

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

November 23 – November 29, 11 (5), 2015

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CONTENTS

In This Issue	Page
I. COUNTRY REVIEWS	2-38
A. South Asia	2-8
B. East Asia	8-10
C. Southeast Asia and Oceania	10-16
D. Russia	16-22
E. United States of America	22-31
II. DEFENCE REVIEWS	31-32
III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEWS	33-36
IV. UNITED NATIONS REVIEWS	36-38

I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. South Asia

Afghanistan

(November 23-29, 2015)

- **Afghanistan signs agreements in Kazakhstan; Hekmatyar offered conditional support to Afghan peace process; Terror groups equip in Pakistan to fight against Afghanistan; Projects of \$13m were 'Unsuccessful'; Foreign plots cannot harm Afghan unity.**

The Russian Federation has promised 10,000 Kalashnikovs AK-47 to Kabul for supporting Afghan forces in their fight against terrorism. Fazal Hadi Muslimyar, speaker of Meshrano Jirga (Upper House of the Parliament) has said that the weapons are expected to arrive in Kabul in next 20 days. "Luckily, I would say Russia's eagerness towards Afghanistan was higher than before. 10,000 Kalashnikovs have been approved which would be handed over to the interior ministry after arriving in Kabul in next 20 days," Muslimyar told *Radio Free Europe* (Azadi Radio). He said that Russian officials have rejected rumours of directly fighting Daesh in Afghanistan, adding that they will extend assistance to Afghan government for eliminating any opponent armed group. Moscow has assured of staying with Kabul in its fight against terrorism which not only threatens Afghanistan but the entire region. Kabul is in contact with Moscow for receiving more weapons and gunship helicopters.¹

The Chief of Hezb-e-Islami party, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, has offered conditional support to the Afghan peace process while seeking a comeback and leverage in the politics. He has been designated a "global terrorist" by the United States and blacklisted by the United Nations along with Osama bin Laden. With a desire to come out of the shadows, the latest statement by Hekmatyar is considered to assert influence and gain new leverage in Afghan politics. Hekmatyar's conditions are similar to the other militant groups fighting the Afghan government, including the Taliban militants. He wants a complete withdrawal of the US and NATO forces from Afghanistan and organization of a new election in 2016. "Peace can be established and the fighting can end once the occupation is over, foreign forces leave and the people of the Afghan nation are given the right to choose their own destiny and establish their own choice of government," Hekmatyar said in a videotaped message to *Associated Press*. However, the political analysts believe Hekmatyar could no longer have influence over the political or security situation of the country. Political analyst Ali Mohammad Ali told *Associated Press* that Hekmatyar can no longer run a private army because "most of his people have joined the Taliban" or other militant groups, including the emerging ISIS affiliate which

¹ "Ghani Signs Agreements In Kazakhstan", *Khaama Press*, November 28, 2015, at <http://www.khaama.com/10000-kalashnikovs-expected-to-arrive-in-kabul-from-russia-next-month-4364>

has established a presence in Hekmatyar's former strongholds in eastern provinces bordering Pakistan.²

Afghanistan National Security Adviser Hanif Atmar said that the terrorist groups are supported and equipped in Pakistan to combat in Afghanistan but Islamabad does not act against them. Hanif Atmar, National Security Adviser a meeting with Turkish ambassador in Kabul declared that the Afghan government works on a new mechanism for peace to not rely only on Pakistan. Turkish ambassador, Ali Saeed, said that his country is ready to host Kabul-Islamabad negotiations. Meanwhile, the High Peace Council (HPC) noted that without Pakistan's practical steps, peace in Afghanistan would be difficult. HPC has also accused Pakistan of brining excuses to pursue Taliban to attend the negotiation table. "If Pakistan takes practical measures, peace will be provided in Afghanistan," said Muhammad Ismail Qasemyar, consultant of HPC international relations.³

Baghlan high peace council has spent more than \$13 million as part of government's peace initiatives since the peace council officially started its activities in the province, but they have confirmed that the projects were "unsuccessful", officials said on November 27. Meanwhile, a number of civil society activists in Baghlan have said that if the money had been spent in the right way, there would be no more violence in the province. "\$13 million USD was spent on various projects in Baghlan since the start of the peace process in the province. However, the majority of projects carried out were not successful," said chairman of Baghlan peace council. He said that much of the money had been embezzled and that if the money had instead been given to local officials, more effective projects would have been accomplished. "Baghlan peace council did nothing constructive. The council held only one meeting since the start of the current year which shows that the council is not effective. From the total amount of \$13 million USD, if \$5 million of it had been spent in the right way, today there would be no war in Baghlan province," Shamsulhaq Barakzai, a member of Baghlan provincial council said.⁴

Former president Hamid Karzai on November 28 said that those intending to cause divisions within the people of Afghanistan will not succeed and that the nation will not be influenced by foreign plots. Speaking at a gathering commemorating the death of a prominent Pakistani politician Afzal Khan earlier this month, Karzai reiterated the call to Pakistani politicians and political parties to take practical steps to bolster sustainable peace and tranquillity in the volatile region. The event was also attended by some visiting Pakistani politicians where they touched on the issue of common challenges facing the two countries. In their speech, Pakistani politicians referred to the historic relations binding the people on both sides of the Durand Line, calling them one nation. Several Afghan politicians also attended the gathering. "I believe that

² "Hekmatyar has Offered Conditional Support to Afghan Peace Process", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, November 28, 2015, at http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=13724

³ "Terror Groups Equip in Pakistan to Fight Against Afghanistan: Atmar", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, November 28, 2015, at http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=13725

⁴ "\$13m Projects were 'Unsuccessful': Baghlan Peace Council"; *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, November 28, 2015, at http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=13728

regional countries face a common threat, but conspiracy cannot create division. I want to call upon you [Pakistani politicians] to use your energy for peace in the region," Karzai said.⁵

Pakistan

(November 23-29, 2015)

- **Pakistan perturbed by Bangladesh executions; Rs 244 bn raised for two hydel projects; Not clear over Balochistan dialogue; Delay, Unemployment of textile workers on rise in Punjab.**

Pakistan is deeply disturbed by the executions of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party leader and Jamaat-e-Islami secretary-general, who were both charged with 1971 war crimes, the Foreign Office said on November 22. Bangladesh Nationalist Party leader Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury and Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary-General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid were 'hanged together, at the same time' at 12:55 am (local time) at Dhaka Central Jail in the nation's capital, Senior Jail Superintendent Jahangir Kabir said. Chowdhury had been convicted on charges of torture, rape and genocide during the 1971 war, while Mujahid was found guilty on charges of genocide, conspiracy in killing intellectuals, torture and abduction. "We have noted with deep concern and anguish the unfortunate executions of the Bangladesh National Party Leader, Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury and Ali Ahsan Mujahid," Foreign Office Spokesman Qazi Khalilullah said in a statement. The spokesman said Pakistan also took notice of the international community's reaction to the flawed trials in Bangladesh related to the events of 1971. Jamaat-e-Islami and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party say the trials were politically motivated. Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has denied the allegations, but acknowledged that she faced international pressure for trying opposition figures for war crimes. Human Rights Watch said the tribunal allowed the prosecution to call 41 witnesses, while Chowdhury's defence was limited to four witnesses. The New York-based group said Mujahid was sentenced to death for instigating his subordinates to commit abuses, although no subordinates testified or were identified.⁶

The government allowed the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) on November 25 to raise Rs244 billion from domestic commercial banks for timely completing two major hydropower projects of Rs900bn — Dasu and Neelum-Jhelum. The decision was taken at a meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the cabinet, presided over by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar. The meeting postponed till Friday approval of a proposed \$16bn gas sale and purchase agreement with Qatar for import of liquefied natural gas (LNG) till 2030. Wapda Chairman Zafar Mahmood told *Dawn* that the 969MW Neelum-Jhelum hydropower project was being constructed without its financial close. "Today's decision is a milestone for the project, which has now been put on the right track." He said a consortium of banks led by the National Bank of Pakistan was ready to extend Rs100bn for the project. The ECC decided to

⁵ "Foreign Plots Cannot Harm Afghan Unity: Karzai", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, November 29, 2015, at, http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=13739

⁶ "Pakistan Perturbed By Bangladesh Executions", *Daily Times*, November 23, 2015, at <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/E-Paper/Lahore/2015-11-23/page-1/detail-6>

issue sovereign guarantees subject to approval of its revised cost by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec).⁷

Balochistan National Party (BNP) chief Sardar Akhtar Mengal has said there is ambiguity among the government circles regarding initiating dialogue with exiled-Baloch leaders, in order to find a political solution for issues facing the province. "Some call them angry Baloch, whereas some legislators call them terrorists," the BNP chief told a crowded press conference at his residence on November 27. A large number of Baloch Students Organisation (BSO) activists led by Javed Baloch announced joining BNP on the occasion. Sardar Mengal said the Balochistan Assembly also recently adopted a resolution and called the exiled Baloch leaders terrorists. Most of the legislators from treasury benches supported the resolution, he recalled. The former chief minister of Balochistan said the present government has failed to address the grievances of the masses and the issue of missing persons was yet to be resolved. He added that the missing person issue was taken up effectively by former chief justice (CJ) Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry. However, he complained that the issue has been ignored after the former CJ's retirement. When asked about the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Sardar Mengal said his party would never accept any development at the cost of turning the majority Baloch population into a minority.⁸

All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA) Punjab Chairman Aamir Fayyaz said that unemployment of textile workers is on the rise in Punjab because of the delay in the announcement of textile package by the government. He said over two dozen mills have been totally closed down in the province while a large number of mills have reduced their operations to one or two shifts, which has left thousands of textile workers jobless. He said the exports data of last four months showed a significant decline in textile exports but the government was delaying the announcement of textile package since August. "So much so, meeting with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif also proved useless, as he had given a commitment of resolving textile industry issues in September," he added. He lamented that the month of November is near to an end but there is no clue of any textile package by the government. "The textile workers are losing their jobs one after another and the government is still considering the textile package," he argued. He said the textile industry is considered to be the growth engine and employment generator in the region but the government is showing a cold shoulder to the textile industry, which is quite confusing. Fayyaz said the government was not announcing a long-term policy for the revival of textile industry relative to India, Bangladesh and China where extensive support is being provided to the textile industry for mass job creation.⁹

⁷ "Wapda To Raise Rs244bn For Two Hydel Projects", *Dawn*, November 26, 2015, at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1222393/wapda-to-raise-rs244bn-for-two-hydel-projects>

⁸ "Govt not Clear Over Balochistan Dialogue: Mengal", *Daily Times*, November 28, 2015, at <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/E-Paper/Lahore/2015-11-28/page-1/detail-2>

⁹ "Delay in Textile Package : Unemployment of Textile Workers On Rise in Punjab", *Daily Times*, November 29, 2015, at <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/business/29-Nov-2015/delay-in-textile-package-unemployment-of-textile-workers-on-rise-in-punjab>

Sri Lanka

(November 23-29, 2015)

- **President Sirisena attends the CHOGM 2015 in Malta; Sri Lanka signs Declaration of Intent for the creation of Commonwealth Trade Finance facility; Sri Lankan Film Industry witnessing transition in the post war period; General Dalbir Singh, the COAS, will embark on a four day goodwill visit to Sri Lanka.**

President Maithripala Sirisena went to Malta on November 26, 2015 to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) held on November 27-29, 2015. President Sirisena handed over the position of the chair in office of Commonwealth to the Prime Minister of Malta Joseph Muscat. On the side-lines of the meeting, Sirisena met British Prime Minister David Cameron, where he offered £ 6.6 million over three years for the victims of the war.¹⁰ President Sirisena also met the Prime Minister of Canada and the Australian Prime Minister on the side-lines of the CHOGM on November 28, 2015.¹¹

Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka Mangala Samaraweera signed the Declaration of Intent for the creation of Commonwealth Trade Finance facility to assist boost trade and investment flows. Proposal to establish the fund was made in the Kotte Statement issued at the end of the Colombo CHOGM 2013.¹²

Directors of the Sri Lankan Film Dirty, Yellow Darkness Kalpana and Vindana Ariyawansa on November 26 said they feel great to be in India on featuring of their first film at the 46th International Film Festival of India. Interacting with media persons at a press conference at Media Centre on the sidelines of IFFI the duo said India Cinema have played a great role in influencing Sri Lankan cinema. The Sri Lankan Film industry which could not grow initially due to the war period is now witnessing a transition due to west. However, the Sri lankan government is not funding the film industry but wants more foreign production of films in the country, said Ariyawansa.¹³

General Dalbir Singh, the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), will embark on a four day goodwill visit to Sri Lanka from November 30 to November 3, 2015. The visit assumes special significance in light of increasing defence cooperation between the two countries. In recent years, the Indo- Sri Lanka relationship has been marked by high level bilateral exchanges in various fields between the two countries. Defence and Security Cooperation between the two countries have been an important component of the Bilateral Strategic partnership. Bilateral exchanges at various levels over the past year with significant progress in implementation of developmental assistance projects, enhancement of trade and defence cooperation has helped further cement the bonds

¹⁰ "Cameron Meets Sirisena, Offers £6.6m Over 3 Years", *Colombo Gazette*, November 27, 2015 at <http://colombogazette.com/2015/11/27/cameron-meets-sirisena-offers-6-6m-over-3-years/>.

