country deter Chinese and Pakistani provocations and secure its borders. It stated that "US policymakers should expand India's access to US high- tech weapons systems in ways designed to discourage Indian military adventurism that would provoke a hostile Chinese reaction. US arms sales should help India deter Chinese (and Pakistani) provocations, defend India's borders, and clarify the US commitment to long-term strategic partnership". It pointed out that although a large-scale conflict between China and India is unlikely, persistent suspicions and border disputes could have dire consequences. It further said that a dispute at the India-Pakistan border could, for example, lead to a potential spill over in the region.<sup>94</sup>

## II. DEFENCE REVIEWS

### National

(November 16-22, 2015)

- **Indo-Russian joint military exercise culminates in Rajasthan; Indigenously developed unmanned aerial vehicle of the Indian Army crashes near Pokhran in Rajasthan.**

INDRA-2015, the Joint Indo-Russian Military Exercise culminated in Mahajan Field Firing Ranges of Rajasthan on November 18, 2015. Significantly, during the conduct of the joint exercise, it was noted that there is great commonality in the two countries' approach and views to deal with many challenges. The Indo-Russian joint tactical exercise had begun on November 8. The two countries' contingents conducted focussed training and strived to understand the functioning of each other. Inter-operability procedures were high on the agenda for both the Armies. The exercise also provided a unique opportunity to both the Armies to share experiences and strengthen mutual trust and co-operation.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>93</sup> "US Establishes First-Ever India Specific Special Cell To Fast-Track Defence Ties", *Dailyexcelsior*, November 20, 2015 at <http://www.dailyexcelsior.com/us-establishes-first-ever-india-specific-special-cell-to-fast-track-defence-ties/>

<sup>94</sup> Markey, Daniel S., "Armed Confrontation Between China and India", Contingency Planning Memorandum No. 27, *Council on Foreign Relations*, November 2015, <http://www.cfr.org/china/armed-confrontation-between-china-india/p37228>; and, "US Should Expand India's Access to High-Tech Weapons: Think Tank", *PTI*, November 19, 2015 at <http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/expand-indias-access-to-us-high-tech-weapons-think-tank-1245067>

<sup>95</sup> "Indo-Russian Joint Military Exercise Indra-2015 Culminates," *PIB*, November 18, 2015, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=131636>

According to media reports, an indigenously developed unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) of the Indian Army crashed on November 19 near Pokhran in Rajasthan. It was the second such incident in 15 days. The drone named Nishant, made by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), which was the last of the four inducted in 2011, crashed near Pokhran in Jaisalmer district. The crashed UAV was given to the Army under the 'user exploitation' category by the DRDO. Previously, another drone went down on November 4 in the same area. The Nishant UAV programme, which had been in the works since 1995, was launched with the aim of providing the Army with indigenous systems for reconnaissance and intelligence gathering.<sup>96</sup>

## International

(November 16-22, 2015)

- **Russia to supply China 24 multirole Su-35 fighter aircrafts; US Defence Security Cooperation Agency approves sale of four Bell 412EP helicopters to Argentina.**

Reports say that Russia is to supply China with 24 multirole Su-35 fighters. The deal is stated to be worth USD2 billion. Lengthy negotiations between the two countries have concluded in a contract to supply 24 Su-35 multi-purpose fighters to China. China has become the first country with which Russia has signed a contract for the supply of its latest Su-35. It reflects a high level of co-operation and the depth of strategic partnership between the two countries.<sup>97</sup>

Meanwhile, according to reports, the US Defence Security Cooperation Agency has notified the US Congress of a possible Foreign Military Sale (FMS) of four Bell 412EP helicopters to Argentina. The USD80 million deal includes spare parts, tools, pilot and technical training, and getting the aircraft ready to be shipped to the South American country. Argentina is in the process of modernizing its Air Force. However, Argentina's financial woes are casting doubt on all such proposed procurements.<sup>98</sup>