¹¹ "Relations between Canada and Lanka Back on Track", *Colombo Gazette*, November 28, 2015 at <http://colombogazette.com/2015/11/28/relations-between-canada-and-lanka-back-on-track/>.

¹² "Sri Lanka Backs New Commonwealth Trade Fund", *Colombo Gazette*, November 27, 2015 at <http://colombogazette.com/2015/11/27/sri-lanka-backs-new-commonwealth-trade-fund/>.

¹³ "Sri Lankan Film Industry Witnessing Transition in the Post War Period; Film Makers Seek More Government Support", *PIB*, Release ID :131903, November 26, 2015 at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx>

of friendship between the two countries. During his visit, the COAS is scheduled to interact with senior officials of Defence Forces and Ministry of Defence of Sri Lanka to discuss a wide range of issues and to enhance military cooperation. He will also visit training establishments and Formation Headquarters. The visit will further enhance the longstanding ties and cooperation in other areas of mutual interest between India and Sri Lanka, including regional security.¹⁴

Maldives

(November 23-29, 2015)

- **Majlis passes State Budget for 2016; President Yameen writes letter to the President and people of Palestine; Maldives hopes to cut down carbon emission by 10 per cent by 2030; Vice Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) calls on President Yameen.**

People's Majlis passed the MVR 27.457 billion projected state budget for 2016, proposed by government on November 23.¹⁵ 59 members voted in favour of the budget while 19 members voted against the budget, with opposition party – Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) issuing a three-line whip not to participate in the voting. MDP had proposed 11 revisions to the budget, with none of it gaining approval. The budget was sent to Majlis by Finance Minister Abdulla Jihad, while Budget Committee finished reviewing the budget on November 19 with an additional amount of MVR 20 million allocated to judiciary. The budget includes an allocation of MVR 9.1 billion to Public Sector Investment Programmes. Finance Minister Abdulla Jihad had said that of the MVR 9.1 billion allocated for Public Sector Investment Programmes, MVR 5.2 billion would be spent by government while the remaining MVR 2.7 billion would be funded through free aid and MVR 1.2 billion via trust funds.¹⁵

President Abdulla Yamin Abdul Gayoom has said that the work of the international community will not be complete until a day comes where Palestinians can watch their children grow without fear. In a letter to the President and people of Palestine on the occasion of the International Palestine Solidarity Day, President Yamin said that the conflict in Palestine must be resolved.¹⁶

Environment Minister Ibrahim Toriq has said that Maldives will be able to cut down harmful gases being released into the atmosphere by 10 per cent by 2030. Speaking during a ceremony held at Environment Ministry on November 24 in which government companies signed a declaration aimed at building an economy low on carbon emission, Minister Toriq said that

¹⁴ "Visit of COAS to Sri Lanka (30 Nov - 03 Dec 15)", *PIB*, Release ID :131996, November 29, 2015 at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx>

¹⁵ "Majlis Passes MVR 27.457 Billion Projected State Budget for 2016", *SunOnline*, November 23, 2015 at <http://english.sun.mv/34782>.

¹⁶ "President: Work Won't Be Complete Until Palestine Is Saved", *SunOnline*, November 23, 2015 at <http://english.sun.mv/34789>.

Maldivian economy could transform into a carbon low economy if reliance on fuel as a source of energy was cut down.¹⁷

President Yameen met the Vice Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), Mr. Chen Ziaoguang at the President's Office on November 29. In his meeting with the Vice Chairman of CPPCC, President Abdulla Yameen said that China and Maldives are showing a fine example of beneficial cooperation between small and big countries.¹⁸

B. East Asia

China

(November 16-29, 2015)

- **China working towards removing poverty by 2020; China successfully meets pollution reduction targets; Chinese Premier meets with his Czech counterpart; China and five CEE countries sign memorandum of understanding on One Road One Belt; Xi Jinping calls for military reforms; China calls for no militarization of South China Sea; Security tightened in Beijing in post Paris attack scenario; China calls for IPR protection; India stands to become the second largest shareholder of AIIB after China; India's Home Minister Singh leaves on Six-day visit to China.**

On November 28 the Chinese leadership promised to undertake measures to help the remaining 70 million poor people in China to be able to enjoy the basic necessary social services by 2020. This was during a two day conference in Beijing on poverty alleviation and development. During the Conference Xi Jinping said that, "no single poor region nor an individual living in poverty will be left behind".¹⁹

According to the Chinese Environment Minister Chen Jining, China has managed to achieve its pollution reduction targets for major pollutants which were outlined in its 12th Five Year Plan, almost six months before the schedule. According to Chen, "by 2014 discharge of sulfur dioxide and Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD), a measure of organic pollutants in water, had dropped by 12.9 and 10.1 percent from 2010 levels. Emissions of ammonia nitrogen and nitrogen oxide had also declined by 9.8 and 8.6 percent".²⁰

On November 27, the Chinese Premier Li Keqiang met with his Czech counterpart Bohuslav Sobotka. During the meeting both sides discussed ways to improve the bilateral relations. Li said that, "China's nuclear power technology and equipment are safe and inexpensive, which has made them competitive globally". The Czech premier was in China to attend the fourth

¹⁷ "Maldives will be Able to Cut down Carbon Emission by 10% by 2030: Toriq", *SunOnline*, November 24, 2015 at <http://english.sun.mv/34800>.

¹⁸ "President: Trust with China is Guaranteed To Continue", *SunOnline*, November 29, 2015 at <http://english.sun.mv/34883>.

¹⁹ "China Pledges Resolute Measures to Root out Poverty by 2020", *China Daily*, November 29, 2015 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-11/29/content_22527642.htm, accessed on November 30, 2015

²⁰ "China Meets Pollution Reduction Targets Ahead Of Schedule: Minister", *China Daily*, November 29, 2015 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-11/29/content_22527608.htm, accessed November 30, 2015

summit of China and Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries. During the summit Li Keqiang talked about setting up a multilateral financial firm between China and the 16 CEE countries.²¹

The Chinese President Xi Jinping met with the leaders from Serbia, Czech, Poland, Slovakia and Bulgaria on November 26. He signed a memorandum to promote the Belt and Road Initiative. During the meeting Xi said that, "China expects the participation of CEE countries in the development of the connectivity-based Belt and Road Initiative, and will support the integration of Europe and improve the Sino-Europe comprehensive strategic partnership relations".²²

During a meeting held on ways to reform the armed forces from November 24 to November 26, the Chinese President Xi Jinping has urged for ways to do so by 2020. During the meeting Xi said, "A new structure will be established, in which the CMC takes charge of the overall administration of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the Chinese People's Armed Police; battle zone commands focus on combats; and different military services pursue their own construction".²³

The Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hong Lei expressed hope that all the countries in and outside the South China Sea will be making combined efforts to try and avoid any militarization of the region. Lei further asserted that, "it is groundless to link China's construction on its own islands and reefs in the South China Sea to militarization".²⁴

The Beijing Public Security Bureau said that there has been an increase in the security and anti-terrorism response on November 15, two days after the Paris attacks. There has been an increase in the number of police men mobilized across the city.²⁵

According to the Chinese Vice Premier Wang Yang, China will be working towards cracking down the infringements on intellectual property right (IPR) Wang further added that, "The government has fulfilled its commitment to ensure that all government departments use authorized computer softwares".²⁶

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given its approval for the ratification and submitting of the Articles of Agreement (AoA) of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) Establishment of the AIIB will help India and other signatory countries to raise and avail resources for their infrastructure and sustainable development projects. India

²¹ "China, Czech Pledge Closer Nuclear Power, Finance Cooperation", *China Daily*, November 28, 2015 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-11/28/content_22525085.htm, accessed November 30, 2015

²² "China, Five CEE Countries Signed Memo To Promote Belt and Road Initiative" *China Daily*, November 26, 2015 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-11/26/content_22521790.htm, accessed November 30, 2015

²³ "Xi Urges Breakthroughs In Military Structural Reform", *China Daily*, November 26, 2015 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-11/26/content_22521560.htm, accessed on November 30, 2015

²⁴ "China Urges All Related Countries To Avoid Militarizing S. China Sea", *China Daily*, November 23, 2015 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-11/23/content_22512386.htm, accessed November 30, 2015

²⁵ "Beijing Tightens Security against Terrorism", *China Daily*, November 21, 2015 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-11/21/content_22507727.htm, accessed November 30, 2015

²⁶ "China To Reinforce IPR Protection: Vice Premier", *Xinhua*, November 19, 2015 at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-11/19/c_134834734.htm, accessed December 1, 2015

is one of the largest potential borrowers of AIIB's resources. India stands to become the second largest shareholder of AIIB after China. This is a historic opportunity for India to play a prominent role in the governance of a multilateral institution. It is expected that with membership in AIIB, India would be able to raise and obtain more resources for much needed infrastructure development.²⁷

A delegation led by the Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh left for Beijing on November 18 on a six-day official visit to China. Rajnath Singh said, "I'm looking forward to my visit to China. Hope it would help in deepening of mutual understanding and trust." "During my China visit I intend to further strengthen the tradition of mutual learning and better understanding from each other," he added. During the visit, he will call on the Chinese Premier Mr. Li Keqiang and hold bilateral talks with Mr. Guo Shengkun, State Councillor and Minister, Ministry of Public Security in Beijing followed by the signing of a Joint Statement.²⁸

C. Southeast Asia

ASEAN

(November 16-29, 2015)

- **Jokowi calls for intelligence cooperation in ASEAN Summit; Singapore discusses terrorism, South China Sea, haze at regional summit; China, ASEAN seal deal to upgrade bilateral free trade pact.**

President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo called on Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member countries to increase cooperation in intelligence gathering during his speech at the 27th ASEAN Summit plenary meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on November 21. "ASEAN needs to increase intelligence cooperation as well as strengthen legal regulations," said Jokowi. He added that the implementation of the ASEAN Convention on Counterterrorism needed to be regenerated amid the sad news about violent actions taking place in several countries that had shocked the world in the past few days. Regarding the territorial dispute over the South China Sea, Jokowi stated that peace and security should be preserved and relevant international laws should be respected. Jokowi added that 2015 was an important year because of the launch of the ASEAN Community and the association should be able to contribute to the resolution of the world's problems. "Without the unity of ASEAN, the region will see a power struggle for influence and ASEAN should be able to preserve peace and stability," said Jokowi.²⁹

²⁷ "Ratification of the Articles of Agreement of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank", *PIB*, Release ID :131616, November 18, 2015 at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx>

²⁸ "Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh leaves on Six-day visit to China", *PIB*, Release ID :131581, November 18, 2015 at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx>

²⁹ "Jokowi Calls For Intelligence Cooperation in ASEAN Summit", *The Jakarta Post*, November 21, 2015, at <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2015/11/21/jokowi-calls-intelligence-cooperation-ASEAN-summit.html>

Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said that the establishment of the ASEAN Community on December 31 would be a significant milestone in the grouping's history, but ASEAN members must remember that the journey would continue. "We still have work to do," Mr Lee told his counterparts from nine other countries at the ASEAN Summit on November 21. He highlighted three items members should focus on as they commit to further breaking down barriers to trade and travel across the region of 625 million people. First, implementation of the remaining 20 per cent of the action lines in the existing blueprint for an ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), including those related to services liberalisation. Second, ratification of the ASEAN Open Skies agreement which would boost air travel across ASEAN countries and third, the conclusion of a high quality Regional Economic Comprehensive Partnership (RCEP) - a trade pact being negotiated among 10 ASEAN countries, Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea. PM Lee said that as ASEAN became more integrated, members were bound to tackle some of the difficulties in their relationships. On terrorism, Mr Lee noted that the attacks in Paris, Ankara, Beirut and Mali by terror groups were a reminder that the threat was serious and around. As Southeast Asia was a key recruiting ground for ISIS, which already had a battalion of fighters from the region, countries should step up cooperation and information sharing among security and intelligence agencies. As for the South China Sea, Mr Lee said that it had become a test of ASEAN unity and effectiveness. According to him it was an important issue both for claimant and non-claimant states, as the South China Sea was a vital lifeline for trade, livelihoods, energy and free passage for all countries. "We must affirm our commitment to the important principle of freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea," he said. "Any miscalculations at sea could escalate into conflicts that threaten regional peace and stability." He also talked about Haze problem which crops up every year. "It is vital that we deepen cooperation and share information to bring errant companies to account for their irresponsible and unsustainable practices that are the root cause of land and forest fires causing haze pollution," he said. "We must urgently operationalise the Sub-regional ASEAN Haze Monitoring System."³⁰