## III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEWS

### Jammu & Kashmir

(November 16-22, 2015)

- **Top J&K cop rules out influence of IS in the state; Army Colonel killed in gunfight with militants in north Kashmir; Seventy-four foreign militants active in the state, says J&K government; Six injured in grenade attack in Pulwama; Cabinet approves the**

<sup>96</sup> "Army's DRDO-made Drone Crashes, Second in 15 Days," *The New Indian Express*, November 20, 2015, at <http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/Armys-DRDO-made-Drone-Crashes-Second-in-15-Days/2015/11/20/article3137262.ece>

<sup>97</sup> "Russia To Supply China With 24 Su-35 Fighters," *IHS Jane's*, November 18, 2015, at <http://www.janes.com/article/56128/russia-to-supply-china-with-24-su-35-fighters>

<sup>98</sup> "United States Approves Sale of Four Bell 412EP Helicopters To Argentina," *IHS Jane's*, November 18, 2015, at <http://www.janes.com/article/56131/united-states-approves-sale-of-four-bell-412ep-helicopters-to-argentina>

**proposal to provide State Government jobs and transit accommodations in the Kashmir Valley; Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for providing relief to the migrants of the Hilly areas of Jammu division.**

In the wake of terror attacks claimed by the global terror outfit in Paris, Jammu and Kashmir Police ruled out any influence of Islamic State in the Kashmir Valley. "We do not find any ISIS ideology (being followed) in Jammu and Kashmir," Director General of Police (DGP) J&K, K Rajendra Kumar told reporters in Kishtwar on November 17. The officer said that the rate of infiltration from Pakistan has decreased remarkably and there was also a decline in militancy related activities in the state.<sup>99</sup>

An Army Colonel was killed and two security personnel were injured in an ongoing encounter in Manigah forest area of north Kashmir's Kupwara district on November 17. Col. Santosh Mahadik, Commanding Officer of the Army's 41 Rashtriya Rifles, succumbed to bullet injuries. One soldier and a special operations group personnel were also injured in the gunfight, said a local official. Several anti-militancy operations have been going on in Kupwara district since November 13.<sup>100</sup>

In reply to a RTI query of Rising Kashmir, the Jammu & Kashmir government has revealed that seventy-four foreign militants are presently active in the state. "There are 74 foreign militants presently active in the state which is equal to 40 percent of total militants active in Jammu and Kashmir," official documents reveal. In the beginning of 2013, Army had claimed activity of 325 militants in J&K as per the inputs from intelligence agencies of which 60 percent were believed to be foreigners. However, during 2014-15, the official reply reveals 40 percent militants are of foreign origin while 60 percent are local recruits, clearly hinting at more local youth joining militancy. In 2010, police had said that 60 foreign militants were active in North Kashmir's Sopore area alone.<sup>101</sup>

In a grenade attack by militants on security forces on Srinagar-Jammu national highway in south Kashmir's Pulwama district on November 20, six persons, including three CRPF jawans, were injured. "Some unidentified militants hurled a grenade at a CRPF party at Drangbal on the national highway in Pampore which exploded causing splinter injuries to three CRPF personnel and as many civilians," a police officer said.<sup>102</sup>

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given its approval for providing State Government jobs and transit accommodations in the Kashmir Valley for the

<sup>99</sup> "No Influence of IS Ideology in J&K, Says Top JK Cop", *The Times of India*, November 17, 2015 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/jammu/No-influence-of-IS-ideology-in-JK-says-top-JK-cop/articleshow/49811018.cms>

<sup>100</sup> Ashiq, Peerzada, "Colonel Killed In Gunfight With Militants in Kashmir", *The Hindu*, November 18, 2015 at <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/colonel-killed-in-gunfight-with-militants-in-kashmir/article7889586.ece>; and, "Army Colonel Martyred Leading Operation Against Terrorists", *PIB*, Release ID :130575, November 17, 2015 at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx>

<sup>101</sup> Yousuf, Sumaiya, "74 Foreign Militants Active in JK", *Rising Kashmir*, November 20, 2015 at <http://risingkashmir.in/news/74-foreign-militants-active-in-jk/>

<sup>102</sup> "Six Injured In Grenade Attack on CRPF Team in Pulwama", *The Hindu*, November 20, 2015 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/six-injured-in-grenade-attack-on-crpf-team-in-pulwama/article7899977.ece>



rehabilitation of Kashmiri migrants involving a total estimated expenditure of Rs.2000 crore. Terrorist violence/ militancy in Jammu & Kashmir, particularly in its early phases, had led to large scale forced migration of members of the Kashmiri Pandit community along with some Sikh and Muslim families from the Kashmir Valley. Presently there are about 62,000 registered Kashmiri migrant families residing in Jammu, Delhi, NCR and other parts of country. The new proposal provides for additional 3000 state government jobs to the Kashmiri migrants with financial assistance from the Government of India and to construct transit accommodations in the Kashmir Valley for the Kashmiri migrants to whom state government jobs have been provided/ will be provided. The financial implication in this respect would be borne by the Government of India.<sup>103</sup>

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Modi has approved the proposal for providing relief to the migrants of the Hilly areas of Jammu division at par with the relief being provided to the Kashmiri migrants involving a total estimated expenditure of Rs. 13.45 Crore per annum. Presently the State Government of Jammu and Kashmir is providing cash relief of Rs.400/- per head per month (maximum Rs.1600/- per family per month), cash assistance of Rs.300 per cattle per month for purchase of fodder, plus dry ration (9 Kg. Atta, 2 Kg. Rice per person per month and 10 Litre Kerosene per family per month) to the migrants of the Hilly areas of Jammu division. The new proposal would enhance the relief being provided to the migrants of the hilly areas of Jammu division at par with the Kashmiri migrants i.e. a cash relief of Rs.2500 per head per month (maximum Rs.10000 per family per month) plus relief for ration/fodder. The expenditure incurred by the state Government in this regard would now be reimbursed by the Government of India.<sup>104</sup>

## Northeast India

(November 16-22, 2015)

- **Invitation to women entrepreneurs from across the country to invest in the North-East Region; Four NSCN (KK) members killed in Nagaland; Centre declares NSCN (K) as terror outfit; Two militants arrested in Manipur.**

The Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Development of North-Eastern Region (DoNER), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh has invited women entrepreneurs from across the country to invest in the North-East Region and take a lead in developing the region as an industrial hub not only for India but also for the countries across the eastern borders. Launching the "Swayam" initiative of "Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry" (FICCI) women wing in Guwahati on November 17, Dr Jitendra Singh said, the unique advantage of any women initiative is that it has a wider social and public impact, also because a woman holds stake for

<sup>103</sup> "Cabinet Approves The Proposal To Provide State Government Jobs And Transit Accommodations In The Kashmir Valley For The Rehabilitation Of Kashmiri Migrants", *PIB*, Release ID :131618, November 18, 2015 at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx>

<sup>104</sup> "Cabinet approves the proposal for providing relief to the militancy affected migrants of the hilly areas of Jammu division at par with the Kashmiri Migrants", *PIB*, Release ID :131614, November 18, 2015 at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx>



at least three generations, that is, the generation of her parents and in-laws, the generation of her husband and brothers, and the generation of her children.<sup>105</sup>

Troops of Assam Rifles on November 15 gunned down four members of the Khole-Kitovi faction of NSCN in Nagaland— a group that is under a ceasefire agreement with the government. A press release issued by the Assam Rifles in Kohima said a patrol party in village Laikunger was fired upon from inside a community hall complex. The troops retaliated, killing four militants. Several weapons, including one AK-47 rifle, one M-16 assault rifle and two .303 assault rifles, were also recovered. The press release said that while the groups in ceasefire with the government are supposed to remain confined to their designated camps, a heavily armed party of NSCN (KK) members was operating in the area, in clear violation of the ceasefire agreement.<sup>106</sup>