China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) sealed a deal on November 22 to upgrade their free trade area (FTA), injecting fresh impetus into regional economic cooperation. A protocol that pronounced the full conclusion of China-ASEAN negotiations on upgrading their FTA was signed at a ceremony in the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre in the presence of visiting Chinese Premier Li Keqiang and leaders of the 10-member ASEAN. The upgrade of the FTA, China's first with foreign trading partners, was nailed down after only four rounds of talks that officially started in August 2014, in a sign of the common aspiration and practical need of both sides to deepen and expand cooperation in trade and economy. Covering a wide range of areas including goods, services, investment, and economic and technological

³⁰ "Asean Summit: PM Sets Out Areas Asean Can Focus On In Economic Integration, Tackling Key Challenges", *The Strait Times*, November 21, 2015, at <http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/ASEAN-summit-pm-sets-out-areas-ASEAN-can-focus-on-in-economic-integration-tackling-key>

cooperation, the upgrade would provide fresh momentum for economic development of both China and ASEAN.³¹

Southeast Asia

(November 16-29, 2015)

- **Vietnam, New Zealand advance with comprehensive partnership; Xi pledges "priority" to ties with Malaysia in China's neighbourhood diplomacy; Japan, Philippines strike broad accord on defence equipment transfer.**

Vietnam and New Zealand agreed to develop their comprehensive partnership both in scale and in depth towards a strategic partnership. The consensus was reached during talks between Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung and his visiting New Zealand counterpart John Key in Hanoi on November 15. Priority would be given to strengthening political ties, increasing the exchange of delegations at all levels and optimising the operation of bilateral mechanisms for co-operation in all aspects. The Vietnamese PM hailed the significance of PM John Key's visit, especially at a time when the two countries were celebrating the 40th anniversary of diplomatic ties (1975-2015). The leaders also stressed the effectiveness of bilateral co-operation mechanisms, as seen in the progress in affiliation in all fields from economy, trade and investment to national defence and security, education-training and science-technology. New Zealand pledged to continue providing development assistance for Vietnam, particularly in agriculture, knowledge and skills and natural disaster risk management. The two sides also discussed measures to boost their partnership in national defence and security, including increasing delegation exchanges, and information and experience sharing in search and rescue operations and UN peace-keeping missions. They reiterated the importance of ensuring peace, stability, security, safety and freedom of maritime and aviation in the East Sea (South China Sea) as well as settling disputes at sea in line with international law, including the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The two leaders also agreed on the urgency of the building of a Code of Conduct (COC) in the East Sea. Following their talks, the two PM's witnessed the signing of co-operation agreements in civil aviation and health care and a plan on strategic cooperation in education.³²

Chinese President Xi Jinping met Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak in Manila on November 17 and pledged that China would continue to consider bilateral ties with Malaysia as one of its priorities in neighbourhood diplomacy. "China and Malaysia are good neighbours and friends that trust and respect each other," Xi said during the meeting on the sidelines of the 23rd Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting. Xi said that China stood ready to work with Malaysia to enrich the content of their partnership and boost practical cooperation to benefit the two peoples. "The two sides can work harder to dock their

³¹ "China, ASEAN Seals Deal To Upgrade Bilateral FTA", *Xinhua*, November 23, 2015, at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-11/23/c_134842731.htm

³² "Viet Nam, New Zealand Advance With Comprehensive Partnership", *Viet Nam News*, November 16, 2015, at <http://vietnamnews.vn/politics-laws/278566/viet-nam-new-zealand-advance-with-comprehensive-partnership.html>

development strategies," Xi said, suggesting that the two sides take the building of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road as a new integrating point to enhance cooperation on trade, inter-connectivity and infrastructure. Echoing Xi on the positive development of bilateral relations, PM Najib said that the Malaysia-China ties were at the best period of development in history. He highlighted the high degree of mutual trust and friendly sentiment between the two countries. Najib said that China's work to deepen reform in an all-round way generated more opportunities for the two countries to boost cooperation, and Malaysia would like to deepen cooperation on finance, infrastructure and inter-connectivity with China, adding that Malaysia supported the Belt and Road initiative.³³

Japan and the Philippines on November 19 broadly agreed on a pact for the transfer of defence equipment and technology, as they stepped up their cooperation over China's muscle-flexing in regional waters. The deal was struck between Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Philippine President Benigno Aquino after they finished attending the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum summit in Manila. "We have taken a significant step forward in enhancing our defence and security relations by agreeing in principle (on the accord)," Aquino said. "We are hopeful that we can conclude and sign this agreement sooner rather than later." It was Japan's first such agreement with another Asian country, and was a sign that Tokyo recognized the importance of beefing up the maritime capacity of the Philippines, the most vocal opponent of China's territorial claims in the South China Sea. If the pact was signed, it would allow Japan to provide Self-Defence Forces equipment to the Philippines. Abe said that there had been a request from Aquino for the provision of large patrol vessels to the Philippine Coast Guard and that Japan would consider the specifics of the matter. The Philippines could be the fifth country for Japan to have such an accord on the transfer of defence equipment and technology with, following the United States, Britain, Australia and France.³⁴

Oceania

(November 16-29, 2015)

- **Japan, Australia urge restraint over South China Sea tensions; Philippines, Australia sign declaration on 'comprehensive partnership'.**

The Japanese foreign and defence ministers and their Australian counterparts on November 22 urged all parties to exercise restraint amid growing tensions in the South China Sea. In the joint statement released after their "two-plus-two" talks in Sydney, the ministers "expressed strong concern over the situation in the South China Sea," calling on "all claimants" to halt land reclamation and "exercise restraint." The meeting involving Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida, Defence Minister Gen Nakatani, Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop and Defence Minister Marise Payne came as China's land reclamation in the South China Sea had created

³³ "Xi Pledges "Priority" To Ties With Malaysia In China's Neighbourhood Diplomacy", *Xinhuanet*, November 17, 2015, at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-11/17/c_134826574.htm

³⁴ "Japan, Philippines Strike Broad Accord On Defence Equipment Transfer", *The Japan Times*, November 20, 2015, at <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/11/20/national/politics-diplomacy/japan-philippines-strike-broad-accord-defense-equipment-transfer/>

tension in the area. "It is strategically important that the region as a whole raise its voice and say that it does not accept China's island-building", said Nakatani. The ministers "reiterated their strong opposition to any coercive or unilateral actions that could alter the status quo in the South China Sea." They called on all claimants to halt large-scale land reclamation, construction, and use for military purposes while supporting the right of claimants to settle territorial disputes peacefully based on international law, citing Manila's case filed with an arbitration court in the Hague. The ministers also agreed to finalize a joint strategy to support infrastructure building in Pacific island states amid China's growing influence over the states. Bishop said Australia strongly supported Japan's new security legislation, which would expand the role of the Self-Defence Forces abroad.³⁵

Philippines President Benigno Aquino III on November 18 signed a comprehensive partnership with Australia in a bid to strengthen the relationship of the two countries. "The Declaration acknowledges the increasing breadth and depth of our relations, which sets the tone, pace, and direction of our relationship in the years ahead," he said. Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull was in Manila to attend Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit. President Aquino said that he and PM Turnbull discussed how the two countries could improve bilateral relations and engagement on regional and international issues. "We reaffirmed the importance of engagement and cooperation in the political, defence and security, law enforcement, and counter-terrorism fields, among others," he said. "We also exchanged views on regional security challenges, including maritime security, and, with this, committed to continue our bilateral consultations on how to address them." Australia was among the countries that had been helping the Philippines modernize its military. It recently donated two landing craft heavy vessels to the Philippine Navy. Aquino also thanked Australia for the growing bilateral trade between the two countries, as well as the latter's support for public-private partnership (PPP) programs. Turnbull said that the Philippines and Australia were "very, very good friends" and that their relationship was "deepened further" through the signed agreements. He also lauded the government for pushing for the rule in the region. At the end of his speech, Turnbull said that it was important for both businesses and governments to be "agile."³⁶

India and Southeast Asia

(November 16-29, 2015)

- **PM Modi calls for enhancing counter-terror cooperation with ASEAN; India, Singapore ink 10 pacts to boost strategic ties.**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on November 21 called for enhancing cooperation with ASEAN to tackle the major global challenge of terrorism and underlined the need for settling territorial and maritime disputes in the South China Sea through peaceful means. He suggested evolving

³⁵ "Japan, Australia Urge Restraint over S. China Sea Tensions", *The Mainichi*, November 22, 2015, at <http://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20151122/p2g/00m/0in/036000c>

³⁶ Kristine Angeli Sabillo, "PH, Australia Sign Declaration On 'Comprehensive Partnership'", *Inquirer.net*, November 18, 2015, at <http://globalnation.inquirer.net/131638/ph-australia-sign-declaration-on-comprehensive-partnership>

specific plans for cooperation with the 10-member grouping in key areas of maritime security, counter-piracy and humanitarian and disaster relief. "Terrorism has emerged as a major global challenge that affects us all here. We have excellent bilateral cooperation with ASEAN members. And, we should see how we can enhance our cooperation at the regional and international level, including through support for adoption of Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism," Modi said in his opening remarks at the ASEAN-India Summit in Kuala Lumpur. Prime Minister Narendra Modi proposed a USD one billion line of credit to promote projects that support physical and digital connectivity between India and ASEAN. "We also propose to commit a Line of Credit of 1 billion US dollars to promote projects that support physical and digital connectivity between India and ASEAN," he said.³⁷

Terming connectivity as the pathway to shared prosperity, he said that the India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral highway project was making good progress and should be completed by 2018. "As our rapidly transforming region navigates its way through uncertain times to a peaceful and prosperous future, we look forward to ASEAN leading the way in defining the regional architecture," said Modi. Referring to the territorial disputes in the South China Sea, he said, "India shares with ASEAN a commitment to freedom of navigation, over flight and unimpeded commerce, in accordance with accepted principles of international law, including the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. Territorial disputes must be settled through peaceful means." Modi said India hoped that all parties to the disputes in the South China Sea would abide by the guidelines on the implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea and redouble efforts for early adoption of a Code of Conduct on the basis of consensus.³⁸

India and Singapore on November 24 elevated their ties to the 'strategic partnership' level and signed bilateral agreements for enhanced defence cooperation and in areas like cyber security; shipping and civil aviation after Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi met his Singaporean counterpart Lee Hsien Loong. Modi also met Singapore President Tony Tan Keng and was accorded a ceremonial welcome at Istana, the official residence and office of the President. The ten pacts signed by the two sides included a joint declaration by the two Prime Ministers on a strategic partnership. "India and Singapore elevate their bilateral relations to a strategic partnership to deepen and broaden engagement in existing areas of cooperation and catalyse new ones ranging from political, defence and security cooperation to economic, cultural and people-to-people contact. The strategic partnership is also a framework to contribute to greater regional stability and growth," the joint declaration said. The other pacts included an agreement

³⁷ Jaishree Balasubramanian, "PM Proposes USD 1bn Line Of Credit For Connectivity with ASEAN", *India Today*, November 21, 2015, at <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/pm-proposes-usd-1bn-line-of-credit-for-connectivity-with-ASEAN/1/528458.html>; and, "Text of PM's statement to media in the joint press briefing with Prime Minister of Malaysia", *PIB*, Release ID :131795, November 23, 2015 at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx>

³⁸ "PM Modi Calls For Enhancing Counter-Terror Cooperation with ASEAN", *The Indian Express*, November 21, 2015, at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/pm-modi-calls-for-enhancing-counter-terror-cooperation-with-ASEAN/>; and, See "Text of Prime Minister's Address at ASEAN Business and Investment Summit", *PIB*, Release ID :131756, November 21, 2015 at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx>; "PM's bilateral engagements on the sidelines of the ASEAN Summit", *PIB*, Release ID :131766, November 21, 2015 at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx>

between the two countries on enhanced defence cooperation, which provided for defence ministers' dialogue, joint exercises between armed forces, cooperation between defence industries to identify areas of co-production and co-development. The two sides also signed an agreement on the extension of loan of artefacts to the Asian Civilisations Museum of Singapore and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), the Indian IT department and Singapore Computer Emergency Response Team (SingCERT), Singapore's Cyber Security Agency on security cooperation.³⁹

D. Russia

Russia: National

(November 23-29, 2015)

- **Russian Minister says security concerns justify restricting civil rights; Russia hands out first prison term for distributing extremist materials; Poll shows Russians fear clashes with Islamic State more than a conflict with NATO; Gazprom may build LNG plant on the Black Sea; Russia plans to increase production of natural gas by 40 per cent until 2035; Russia to intensify Kuril and Arctic military infrastructure development; Russia plans to build radioactive waste storage on Arctic islands of Novaya Zemlya; Far East Development Fund to finance three new projects.**