The Centre has declared the National Socialist Council of Nagaland -Khaplang (NSCN-K), all its formations and front organisations as a terrorist organisation under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, official sources said. A Gazette notification issued on November 6 mentions that the NSCN (K), a militant outfit, came into existence in 1988 and is active along the Indo-Myanmar border. Earlier on September 17, the Centre had decided to ban NSCN (K) for five years.<sup>107</sup>

A combined team of Assam Rifles and Manipur Police commandos apprehended a cadre of outlawed People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak from Kakching Khunou Lamkhai of Thoubal district, a press release issued by Assam Rifles said. The cadre was identified as Angom Ibotombi Singh (26) of Kakching Khunou village of the same district, the release said adding he was arrested on November 14. Meanwhile, troops of Assam Rifles apprehended a woman cadre of outlawed United National Liberation Front at Khudengthabi check post in Chandel district on November 10, the release added.<sup>108</sup>

## Left-wing Extremism

(November 16-22, 2015)

- **Three villagers killed in cross-fire in Odisha; Two Maoists gunned down in Sukma encounter.**

Three villagers, including a ward member, were allegedly killed and two minors injured in firing by security forces during a combing operation against Left wing extremists in Karlapat forest in Odisha's Kalahandi district on November 15. The security personnel fired upon villagers near Nishanguda village under the Bhawanipatna Sadar police station in the

<sup>105</sup> "Dr. Jitendra Singh invites women entrepreneurs to Northeast", *PIB*, Release ID :130552, November 17, 2015 at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx>

<sup>106</sup> Kashyap, Samudra Gupta, "4 NSCN (KK) Members Killed in Nagaland", *The Indian Express*, November 16, 2015 at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/4-nscnkk-members-killed-in-nagaland/>

<sup>107</sup> "Centre Declares NSCN (K) as Terror Outfit", *The Assam Tribune*, November 17, 2015 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=nov1715/at052>

<sup>108</sup> "2 Militants Arrested", *The Assam Tribune*, November 18, 2015 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=nov1815/oth054>

afternoon. Three persons died on the spot while two others were rushed to the District Headquarters Hospital, Bhawanipatna. "Personnel of the district police and the Special Operations Group began the anti-Maoist operation in the forest on November 13. On November 15, Maoist rebels fired at the forces, who retaliated. In the meantime, villagers were caught in the cross-firing," Brijesh Kumar Rai, Kalahandi Superintendent of Police, told *The Hindu* over phone. Mr. Rai said the villagers had gone to forest for hunting and they had unlicensed country-made guns.<sup>109</sup>

Two alleged Maoists were killed in a fierce encounter in Dubakonta area of Sukma district on November 19. The operation was launched by the CRPF's Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (COBRA) 208 battalion and the District Reserve Group, the police said. So far, two bodies have been recovered, though there could be more insurgent casualties given the nature of the encounter and the material recovered from the spot, said police officers. "The operation was planned based on inputs that Hidma (head of the military battalion 1 of the Naxals) was to participate in the wedding ceremony of a cadre member in Dubakonta village, after which composite forces were mobilised to nab him," said S R Kalluri, Inspector General of Police, Bastar.<sup>110</sup>

## IV. UNITED NATIONS REVIEWS

### India and the UN

(October 26-November 1, 2015)

- **Third IAFS calls for UN reform, adoption of CCIT and Cooperation on Climate Change; India leads in tuberculosis cases; Book on India in the UN released; India's protests selective shaming of countries on issues of human rights.**

At the ministerial meeting of the India-Africa Forum Summit held from October 26-29, Minister for External Affairs, Sushma Swaraj, stated categorically that India and Africa ought to be present in the expanded UNSC. This, she said, would provide 'legitimacy' to the body.<sup>111</sup> She also made a case for the adoption of the Comprehensive Convention against International Terrorism (CCIT) as India and Africa face the scourge of terrorism.<sup>112</sup> The third issue flagged by the minister was that of shared concerns and interest with regard to climate change, as the issue would be coming up for discussion is the Conference of Parties (COP) 21 in Paris in

<sup>109</sup> Barik, Satya Sundar, "Three Odisha Villagers Killed In Firing By Security Forces", *The Hindu*, November 16, 2015 at <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/three-odisha-villagers-killed-in-firing-by-security-forces/article7881760.ece>

<sup>110</sup> Ghose, Dipankar, "Two Naxals Gunned Down In Sukma Encounter With Police", *The Indian Express*, November 20, 2015 at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/two-naxals-gunned-down-in-sukma-encounter-with-police/>

<sup>111</sup> "India, Africa Can't Be Excluded from UN Security Council: Sushma", *Business Standard*, October 27, 2015, at [http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/india-africa-can-t-be-excluded-from-un-security-council-sushma-115102700326\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/india-africa-can-t-be-excluded-from-un-security-council-sushma-115102700326_1.html)

<sup>112</sup> "India-Africa Forum Summit: India Pitches for UNSC Reforms, Terror", *The New Indian Express*, October 27, 2015, at <http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/India-Africa-Forum-Summit-India-Pitches-for-UNSC-Reforms-Terror/2015/10/27/article3100206.ece>

December 2015.<sup>113</sup> All three were also highlighted in the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's interaction with visiting dignitaries from Africa's nations.<sup>114</sup> They also found mention in the Delhi Declaration 2015 issued after the Summit.<sup>115</sup>

The WHO's Global Tuberculosis Report 2015 has said that India recorded the highest numbers of patients affected by the disease, Nearly 23 per cent of the 1.5 billion affected the world over were Indians. China and Indonesia followed, with 10 per cent each.<sup>116</sup>

Leading to the occasion of the 70<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, India's PR, Asoke Mukherji, has compiled a book titled 'India and the United Nations -- a Photo Journey: 1945-2015' in which he chronicles India's engagement with the UN since GS Bajpai as the representative of British India supported the formation of the organization in 1942.<sup>117</sup>

At a session of the Third Committee of the General Assembly on human rights, Mayank Joshi, First Secretary in the Indian Mission in New York defended India's credentials of being secular and tolerant towards religious minorities. He condemned the use of human rights as a political tool for selectively naming and shaming countries.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> "No Security without UNSC Reforms: Swaraj", *The New Indian Express*, October 28, 2015, at <http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/No-Security-Without-UNSC-Reforms-Swaraj/2015/10/28/article3101532.ece>

<sup>114</sup> "Text of PM's Statement at the Third India-Africa Forum Summit", *The Hindu*, October 29, 2015, at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/resources/text-of-pms-statement-at-the-third-indiaafrica-forum-summit/article7817691.ece>

<sup>115</sup> MEA, "Delhi Declaration 2015: Partners in Progress: Towards a Dynamic and Transformative Development Agenda", *Ministry of External Affairs*, New Delhi, October 29, 2015, at [http://www.mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/25980\\_declaration.pdf](http://www.mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/25980_declaration.pdf)

<sup>116</sup> "India Recorded Largest Number of TB Cases in 2014", *The Economic Times*, October 29, 2015, at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/healthcare/biotech/healthcare/india-recorded-largest-number-of-tb-cases-in-2014/articleshow/49577371.cms>

<sup>117</sup> "A Pictorial Journey Through History", *The Statesman*, October 31, 2015, at <http://www.thestatesman.com/news/features/a-pictorial-journey-through-history/100631.html>

<sup>118</sup> "India Tells UN That It Supports Building Understanding Between Religions", *The Economic Times*, October 31, 2015, at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/india-tells-un-that-it-supports-building-understanding-between-religions/articleshow/49606249.cms>