Russia's Interior Minister Vladimir Kolokoltsev has said that restricting civil rights is justifiable if security considerations demand so. He added that police and security agencies must "tighten the screws" in case of unspecified major threats. Meanwhile, prominent human rights advocate and founder of Moscow Helsinki Group, Lyudmila Alexeyeva has said the government has been chipping away at Russians' rights for years, and warned that Kolokoltsev's subordinates may interpret his comments as a go-ahead for disregarding citizens' rights.⁴⁰

A resident of the northern Russian city of Surgut, Oleg Novozhenin has been sentenced to one year in a penal colony for distributing extremist materials on social networks. Novozhenin had posted several audio and video materials online in order to promote the Pravy Sector which is a Ukrainian nationalist group banned in Russia. Earlier this year, Moscow resident Alexander Razumov was sentenced to seven years behind bars for attempts to recruit new members for the Pravy Sector.⁴¹

³⁹ "India, Singapore Lift Ties To Strategic Partnership, Ink 10 Pacts", *Business world*, November 24, 2015, at <http://www.businessworld.in/article/India-Singapore-Lift-Ties-To-Strategic-Partnership-Ink-10-Pacts/24-11-2015-88623/>; and, "Text of PM's address at India-Singapore Economic Convention", *PIB*, Release ID :131847, November 24, 2014 at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx>

⁴⁰ "Russian Minister: Security Concerns Justify Restricting Civil Rights", *The Moscow Times*, November 27, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russian-minister-security-concerns-justify-restricting-civil-rights/550832.html>

⁴¹ "Russia Hands Out First Prison Term for Distributing Extremist Materials", *The Moscow Times*, November 30, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russia-hands-out-first-prison-term-for-distributing-extremist-materials/551283.html>

According to a poll conducted by Levada Centre, nearly 19 per cent of Russians believe that their country can become the site of “major clashes” with NATO forces within the next decade. An even higher number, 28 per cent, think that a conflict between Russian and NATO forces can occur outside of Russia's borders. Meanwhile, 59 per cent of respondents believe that major clashes are likely to occur between the Russian army and the Islamic State. Around 13 per cent of polled Russians also believe that clashes with China are a possibility in the future. The poll was conducted during November 13-16 among 800 adults in 134 cities and towns around Russia. It has a margin of error of no more than 4.1 percentage points.⁴²

Gazprom is studying the economic viability of constructing an LNG plant on the Black Sea. It is considering the possibility of building a plant with an annual capacity of 500,000 tonnes with further expansion to 1 million tonnes. Gazprom is also exploring the option of building a floating LNG plant. Meanwhile, President Putin has announced Russia's plans to triple sales of liquefied natural gas on the global market and increase the supply of gas to Asian countries. He stated ‘we plan to increase our supplies in the Asian direction from 6 per cent to 30 per cent to 128 billion cubic meters.’⁴³

President Vladimir Putin has said, on November 23, that Russia plans to increase its production of natural gas by 40 per cent till 2035. He stated ‘preparing the draft national energy strategy until 2035, we include a significant - 40 per cent increase in natural gas production. If in 2014 we produced 578 billion cubic meters, then by 2035 we plan to produce 885 billion cubic meters.’⁴⁴

Russia's Defence Ministry has said that it will intensify its efforts to create modern military infrastructure on the Kuril Islands and in the Arctic. Defence Minister Sergey Shoigu stated that ‘the current geopolitical and economic situation has prompted to specify the plan of building the Defence Ministry's facilities. Budget appropriations for this year have been re-distributed to build especially important facilities. In particular, money has been channelled into building wharfs for naval ships, arsenals and cantonments.’ State financing for national defence in 2016 will total 3.1 trillion roubles (US\$ 49.5 billion) which is 25.5 billion roubles (US\$ 400 million) more than in 2015. Defence expenditures will equal 4 per cent of GDP. In all, spending on national security and law-enforcement activity is expected to be 2.024 trillion roubles (US\$ 31.8 billion) in 2016 which is 26 billion roubles (US\$ 410 million) more than in 2015.⁴⁵

Russia's state nuclear corporation Rosatom intends to build a low-and medium-level radioactive waste disposal facility in the area of the Novaya Zemlya archipelago. According to experts, about 50 tonnes of radioactive waste from the nuclear-powered submarines in

⁴² “Russians Fear Clashes With Islamic State More Than With NATO – Poll”, *The Moscow Times*, November 23, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russians-fear-clashes-with-islamic-state-more-than-with-nato--poll/550465.html>

⁴³ “Russia's Gazprom May Build LNG Plant on the Black Sea”, *Itar-Tass*, November 23, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/838618>

⁴⁴ “Russia Plans To Increase Production Of Natural Gas by 40% until 2035 — Putin”, *Itar-Tass*, November 23, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/838539>

⁴⁵ “Russia's Defence Ministry to Intensify Kuril, Arctic Military Infrastructure Development”, *Itar-Tass*, November 25, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/defense/839327>

Severodvinsk have accumulated in the Arkhangelsk region. Until 1992, the sea off the coast of the Arctic archipelago of Novaya Zemlya had been the main area for sinking solid radioactive waste from the Soviet military and civilian nuclear vessels based in the North. A total of about 17,000 containers with solid radioactive waste as well as 16 nuclear reactors from submarines and icebreakers were sunk in the Arctic.⁴⁶

Deputy Prime Minister and presidential plenipotentiary in the Far East Federal District Yuri Trutnev has said, on November 24, that the Far East Development Fund will finance three projects worth 50.3 billion roubles (US\$ 761.4 million). Two of the projects are in the Primorsky Region — a dry port and a fish refrigerating warehouse while the third project (open-pit coal mine development) is on the Sakhalin Island.⁴⁷

Russia: International

(November 23-29, 2015)

- **Russian Sukhoi SU-24 fighter jet shot down by Turkey - Putin says it a 'stab in the back'; Russia suspends visa free travel for Turkish citizens; Erdogan warns Russia against using missile defence systems in Syria; Putin says Russia ready to cooperate with US coalition in Syria; US Embassy in Moscow says Turkey did not violate Syria memorandum when it downed Russian jet; US offers condolences over the death of SU-24 fighter jet pilot; Russia increases air defences in Syria to protect its aircrafts; Putin meets Obama in Paris; French President Hollande visits Moscow; Putin says Russian military to remain in Caspian Sea despite the region's unease; Russia warns of consequences over the Crimean electricity blackout; Russia warns US against training Ukrainian troops; Putin discusses energy cooperation and Syrian conflict with Iran's Supreme Leader; Russia and China to sign agreements on transport corridors; Russia ready to cooperate with Saudi Arabia on LNG supplies; Kiev bans all transit flights across Ukrainian airspace for Russian air carriers; Russian Defence Ministry restoring contacts with European defence ministries.**

Russian President Vladimir Putin has said that the downing of Su-24 military plane by Turkey was a "stab in the back from accomplices of terrorists." He stated that 'Turkey had no reason to attack the plane' since it remained a kilometre away from the Turkish border and landed 4 kilometres away from it. Putin added that the incident will seriously impact relations between the two countries since previously Russia had seen Turkey as not just a neighbouring state but also friendly country. He also alleged that Turkey had profited from oil supplies from Syrian regions controlled by "terrorist groups," and consequently provided these groups with financial help. Tensions between Russia and Turkey had been running high because of what Ankara considered repeated violations of Turkish airspace by Russian aircraft. Meanwhile,

⁴⁶ "Russia Plans To Build Radioactive Waste Storage On Arctic Islands of Novaya Zemlya", *Itar-Tass*, November 25, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/839293>

⁴⁷ "Far East Development Fund to Finance Three New Projects — Deputy PM", *Itar-Tass*, November 25, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/838853>

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has cancelled his visit to Turkey. Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has cancelled his visit to Turkey that was scheduled for September 26.⁴⁸

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has said that Russia will suspended visa-free travel for Turkish citizens from January 1, 2016. Turkey's annual revenues from Russian tourists stood at US\$ 10 billion and 4.5 million Russian tourists had visited Turkey in 2014. The move came as the Russian government announced a series of economic measures against Turkey after a Turkish F-16 interceptor shot down a Russian Su-24 bomber on the Turkish-Syrian border, resulting in the death of two servicemen. Lavrov did not mention how long the suspension will last, but said Turkey was the source of a "very real threat" of terrorism.⁴⁹ Meanwhile, Russian Presidential spokesman Dmitry Peskov has said that President Putin will refuse to meet his Turkish counterpart Erdogan during the Climate Conference scheduled to be held in Paris on November 30.⁵⁰

Turkish President Recep Erdogan has refused to apologize for the downing of a Russian warplane on the Turkish-Syrian border and implied that Turkey will respond militarily to Russian actions against its aircraft. Erdogan stated that 'I think if there is a party that needs to apologize, it is not us...those who violated our airspace are the ones who need to apologize.' He also rebuffed claims by Russia that his country was an "accomplice of terrorists" or had ties to the Islamic State.⁵¹

Russian President Vladimir Putin has said that his country is committed to cooperate with a U.S.-led coalition in order to fight the Islamic State terrorist group in Syria. He stated 'we respect the coalition that is headed by the Americans, and are ready to cooperate with it. Russia is willing to avoid any strikes against those territories and those armed forces that themselves are willing to fight against terror.' However, Putin also expressed concern about whether the coalition is effective, and that Russia prefers to see a coalition led by the United Nations.⁵²

The spokesman for the U.S. Embassy in Moscow has said that the downing of a Russian jet by Turkey is not in violation of a safety memorandum agreed to by the U.S. and Russia. Spokesman Will Stevens said the memorandum signed by U.S. and Russian military officials in late October only applied to the safety of U.S.-led coalition aircraft and Russian aircraft within Syrian airspace. He stated 'it does not apply to or limit the right of Turkey to defend its sovereign

⁴⁸ "Downing of Russian Su-24 Was a 'Stab in the Back' – Putin", *The Moscow Times*, November 24, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/downing-of-russian-su-24-was-a-stab-in-the-back--putin/550570.html>

⁴⁹ "Russia Suspends Visa-Free Travel for Turkish Citizens", *The Moscow Times*, November 24, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russia-suspends-visa-free-travel-for-turkish-citizens/550880.html>

⁵⁰ "Putin's Spokesman Confirms Erdogan Tried to Contact Russian President", *The Moscow Times*, November 27, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/putins-spokesman-confirms-erdogan-tried-to-contact-russian-president/550862.html>

⁵¹ "Erdogan Warns Russia Against Using Missile Defence Systems in Syria", *The Moscow Times*, November 27, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/erdogan-warns-russia-against-using-missile-defense-systems-in-syria/550836.html>

⁵² "Putin: Russia Ready to Cooperate With U.S. Coalition in Syria", *The Moscow Times*, November 27, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/putin-russia-ready-to-cooperate-with-us-coalition-in-syria/550829.html>

airspace in accordance with international law. We support Turkey's right to defend its territory and airspace.' Meanwhile, US Secretary of State John Kerry, in a telephone conversation with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, has offered his condolences.⁵³

President Vladimir Putin has authorized the deployment of the country's most advanced surface-to-air missile systems, the S-400 Triumf at the air base in the Syrian region of Latakia. The move is an apparent response to the downing of a Russian Su-24 fighter aircraft. The S-400 is Russia's top of the line air defence system, capable of intercepting targets up to 250 kilometres away. Their deployment coincides with two other measures intended to increase operational safety for Russian pilots bombing targets in Syria. The first was the Defence Ministry's decision to assign Sukhoi Su-30 Flanker heavy fighter jets to escort all Russian bombers carrying out sorties in Syria. Russia has also assigned the flagship of the Black Sea Fleet, the guided missile cruiser Moskva to support the air grouping with its modified S-300 air defence units off the coast of Latakia.⁵⁴

Russian President Putin has met with his US counterpart Obama in Paris on November 30. The two presidents talked for 30 minutes behind closed doors. Developments in Syria and Ukraine topped the agenda. Russian Presidential spokesperson Dmitry Peskov stated that 'Putin and Obama said it was necessary to start political stabilization in Syria. They also talked about Ukraine and noted that the quickest implementation of the Minsk agreements is necessary.' Meanwhile, according to an unidentified representative of the White House cited by Reuters, Obama told Putin that Syrian President Bashar Assad needs to leave his post so that the political transition in the country can take place. The representative also told Reuters that Obama pointed out that sanctions against Russia can be lifted only when the Minsk agreements are fully implemented.⁵⁵

French President Francois Hollande has visited Moscow on November 26 wherein the two Presidents agreed to target just the Islamic State group and share intelligence in order to avoid bombing other groups fighting against it. Meanwhile, Putin asked French officials to create a map indicating the location of troops in Syria fighting against the Islamic State in order to avoid Russian air forces bombing them.⁵⁶

President Vladimir Putin has said, on November 24, that the Russian military will continue to use the Caspian Sea to launch attacks against Islamic State "for as long as necessary," despite the concerns of former Soviet republics in the region. Putin, who was in Iran for the Gas

⁵³ "Turkey Didn't Violate Syria Memorandum When It Downed Russian Jet – U.S. Embassy", *The Moscow Times*, November 27, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/turkey-didnt-violate-syria-memorandum-when-it-downed-russian-jet--us-embassy/550723.html>

⁵⁴ "Russia Increases Air Defences in Syria to Protect Aircraft", *The Moscow Times*, November 25, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russia-increases-air-defences-in-syria-to-protect-aircraft/550626.html>

⁵⁵ "Putin Met with Obama in Paris, Discussed Syria", *The Moscow Times*, November 30, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/putin-met-with-obama-in-paris-discussed-syria/551209.html>

⁵⁶ "Putin Asked France for Map of Troops Fighting Islamic State", *The Moscow Times*, November 30, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/putin-asked-france-for-map-of-troops-fighting-islamic-state/550864.html>

Exporting Countries Forum, met with Turkmenistan's President Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov on the side-lines of the Tehran gathering that largely focused on the Syrian crisis. Berdymukhammedov expressed anxiety over Russia's military activities in the Caspian – though he attributed the concern to Kazakhstan. Russian warships had launched 26 rockets at Islamic State in Syria from the Caspian Sea in October.⁵⁷

Crimean Prime Minister Sergei Aksyonov has dismissed the peninsula's Energy Minister Sergei Yegorov, citing his "unsatisfactory" handling of the power outage when all four power lines supplying electricity from Ukraine were disabled. Meanwhile, Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak has said that Moscow may take retaliatory measures against Kiev following the power outage. This includes termination of coal supplies. He also referred to the destruction of the power lines in Ukraine's southern Kherson region as "a criminal act," and criticized Kiev's delay in carrying out repair work.⁵⁸

Russian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zakharova has said, on November 26, that the US decision to launch a new phase of training Ukrainian servicemen can have 'negative consequences for the future of the Donbas peace process.' She added that presence of foreign paratroopers and their weapons in Ukraine is a violation of the Minsk agreements. It has been reported that the US will train and equip six army battalions, including one special operations unit. During April-November 2015, 300 US instructors from the 173rd US airborne brigade had trained three Ukrainian National Guard battalions of approximately 780 people.⁵⁹

Russia's President Vladimir Putin and Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei have, on November 24 in Tehran, discussed energy cooperation and developments in Syria. A number of agreements were also signed. This includes electrification of the Gamsar-Inche-Burun railway section, construction of a heat electricity plant with a capacity of 350 megawatt and a desalination plant with a daily capacity of 200,000 cubic meters in Bandar Abbas and a MoU between Russia's Vnesheconombank and Iran's Central Bank to promote investment activities, guarantee support, export financing and trade ties.⁶⁰ Meanwhile, Iranian news agency Tasnim has reported that Russia has 'launched the procedure of the delivery of the S-300 air defence missile systems to Iran.' It stated 'the process of the S-300 system's delivery to Iran has entered the implementation stage.'⁶¹

Minister for the Development of the Russian Far East Alexander Galushka has said that Russia and China are planning to sign an agreement in December for the development of transport

⁵⁷ "Putin: Russian Military to Remain in Caspian Sea Despite Region's Unease", *The Moscow Times*, November 30, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/putin-russian-military-to-remain-in-caspian-sea-despite-regions-unease/550546.html>

⁵⁸ "Crimea Blackout Sees Minister Sacked, Russia Threatens Payback", *The Moscow Times*, November 30, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/crimea-blackout-sees-minister-sacked-russia-threatens-payback/550560.html>

⁵⁹ "Moscow Warns Against US Plans To Continue Training Ukrainian Troopers", *Itar-Tass*, November 26, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/politics/839700>

⁶⁰ "Russia, Iran Sign Documents To Expand Economic Cooperation", *Itar-Tass*, November 24, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/politics/838669>

⁶¹ "Media Claim Russia Has Begun Delivery Of S-300 Missile System to Iran", *Itar-Tass*, November 23, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/defense/838491>

corridors linking China's northeast with the ports of the Russian Far East- primarily Primorye region. The volume of external trade between Russia's Primorye and China's Heilongjiang province via Primorye-1 transport corridor is expected to touch 80 million tons of cargo per year by 2025, while the volume of external trade with Jilin province and domestic traffic in the Zarubino port via Primorye-1 corridor will reach around 90 million tons per year within 10 years. The Primorye-1 transport corridor will link the Chinese border city of Suifenhe, Grodekovo railway station, border region of Primorye and the ports in the east.⁶²

Energy Minister Alexander Novak has said that Russia is ready to cooperate with Saudi Arabia on supplies of liquefied natural gas (LNG). Gazprom's Chairman of Board Viktor Zubkov had stated that Gazprom can reach an agreement with Kuwait on LNG supplies in the near future. It was also reported that Russia is considering LNG supplies to the Middle East and in this light Novak is likely to hold a meeting with his Saudi counterpart in the middle of December. Novak added that Russia's Energy Ministry is in 'constant contact with Saudi colleagues'.⁶³

Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk has said, on November 25, that the country has fully closed its airspace for Russian air carriers including the transit flights.⁶⁴

Deputy Defence Minister Anatoly Antonov has said that Russia's Defence Ministry is restoring contacts with Defence Ministries of European countries. He stated 'consultations in Geneva have shown our partners are getting deeper and deeper convinced that none of the problems in the field of regional and global security can be resolved without Russia's participation. This applies in an equal measure to struggle with terrorism or to the shaping up of a new architecture of security in Europe.'⁶⁵

E. The United States of America

National

(November 23-29, 2015)

- **Chicago protesters took to the streets over police shooting; Department of Homeland Security defends its ability to screen refugee applicants; Indiana City welcomes Myanmar refugees, but struggle with Syrians; Advocates for Syrian refugees are intensifying; Trump has denied he made fun of a disabled reporter; Paris attacks have shifted the focus of the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign; Obama reassures Americans on the threat of terrorism over the Thanksgiving weekend.**

⁶² "Russia, China to Sign Agreement On Transport Corridors", *Itar-Tass*, November 23, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/838400>

⁶³ "Russia Ready To Cooperate with Saudi Arabia on LNG Supplies — Energy Minister", *Itar-Tass*, November 26, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/839673>

⁶⁴ "Kiev Bans All Transit Flights Across Ukraine's Airspace For All Russian Air Carriers — PM", *Itar-Tass*, November 25, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/839146>

⁶⁵ "Russian Defence Ministry Restoring Contacts With European Defence Ministries", *Itar-Tass*, November 25, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/politics/839366>

Protesters took to the streets of Chicago for the second straight on November 25 night, one day after the city's police department released video that showed officer Jason Van Dyke shooting 17-year-old Laquan McDonald 16 times in October 2014. Van Dyke was arrested on November 24 and charged with murder. Several people were arrested during the protests. Demonstrators took lights off a Christmas tree in a park, according to U.S. media reports. TV footage showed protesters trying to pull police bicycles away from officers.⁶⁶

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security is defending its ability to screen refugee applicants following the deadly attacks in Paris, and officials there say that state governors who want to refuse Syrian refugees on security grounds have unfounded fears. The department's Deputy Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas told reporters on a conference call on November 23 that he is confident the governors' concerns will be adequately addressed. He said they will "be able to stand tall and accept refugees across the country." Mayorkas said the administration "strongly believes that the governors' fears are not well founded."⁶⁷ Indiana City welcomes Myanmar refugees, but they struggle with Syrians. The group Fort Wayne for Syrian Refugees is working to change minds and find homes for Syrians. They believe the government controversy will die down within six months and Syrian refugees will be accepted into Indiana in 2016.⁶⁸

U.S. advocates for Syrian refugees are intensifying a campaign to boost public support for resettling them in the United States, as opinion polls suggest more than half of U.S. citizens oppose the resettlement programme. In three U.S. opinion polls published by *Bloomberg*, *NBC News* and the *Washington Post/ABC News* this month, 53 to 56 percent of respondents said no more Syrian refugees should enter. U.S. President Barack Obama has said he wants to welcome at least 10,000 Syrian refugees in the 2016 fiscal year, on top of the 2,234 Syrians whom the State Department says have been admitted to the United States since October 2010.⁶⁹

Republican U.S. presidential hopeful Donald Trump has denied he made fun of a disabled *New York Times* reporter earlier this week. During a campaign rally in South Carolina on November 24, the billionaire candidate flailed his arms when referring then-Washington Post reporter Serge Kovaleski and an article he wrote about the 9/11 2001 suicide hijacking attacks on New York and Washington. Kovaleski suffers from a congenital joint condition called arthrogryposis. According to Trump, Kovaleski's 2001 reporting supports Trump's controversial claim that "thousands" of Muslims in New Jersey celebrated watching the World

⁶⁶ "A Second Night of Chicago Protests Over Police Shooting", *VOA News*, November 26, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/second-night-of-chicago-protests-over-police-shooting/3074855.html>; and, Scott, Amanda and Schwartz, Ken, "Chicago Police Release 'Graphic' Video of 2014 Shooting of Black Teen", *VOA News*, November 24, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/chicago-officer-charged-shooting-black-teen/3072052.html>

⁶⁷ Duzor, Megan, "Homeland Security Defends US Refugee Security Vetting", *VOA News*, November 24, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/obama-administration-defends-refugee-security-vetting/3071197.html>

⁶⁸ Presutti, Carolyn, "Indiana City Welcomes Myanmar Refugees, Struggles With Syrians", *VOA News*, November 25, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/indiana-city-welcomes-myanmar-refugees-struggles-syrians/3073974.html>

⁶⁹ Lipin, Michael, "US Backers of Syrian Refugees Step Up Campaign", *VOA News*, November 27, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/us-backers-of-syrian-refugees-step-up-campaign/3077109.html>

Trade Centre towers collapse. But the reporter told *CNN* he did not see “thousands, or even hundreds” of people celebrating.⁷⁰

The recent events in Paris seem to have shifted the focus of the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign in a major way. Recent public opinion polls show that concerns about national security are on the rise in the wake of the terrorist attacks, prompting strong responses from presidential contenders from both political parties. For Republican frontrunner Donald Trump the attacks in Paris have reset the presidential campaign with a focus on protecting the homeland. At a rally in South Carolina, Trump asserted that the renewed focus on terrorism and national security has helped him in the polls. Trump’s rivals have seized on the issue including Florida Senator Marco Rubio who argued for a stronger commitment to fight the Islamic State group during a recent rally in Iowa. “Either they win or we win. That is the seriousness of this threat,” he said. Also on the campaign trail this week, Texas Senator Ted Cruz defended his opposition to allowing Syrian refugees into the U.S. as part of a broad anti-terror strategy. The new focus on terrorism is also playing out in the Democratic race. Frontrunner Hillary Clinton said it is time for a tougher approach in dealing with the Islamic State group. “Our goal is not to deter or contain ISIS, but to defeat and destroy ISIS,” she said. “And we should be honest about the fact that to be successful, airstrikes will have to be combined with ground forces actually taking back more territory from ISIS.”⁷¹

In the wake of attacks claimed by the Islamic State militant group in Paris, Beirut, and Tunis, U.S. President Barack Obama is reassuring Americans on the threat of terrorism over the Thanksgiving holiday weekend. Obama said on November 25 that “Right now we know of no specific and credible intelligence indicating a plot on the homeland”. In a six-minute statement to the American public, said, “In the event of a specific, credible threat, the public will be informed. We do think it’s useful for people as they are going about their business to be vigilant”.⁷²

International: Asia

(November 23-29, 2015)

- **A court has sentenced Pakistani man 40 years in prison for plotting to bomb; US welcomes the release of the document on the redesign and reconstruction of Iran's Arak nuclear reactor; Work travelled to Djibouti and Qatar from November 25-28 to visit U.S. servicemen and women; VP Biden joins senior diplomatic representatives from the 65 members of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL; Coalition military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria and Iraq; Secretary Kerry and Prime Minister Netanyahu discuss bilateral and regional security issues; Kerry meets with Saudi Foreign Minister**

⁷⁰ “Trump Denies Mocking Disabled Reporter”, *VOA News*, November 27, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/mht-trump-denies-mocking-disabled-reporter/3077323.html>

⁷¹ Malone, Jim, “Paris Attacks Have Reset US Election Campaign”, *VOA News*, November 25, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/paris-attacks-have-rest-us-election-campaign/3073404.html>

⁷² Pande, Aru, “Obama: ‘No Specific and Credible’ Threat to US”, *VOA News*, November 25, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/obama-holds-security-talks-as-hollande-urges-action-against-is/3072992.html>

al-Jubeir and UAE Foreign Minister Zayed; US welcomes the statement of support for a Government of National Accord on Libya; Malaysia-US Amphibious Exercise 2015 was completed; U.S. Pacific Fleet will continue to fly and sail wherever international law allows; Military representatives from the U.S. and China met at Headquarters, Pacific Air Forces; Secretary Kerry speaks with Chinese State Councillor Jiechi in advance of the climate conference in Paris; USS Charlotte (SSN 766) arrives at Fleet Activities Yokosuka; USCGC Sequoia (WLB 215) crew returns from a 13-day partnership-building patrol of the waters.

A U.S. court has sentenced Abid Naseer, a 29 year old Pakistani man, to 40 years in prison for plotting to bomb a British shopping centre. Naseer was convicted earlier this year of providing support to al-Qaida, conspiring to provide material support to al-Qaida and conspiring to use a destructive device. Naseer was first arrested in Britain in 2009 where he led an al-Qaida cell that was planning the attack on the Manchester mall. The planned bombing was part of a coordinated plot which also included attacks on the New York City subway and a *Danish* newspaper. Although he was never charged in Britain, he was extradited to the United States in 2013 to face charges related to the subway plot. Two men, Najibullah Zazi and Zarein Ahmedzay, have already pleaded guilty in the U.S. to charges stemming from the New York subway plot.⁷³

In a press statement on November 23, Mark C. Toner, Deputy Department Spokesperson, welcomed the release of the document on November 22 outlining the expected roles by all of the participants to the JCPOA in regard to the redesign and reconstruction of Iran's Arak nuclear reactor. Toner said that Secretary of State John Kerry signed the document, along with the other foreign ministers from the P5+1 and Iran, as well as the EU High Representative. It stated that this document is an important step towards operationalizing Iran's commitments under the JCPOA regarding the Arak reactor, and is one of many that Iran is completing before Implementation Day. That will occur when the IAEA verifies that Iran has completed all of the required nuclear steps specified in the text of the JCPOA. It added "this project will redesign and reconstruct the Arak reactor in a way that addresses our proliferation concerns and cuts off the plutonium pathway to enough fissile material for a nuclear weapon".⁷⁴

US Deputy Secretary of Defence Spokesperson Lt. Cmdr. Courtney Hillson in a statement said that Deputy Secretary of Defence Bob Work travelled to Djibouti and Qatar from November 25-28 to visit U.S. servicemen and women during the Thanksgiving holiday and thank them for their service. Work visited Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar from November 26th through 27th, where he met with U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) Commander Gen. Lloyd Austin and the Commander, 379th Air Expeditionary Wing, Brig. Gen. Darren James. During his visit, Work also spoke with service members, re-enlisted a soldier and visited CENTCOM forward headquarters and the Combined Air and Space Operations Centre. Throughout his visit, Work

⁷³ "US Jails Pakistani Man for 40 Years for al-Qaida Attack Plot", *Reuters*, *VOA News*, November 24, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/pakistani-man-faces-us-sentencing-over-al-qaida-plot/3071529.html>

⁷⁴ "Transforming the Iranian Arak Nuclear Reactor", Press Statement by Mark C. Toner, Deputy Department Spokesperson, *US Department of State*, Washington, DC, November 23, 2015 at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/11/249896.htm>

underscored the strong partnership between the United States and Qatar in the areas of security and defence. Additionally, he expressed appreciation for the support Qatar provides U.S. forces in the country.⁷⁵

The US State Department in a statement said that following the recent barbaric attacks claimed by ISIL in Paris, Beirut, Baghdad, and other locations in recent weeks, on November 23, Vice President Joe Biden joined “senior diplomatic representatives from the 65 members of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL who gathered for a plenary session at the State Department to review progress made and discuss where we can redouble and expand our efforts as a coalition.” It stated that “Coalition partners were clear that they stand in solidarity against the recent heinous attacks and in their commitment to work together in defeating ISIL.” “Vice President Biden also reconfirmed the unwavering commitment of the United States to work with coalition partners to degrade and destroy this unprecedented terrorist threat.”⁷⁶

On November 28, coalition military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria and Iraq. In Syria, coalition military forces conducted three strikes using remotely piloted aircraft. Separately in Iraq, coalition military forces conducted 19 strikes coordinated with and in support of the Government of Iraq using bomber, fighter, attack, and remotely piloted aircraft against ISIL targets.⁷⁷

In a statement on November 24, the US State Statement Spokesperson John Kirby said that “Secretary Kerry and Prime Minister Netanyahu discussed bilateral and regional security issues, with a focus on Syria and Daesh. They discussed steps that can be taken to stop the violence in Israel, Jerusalem and the West Bank and improve conditions on the ground.” Kirby added, “They also discussed ways in which the United States and Israel could further strengthen their security cooperation, in the face of regional instability.” And, “Secretary Kerry expressed sympathy and condolences for victims of recent terror attacks”.⁷⁸

In a briefing, US State Department Spokesperson John Kirby said that Secretary of State Kerry met on November 23 with Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir and United Arab Emirates Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed. Kirby said, the three ministers discussed a range of regional and bilateral security issues, to include the conflict in Syria and ongoing coalition efforts against Daesh. They discussed ways in which efforts to defeat Daesh can and will

⁷⁵ “Readout of Deputy Secretary Bob Work's Visit to Djibouti and Qatar”, *DoD News*, Release No: NR-451-15, November 27, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/News/News-Releases/News-Release-View/Article/631420/readout-of-deputy-secretary-bob-works-visit-to-djibouti-and-qatar>

⁷⁶ “Readout of the Plenary Meeting of the Global Coalition to Counter-ISIL”, Readout by Office of the Spokesperson, *US Department of State*, Washington, DC, November 23, 2015 at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/11/249908.htm>

⁷⁷ “Military airstrikes continue against ISIL terrorists in Syria and Iraq”, *US CENTCOM*, Release # 20151129-01, November 29, 2015 at <http://www.centcom.mil/en/news/articles/nov.-29-military-airstrikes-continue-against-isil-terrorists-in-syria-and-i>; and, Pande, Aru, “Obama Directs Security Team to 'Intensify' Anti-IS Efforts”, *VOA News*, November 24, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/obama-hollande-to-meet-in-wake-of-paris-attacks/3071175.html>

⁷⁸ “Secretary Kerry's Meeting With Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu”, Readout by John Kirby, Office of the Spokesperson, *US Department of State*, Washington, DC, November 24, 2015 at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/11/249925.htm>

intensify across all lines of coalition efforts and asserted the need to explore more support from the international partners to that end. It added, following up on the most recent meeting in Vienna, the ministers also expressed the importance of multilateral efforts to pursue a political transition in Syria, in accordance with the Geneva communique, and reaffirmed their mutual goal of achieving a unified, pluralistic, and stable country for all Syrians.⁷⁹

On November 27, the Governments of Algeria, France, Germany, Italy, Morocco, Spain, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States welcomed the statement of support for a Government of National Accord on Libya signed by the majority of House of Representatives (HoR) members on November 24 and note that a majority of General National Congress (GNC) members in Tripoli also stand firmly in support of a Government of National Accord. The US said, "We strongly encourage all parties to form a Government of National Accord. Only a Government of National Accord can begin the difficult work of establishing effective, legitimate governance, restoring stability, and preserving the unity of the country, as expected by all Libyans."⁸⁰

Malaysia-United States Amphibious Exercise 2015, a four-day-long bilateral training exercise between U.S. Marines with the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit and the Malaysian Armed Forces was successfully completed. The exercise aimed to strengthen military cooperation and interoperability in the planning and execution of amphibious operations between the two countries. Training included amphibious operations, jungle survival, weapons and tactics familiarization, and cultural exchange between Kilo Company, Battalion Landing Team 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 15th MEU, and Malaysian soldiers.⁸¹

Adm. Scott Swift, commander of U.S. Pacific Fleet, met with the commander of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy, Adm. Wu Shengli, November 19, at Wu's headquarters in Beijing. Swift reiterated the intentions expressed by President Obama, Secretary of Defence Carter and Commander, U.S. Pacific Command Adm. Harry Harris that the U.S. Pacific Fleet will continue to fly and sail wherever international law allows. The U.S. Pacific Fleet has been a key guarantor of the stability, security and prosperity enjoyed by all Pacific nations during the past 70 years, and is committed to continuing that heritage into the future. Swift also expressed to Wu the importance of transparency, parity and reciprocity in the effort to build the relationship between the Pacific Fleet and its counterparts in the PLA (N).⁸²

⁷⁹ "Secretary Kerry's Meeting With Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir and United Arab Emirates Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed", Readout by John Kirby, Office of the Spokesperson, *US Department of State*, Washington, DC, November 23, 2015

⁸⁰ "Joint Statement on Libya", *US Department of State*, Washington, DC, November 27, 2015 at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/11/250130.htm>

⁸¹ "U.S. Marines, Malaysian Soldiers Complete Malaysia-United States Amphibious Exercise 2015", By Sgt. Emmanuel Ramos, *US Pacific Command*, November 23, 2015 at <http://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/tabid/5693/Article/630998/us-marines-malaysian-soldiers-complete-malaysia-united-states-amphibious-exerci.aspx>

⁸² "Readout of Pacific Fleet Commander's Meeting with PLA Navy Commander in Beijing", By U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs, *US Pacific Command*, November 23, 2015 at <http://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/tabid/5693/Article/630994/readout-of-pacific-fleet-commanders-meeting-with-pla-navy-commander-in-beijing.aspx>

Military representatives from the U.S. and the People's Republic of China met at Headquarters, Pacific Air Forces, from November 21-24 for bilateral talks concerning military air and naval safety. The overall goal of the long-standing bi-annual talks, known as the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement (MMCA), is to provide a mechanism for open and transparent communication to address concerns and develop common understanding between U.S. and PRC air and naval forces in order to avoid unsafe incidents. The MMCA was signed between the U.S. DoD and the PRC Ministry of National Defence in January 1998 to promote common understanding regarding activities undertaken by both nations maritime and air forces when operating in accordance with international laws and norms. According to event coordinators, the talks consisted of a two-day working group and a two-day plenary attended by representatives from the U.S. Pacific Command, Pacific Fleet, Pacific Air Forces and the Office of the Secretary of Defence, as well as senior officials from the PRC's air and naval forces.⁸³

On November 24, Secretary Kerry spoke by phone with Chinese State Councillor Yang Jiechi in advance of the climate conference in Paris that begins later this month. The Secretary and State Councillor agreed on the need for close cooperation between the United States and China in order to achieve an ambitious and effective agreement. Both agreed to build on the common vision laid out by President Obama and President Xi in the U.S.-China Joint Statement on Climate Change on September 25, 2015. The two agreed to stay in close touch in the days ahead.⁸⁴

The Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarine USS Charlotte (SSN 766) arrived at Fleet Activities Yokosuka November 24, for a port visit during its Indo-Asia-Pacific deployment. This was the first port visit for Charlotte's crew during its current deployment. Measuring more than 360 feet long and weighing over 6,000 tons when submerged, Charlotte is one of the most modern attack submarines in the world.⁸⁵

The USCGC Sequoia (WLB 215) crew recently returned from a 13-day partnership-building patrol of the waters surrounding Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, a U.S. commonwealth in the Western Pacific Ocean, covering 2,358 miles. The crew recovered a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration hydrophone from Challenger Deep, patrolled for illegal fishing incursions of the CNMI exclusive economic zone, responded to distress signals from the island of Agrihan, held boating safety training for CNMI partner agencies, and assisted the National Park Service in restoring American Memorial Park in Saipan

⁸³ "U.S., China Conclude Bilateral Maritime Talks", By U.S. Pacific Air Forces Public Affairs, U.S. Pacific Air Forces, *US Pacific Command*, November 25, 2015 at <http://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/tabid/5693/Article/631328/us-china-conclude-bilateral-maritime-talks.aspx>

⁸⁴ "Secretary Kerry's Call with Chinese State Councillor Yang Jiechi", Readout by John Kirby, Office of the Spokesperson, *US Department of State*, Washington, DC, November 24, 2015 at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/11/249924.htm>

⁸⁵ "USS Charlotte Visits Yokosuka during Indo-Asia-Pacific Deployment", By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Brian G. Reynolds, *US Pacific Command*, November 25, 2015 at <http://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/tabid/5693/Article/631349/uss-charlotte-visits-yokosuka-during-indo-asia-pacific-deployment.aspx>

before Veterans Day. The crew's efforts were the result of a long and fruitful partnership between the Coast Guard and NOAA, who work closely in many areas, including scientific research, pollution response, fisheries management, and law enforcement.⁸⁶

India-US Relations

(November 23-29, 2015)

- **Defence officials discuss a range of common regional security interests and new opportunities for engagement; India-US make progress in the fields of jet engine and aircraft carrier technology; Immigrants went on a hunger fast to protest indefinite confinement and to demand better facilities; Obama will meet China's president and India's prime minister on the first day of the Paris climate talks; Environment Minister Javadekar says India can't be bullied, ahead of Paris Climate Summit; Defence Minister Parrikar will undertake a key visit to the US.**

Top Indian and American defence officials have discussed a range of common regional security interests and new opportunities for engagement, laying the foundation for Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar's maiden visit to the US in December 2015. The 14th US-India Defence Policy Group (DPG) meeting was co-chaired by US Under-Secretary of Defence for Policy Christine Wormuth and Indian Defence Secretary G Mohan Kumar. The meeting was held at the Pentagon on November 18, the meeting serves as an annual, senior-level defence dialogue and was the primary mechanism to guide bilateral strategic defence ties. A senior US Defence official told news agency *PTI* that "The two sides discussed a wealth of common regional security interests, new opportunities for defence engagement, and ways to further strengthen the military-to-military ties".⁸⁷

Ahead of defence minister Manohar Parrikar's maiden US visit next month, the two countries have made progress on their ambitious collaboration in the fields of jet engine and aircraft carrier technology. According to news reports, the terms of reference for Jet Engine Technology Joint Working Group has been finalised and is likely to be signed next month, while the second meeting of the Joint Working Group on Aircraft Carrier Technology Cooperation (JWGACTC) has been slated for February 2016. During the meeting, Indian and US officials committed to executing the project plans for the two government-to- government pathfinder projects -- MEHPS and the NGPE. They also agreed to expeditiously work to resolve remaining issues and complete the Engineer and Scientist Exchange Program (ESEP) Memorandum of Agreement so that the exchange of scientists can begin as soon as possible.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ "Guam Coast Guard Sequoia Completed Partnership Building Patrol Western Pacific", By .S. Coast Guard District 14 Hawaii, *US Pacific Command*, November 25, 2015 at <http://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/tabid/5693/Article/631344/guam-coast-guard-sequoia-completed-partnership-building-patrol-western-pacific.aspx>

⁸⁷ "India-US Defence Officials Discuss Common Security Interests", *Press Trust of India (PTI)*, November 26, 2015 at <http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/india-us-defence-officials-discuss-common-security-interests-1247884>

⁸⁸ "India, US Make Progress On Jet Engine, Aircraft Career Co-Op", *PTI*, November 26, 2015, at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/India-US-make-progress-on-jet-engine-aircraft-career-co-op/articleshow/49932368.cms>

Illegal immigrants from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh are among more than 100 detainees in Alabama and California who went on a hunger fast, on Thanksgiving Day, to protest indefinite confinement and to demand better facilities. The report by *Vice* said the hunger strikes started on November 25 are ongoing at three immigration detention facilities: Etowah County Detention Centre in Alabama, Theo Lacey Facility in Orange County, California, and Otay Detention Facility in San Diego. In addition to ending indefinite detention and the ICE bed quota, the latest hunger strikers are also calling for better conditions, including access to better health care, clean clothes and unspoiled food, and a less repressive disciplinary regime.⁸⁹

The White House Deputy National Security Advisor Ben Rhodes said on November 24 that U.S. President Barack Obama will meet China's president and India's prime minister on the first day of the Paris climate talks on November 30 to give momentum to the two-week U.N. negotiations. Obama's meetings with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the start of the two-week climate summit "send a strong message to the world about their strong commitment to climate change", Rhodes said. Nearly 140 world leaders have confirmed their attendance at the opening day of the U.N. Climate Change conference that runs until December 11, even after the November 13 attacks by Islamic State militants rattled the host city.⁹⁰

Meanwhile, India's Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar, responding to US concerns over India's pace of climate change action ahead of the key Paris summit, said that India cannot be bullied. "You can't bully India, the message is clear. Developed countries need to provide carbon space to developing countries," Mr Javadekar told *NDTV*, calling remarks by US Secretary of State John Kerry "unfair". "We will not be opposing but we will be proposing real changes needed to ensure we have balanced growth and balanced environment. There should be a durable agreement and we need to trust each other," he said. In an interview Mr Kerry had praised China's role in the talks but raised concerns regarding India. "India has been more cautious, a little more restrained in its embrace of this new paradigm, and it's a challenge," he said. "We've got a lot of focus on India right now to try to bring them along," he added. Under pressure from powers like the US, India's climate negotiators say their approach at the Paris climate change summit will be "proactive and balanced". Following the lead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, they will be calling for "climate justice".⁹¹

⁸⁹ "More Than 100 Illegal Immigrants From India, Bangladesh, Pakistan Go On Hunger Strike in US", *The American Bazar*, November 27, 2015 at <http://www.americanbazaaronline.com/2015/11/27/more-than-100-illegal-immigrants-from-india-bangladesh-pakistan-go-on-hunger-strike-in-us/>; and, "Over 100 South Asian Immigrant Detainees On Hunger Strike", *Business Standard*, November 28, 2015 at http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/over-100-south-asian-immigrant-detainees-on-hunger-strike-115112800144_1.html

⁹⁰ Volcovici, Valerie, "Obama To Meet China's Xi, India's Modi At Paris Climate Talks: White House", *Reuters*, November 24, 2015 at <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-climatechange-summit-obama-idUSKBN0TD2NB20151124>

⁹¹ "'Can't be Bullied,' Says India on US Concerns Ahead of Paris Climate Summit", *NDTV News*, November 29, 2015 at <http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/cant-be-bullied-says-india-to-us-concerns-ahead-of-paris-climate-summit-1248745>; and, "India a Partner In Climate Change Fight: US", *The Hindu*, November 29, 2015 at

Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar will undertake a key visit to the US this week during which he will take forward the Defence Trade and Technology Initiative (DTTI) as both countries work towards greater collaboration in joint development and manufacture of next-gen military tech. Parrikar will leave for the US on December 4 and will return on December 12, ahead of the Combined Commanders' Conference on board aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya on December 15. During his meeting with American counterpart Ashton Carter, both are set to review the joint working group on aircraft carrier under DTTI as well as identify technologies that could be acquired by India on government-to-government basis.⁹²

II. DEFENCE REVIEWS

National

(November 23-29, 2015)

- **Defence Minister inaugurates two day long DEFCOM-2015; Ships of Indian Navy and Royal Navy of Oman set sail together from Muscat to Kochi to celebrate 60 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries.**

The Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar has stressed the need to enhance the Information, Communications, Technology, Electronics and Cyber (ICTEC) infrastructure capabilities of the Indian Army to ensure protection from disruptive cyber-attacks and manipulations. While, addressing the inaugural function of the two day long DEFCOM-2015 the minister cautioned about information black out which can result out of disruptive mechanisms of the adversaries. Describing India as source of human intelligence he said, we have been in the forefront of software development and now there is a need to go into better hardware designing and integration in our streams. The DEFCOM-2015 is jointly conducted by the Corps of Signal (Indian Army) and CII under the theme "leveraging ICTEC Infrastructure and Harnessing the Human Capital for Digital Army". The event presents an ideal platform for all participants to understand each other's capabilities and needs in ICTEC field, synergise their efforts and emerge with a pragmatic way forward.⁹³

Ships of Indian Navy and Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) set sail together from Muscat to Kochi to celebrate 60 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The event was also in recognition of ancient historical linkages between the two countries. The flourishing trade of spices and garments from India and dates and gold from Oman, nurtured the two civilisations, developing cultural and trade linkage over many centuries. Since then, over five lakh Indians

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/india-partner-in-climate-change-talks-says-us/article7930177.ece>

⁹² "Parrikar To Undertake Key Visit to US This Week", *PTI*, November 29, 2015 at <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india/parrikar-to-undertake-key-visit-to-us-this-week/story-BNLLMzOXxVYRiZ9rU8h7cM.html>

⁹³ "Defence Minister Inaugurates DEFCOM-2015," *PIB*, November 23, 2015, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=131811>

have made their home in Oman strengthening cultural linkages between the two nations. Indian Sail Training Ship Tarangini had reached Muscat on November 22, 2015. On arrival of both Sail Training Ships at Kochi, a grand welcome and closing ceremony are planned from December 4 to December 7, 2015. The event, celebrating 60 years of establishing diplomatic relations, as well as one of the first major event under 'Project Mausam' is likely to take the naval cooperation between the two countries to new heights.⁹⁴

International

(November 23-29, 2015)

- **Germany extends its support to France in its fight against ISIS; Chinese army commissions a new logistics support ship.**

Reports say that, Germany has extended its support to France in its fight against ISIS. The country has pledged aircraft for the counter-Islamic State mission in Syria and troops for the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Germany would contribute an unspecified number of Panavia Tornado ECR reconnaissance aircraft to gather more intelligence on Islamic State militants in Syria and to protect civilians. Germany will also support the air campaign by providing tanker aircraft.⁹⁵

Meanwhile, according to reports, the Chinese army has commissioned a new logistics support ship. The vessel is likely to bolster the People's Liberation Army logistics capabilities in the South China Sea as it plans to station the vessel in the South China Sea region to support replenishment operations. The vessel is considered to be the PLA's largest ship commissioned. China Military Online lists the vessel's maximum displacement as 2,700 tonnes. The ship has a length of 90 m, a width of 14.6 m, and a flight deck that can accommodate a Z-9 utility helicopter. This is the second-known PLA vessel that features a roll-on, roll-off (ro-ro) design. The ship's design could limit its contribution to amphibious operations; however, it could be used instead to supply equipment and stores to coastal and island garrisons.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ "Joint Sail Voyage by Indian Navy Sail Training Ship Tarangini and Royal Navy of Oman Sail Training Ship Shabab Oman from Muscat to Kochi," *PIB*, November 24, 2015, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=131854>

⁹⁵ "Germany Backs France With More Military Support," *IHS Jane's*, November 26, 2015, at <http://www.janes.com/article/56310/germany-backs-france-with-more-military-support>

⁹⁶ "Chinese Army Commissions New Logistics Ship To Bolster South China Sea presence," *IHS Jane's*, November 25, 2015, at <http://www.janes.com/article/56265/chinese-army-commissions-new-logistics-ship-to-bolster-south-china-sea-presence>

III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEWS

Jammu & Kashmir

(November 23-29, 2015)

- **J&K: Army jawan killed in Pak firing, four militants gunned down in encounters; Militant hideout busted in Poonch district; Three militants, civilian die in attack on army camp; BSF readies second line of defence on IB.**

Security forces on November 23 gunned down four militants in two separate encounters across Kashmir while an Indian army jawan was killed in firing by Pakistani troops from across the Line of Control. Army sepoy Sugmesh, who was in the Nowshera sector in Rajouri district was critically injured when a patrolling party was fired at from the Pakistan side. He later succumbed to his injuries while being shifted to a nearby Army hospital, the officials added. Meanwhile, three militants were killed in an encounter with security forces in Asghmuqam area of Anantnag district, an army official said in Srinagar. The gun-battle started when militants opened fire on security force personnel who had cordoned off Siligam village to carry out a search operation, the official said. He said the search operation was still in progress while the identity of the slain militants was being ascertained. An ANI report said the militants were members of the Hizbul Mujahideen. In a separate operation in north Kashmir's Kupwara district, which entered its 11th day on November 23, security forces killed one militant while efforts were on to flush out his accomplices, the official said. The unidentified militant was killed in the encounter in the dense forests of Manigah, where Colonel Santosh Mahadik was killed last week, he said.⁹⁷

Acting on a specific intelligence, a joint team of Army and Police on November 25 busted a militant hideout in general area of Salani in Poonch district of J&K and recovered huge quantity of arms and explosives. The arms and ammunitions recovered from hideout include - three IED Cylinder (3 kg each), bottle-shaped IED 500 gms, two AK magazines, 112 rounds of AK, one Chinese grenade, 41 PIKA ammunition, one broken radio set, two Pakistan currency notes (50+10), one Telenor sim card, two IED trigger and two meter wire, he said.⁹⁸

Three militants and a civilian were killed on November 25 when soldiers repulsed an attack on an army camp in Tangdhar town of Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir. A civilian working for the army was also killed in the encounter while a junior commissioned officer (JCO) was injured, said a senior police officer. Three AK-47 rifles were recovered from the slain

⁹⁷ "J-K: Jawan Killed In Pak Firing, 4 Militants Gunned Down In Encounters", *Hindustan Times*, November 23, 2015 at <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india/kashmir-one-militant-killed-in-kupwara-encounter/story-DOekkUOqS8JD4SComRm6XP.html>

⁹⁸ "Militant Hideout Busted In Poonch District of J&K", *The Economic Times*, November 25, 2015 at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/militant-hideout-busted-in-poonch-district-of-jk/articleshow/49916341.cms>

militants, police said. The militant outfit Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) has claimed responsibility for the attack.⁹⁹

With rising number of infiltration and ceasefire violation from Pakistan, the Border Security Force (BSF) has identified more than 76 'choke points' where a second rung of defence has been created to thwart any infiltration bid. The assessment was carried out soon after the July Gurdaspur attack in Punjab. BSF DG DK Pathak on November 27 said as many as 62 infiltration bid were foiled on the international border this year. According to BSF, the number of infiltration last year stood at 48. The second line of defence, according to BSF has been strengthened in Jammu and Punjab sectors.¹⁰⁰

Northeast India

(November 23-28, 2015)

- **NSCN (K) rebel held in Manipur; No separate pacts with rebel groups: Ravi; Two NDFB (S) militants arrested in Assam; Include Chetia in peace talks, demands pro-talks ULFA; Arms factory busted in Assam.**

A hardcore NSCN (K) rebel, identified as Maringmei Nelson alias Gaisenlung (37) was arrested in Manipur's Imphal West district, said a press release by Manipur police. Investigation revealed that he had served demand letters and extorted huge amount of money from Railway project companies working in Manipur's Tamenglong district, the release said. He was also involved in an ambush on Assam Rifles convoy at Nungba Bazar in the first week of October this year, the release added.¹⁰¹

The Government of India has decided not to sign separate agreements with different militant outfits of Nagaland, but if any outfit is willing to join the peace process, they would be welcome to do so. This was disclosed by the Centre's interlocutor for Naga talks, RN Ravi, who is also the chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC). Talking to *The Assam Tribune*, Ravi said that the Government is for a comprehensive solution of the Naga political issues and it is of the view that signing separate agreements with different outfits would only complicate matters. He said that the Government has already made it clear that if any other militant group including the Khaplang faction of the NSCN is willing to join the peace process, it is welcome to do so. But at the same time, he said that the Government would not wait for a long time for the other ultra-groups to come for talks.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ "Three Guerrillas, Civilian Die In Attack On Army Camp", *The Times of India*, November 26, 2015 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/srinagar/Three-guerrillas-civilian-die-in-attack-on-army-camp/articleshow/49929558.cms>

¹⁰⁰ Tripathi, Rahul, "BSF Readies Second Line Of Defence On International Border in Jammu, Punjab", *The Economic Times*, November 27, 2015 at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/bsf-readies-second-line-of-defence-on-international-border-in-jammu-punjab/articleshow/49950386.cms>

¹⁰¹ "NSCN (K) Ultra-Held", *The Assam Tribune*, November 23, 2015 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=nov2315/oth055>

¹⁰² Choudhury, R Dutta, "No Separate Pacts With Ultra Groups: Ravi", *The Assam Tribune*, November 23, 2015 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=nov2315/at052>

The National Investigation Agency has arrested two wanted militants of National Democratic Front of Bodoland (Songbijit) in connection with terrorist attack on Narsingbari village in Assam on May 1, 2014. Two hard-core militants of NDFB(S) Lankeswar Boro alias Langtha Boro and Santosh Kherkatary alias K. Simang Baksa of Baksa district in Assam were taken into custody on November 23, NIA said in a statement in New Delhi.¹⁰³

The pro-talks faction of ULFA led by its chairman Arabinda Rajkhowa has asked the Centre to include the outfit's recently deported general secretary, Anup Chetia, in the ongoing peace process. The request was made during a meeting between the government and an ULFA delegation in New Delhi on November 24. The Union Home Secretary suggested to the Government of India's representative to examine the request of ULFA leaders."¹⁰⁴ Meanwhile, ULFA general secretary Anup Chetia on November 25 assured the leaders of the pro-talk faction of the outfit that he would extend full support to the process of talks with the Government of India.¹⁰⁵

In a major success against jihadi activities in Assam, a joint team of Barpeta Police and CRPF busted an arms factory at Milijuli Bazar under the Baghbar Police Station on November 27 and recovered a huge quantity of arms and machinery. They also nabbed four culprits in this connection.¹⁰⁶

Left-wing Extremism

(November 23-29, 2015)

- **Security forces gun down four women 'Maoists' in Chhattisgarh; Maoist commander killed in police encounter; Maoists call bandh in six states; Two Naxals killed; CRPF jawan injured in Chhattisgarh.**

The bodies of four alleged women Maoists were recovered after a gun battle between Maoists and security forces along the border of Sukma and Dantewada districts in Chhattisgarh, police said on November 21. Senior police officers claimed that Aaytu — a divisional commander of the Darbha division of Maoists— was injured in the firing, but was rescued by his accomplices. "The operation was conducted jointly by STF, District Reserve Group from Dantewada district

¹⁰³ "Two NDFB(S) Militants Arrested", *The Hindu*, November 24, 2015 at <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-otherstates/two-ndfbs-militants-arrested/article7910138.ece>

¹⁰⁴ "ULFA Faction to Centre: Include Anup Chetia in Peace Talks", *The Indian Express*, November 25, 2015 at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/ulfa-faction-to-centre-include-anup-chetia-in-peace-talks/>

¹⁰⁵ "Chetia Assures Support to ULFA Peace Talks", *The Assam Tribune*, November 26, 2015 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=nov2615/at058>; and, "Union Home Secretary reviews progress in talks with ULFA", *PIB*, Release ID :131839, November 24, 2015 at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx>

¹⁰⁶ Barman, Haramohan, "Arms Factory Busted In Barpeta, Four Held", *The Assam Tribune*, November 29, 2015 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=nov2915/at054>

and CRPF in the forests of Gadiras Police Station area on November 21," said SRP Kalluri, IG, Bastar Range.¹⁰⁷

Podia, a section commander of Maoists' military platoon no.13, was gunned down on November 24 in Dantewada district of Chhattisgarh, taking the number of rebels killed in various encounters in Bastar region this month to 15, police said. The skirmish took place between a squad of District Reserve Group (DRG) and rebels at Kesapur village under Tongpal police station limits, Dantewada Superintendent of Police Kamlochan Kashyap told *PTI*. A 303 rifle, its nine live rounds, a 315 bore revolver and its six live rounds were also seized from the spot, the SP said.¹⁰⁸

The Naxalites' central regional bureau of Dandakaranya special zonal committee have called for a 'bandh' in six states Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha on November 25. The rebels claimed to have announced the shut down in protest of the air strikes conducted by Indian Air force in Bijapur district of Bastar region in south Chhattisgarh on October 13.¹⁰⁹

Two Naxals were killed and as many women cadres arrested after a gun-battle with security forces on November 27 in restive Abhujmad area of Narayanpur district of Chhattisgarh, SRP Kalluri, IG (Bastar Range) told *PTI*. Meanwhile, in a separate incident on November 28, a jawan of 74th battalion of Central Reserve Police Force was injured when he accidentally stepped on a pressure bomb planted by ultras in Sukma district, said district Superintendent of Police D Shrawan.¹¹⁰

IV. UNITED NATIONS REVIEWS

India and the UN

(November 2-8, 2015)

- **India 2016: Trade in the green, but investment requires structural reforms; PEMRA bans media coverage and JuD, affiliates; India's emissions at 8.2 per cent: PwC; Visiting MPs address various GA Committees; India-Nepal spat at UN; AFSPA should detract from India's UNSC seat credentials: ASM.**

¹⁰⁷ "Chhattisgarh: 4 Women 'Maoists' Killed In Encounter", *The Indian Express*, November 23, 2015 at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/chhattisgarh-4-women-maoists-killed-in-encounter/>

¹⁰⁸ "Naxal Commander Killed In Police Encounter", *The Economic Times*, November 24, 2015 at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/naxal-commander-killed-in-police-encounter/articleshow/49907534.cms>

¹⁰⁹ Bose, Soumitra S, "Naxals Call Bandh In Six States Today", *The Times of India*, November 25, 2015 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/nagpur/Naxals-call-bandh-in-six-states-today/articleshow/49913676.cms>

¹¹⁰ "Two Naxals Killed; CRPF Jawan Injured In Chhattisgarh", *Business Standard*, November 28, 2015 at http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/two-naxals-killed-crpf-jawan-injured-in-chhattisgarh-115112800699_1.html

The Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report 2015 has indicated that India (and Vietnam), whose exports are mainly targeted towards advanced economies in Europe and North America, will continue to do well in 2016. While overall the region will be the largest trading zone in 2016, countries importing from China are likely to suffer as a result of the slowdown in the Chinese economy.¹¹¹ The report also pointed out that structural reform and a boost in the manufacturing sector will be key for the country to emerge as an attractive destination for investments.¹¹²

Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) has banned media coverage of 60 banned terrorist outfits, including 12 that have been designated as such by the UN. The list includes the Jamaat ud-Dawa and its affiliates like the the Falah-i-Insaniat Foundation (FIF) as well as the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).¹¹³ Responding to this, a spokesperson of India's Ministry of External Affairs said that while this was important, it was time for Pakistan to completely ban the outfits.¹¹⁴

The seventh annual Low Carbon Economy Index prepared by Pricewater Cooper (PwC) states that India's energy emissions were the highest in the world in 2014 owing to the 7.4 per cent GDP growth largely based on fossil fuels. India's carbon intensity increased by 0.7 per cent due to insufficient use of renewable sources of energy. Currently India is the fourth largest emitter of carbon.¹¹⁵

Visiting Members of Parliament from India made 12 statements in the General Assembly and at its various Committees. Among them, at a debate on the revitalization of the General Assembly, visiting Member of Parliament (MP) Ram Gopal Yadav (Samajwadi Party) said that the General Assembly which embodied the international community must have a larger say in the election of the Secretary General. He also raised the issue of the urgent need for the reform of the UN Security Council.¹¹⁶ Another visiting MP, Rahul Kaswan (Bhartiya Janata Party)

¹¹¹ "India's Exports Will Do Relatively Well In 2016, Says UN Report", *The Hindu Business Line*, November 2, 2015, at <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/indias-exports-will-do-relatively-well-in-2016-says-un-report/article7834186.ece>

¹¹² "India Has Long Way to Go to Match China's Role in Asia-Pacific: UN Report", *The Economic Times*, November 3, 2015, at http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2015-11-03/news/67987299_1_asia-pacific-trade-growth-momentum-manufacturing-sector

¹¹³ "Pakistan Bans Media Coverage of Terror-linked Charity", *VOA News*, November 3, 2015, at <http://www.voanews.com/content/pakistan-bans-media-coverage-of-anti-india-charity/3034227.html>

¹¹⁴ "Total Ban on LeT, Other Terror Outfits Long Overdue: India", *The New Indian Express*, November 4, 2015, at <http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/Total-Ban-on-LeT-Other-Terror-Outfits-Long-Overdue-India/2015/11/04/article3113380.ece>

¹¹⁵ "India's Energy Emission Growth At 8.2%, Highest Globally: PwC", *The Financial Express*, November 2, 2015, at <http://www.financialexpress.com/article/economy/indias-energy-emission-growth-at-8-2-highest-globally-pwc/160154/>

¹¹⁶ "Statement by Mr. Ram Gopal Yadav, Hon'ble Member of Parliament of India at the Joint Debate on Agenda Item 119: Implementation of the Resolutions of the United Nations & Agenda Item 120: Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly at the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly", November 3, 2015, <https://www.pminewyork.org/pages.php?id=2314>. Also see, India Pitches for Greater Say to General Assembly in Selecting UN Chief, *NDTV News*, November 4, 2015, at <http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/india-pitches-for-greater-say-to-general-assembly-in-selecting-un-chief-1239989>

attended a debate on peacekeeping and reiterated the need for greater consultation by the Security Council in setting the mandates of the missions. He also voiced a concern regarding peacekeeping missions having to do perilous counter-terrorism operations. He urged the UN to have a non-discriminatory policy on non-tolerance of sexual abuse by peacekeepers.¹¹⁷

Following protests at a transit point along the India-Nepal border after the promulgation of the new constitution, two NGOs from Nepal filed a complaint against India with the UN Rapporteur on Unilateral Coercive Measures alleging that India had blockaded the supplies to Nepal in response to the promulgation of the new Constitution which India perceived to be anti-Madhesi. The Indian Ambassador to Nepal, Ranjit Rae, however denied the allegation and expressed concern at the rising anti-India sentiment in the country.¹¹⁸ In a debate of Nepal's human rights record, India's deputy permanent representative to the UN mission in Geneva urged Nepal to address the concerns of its minorities that had led to the protests.¹¹⁹

Forty ethnic groups under the banner of Assam Sanmilita Mahasangha (ASM) appealed to Secretary General Ban-ki Moon to not consider India's candidature for a permanent seat in the Security Council considering the continued prevalence of the Armed Forces Special Power's Act (AFSPA) in the North East states of India, and resulting in gross violations of the human rights.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ "Statement by Hon'ble Member of Parliament, Mr Rahul Kaswan, at the Thematic Debate on Agenda Item 56 - Comprehensive Review of the Whole Question of Peacekeeping Operations in all their aspects at the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) of the UN General Assembly", November 4, 2015, at <https://www.pminewyork.org/pages.php?id=2318>. Also see "India Pushes for Zero Tolerance against Sexual Exploitation in UN Peacekeeping Missions", *The Indian Express*, November 5, 2015, at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/india-pushes-for-zero-tolerance-against-sexual-exploitation-in-un-peacekeeping-missions/>. Also see "India Seeks Strong UN Action Against Groups Attacking Peacekeepers", *The Times of India*, November 5, 2015, at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/us/India-seeks-strong-UN-action-against-groups-attacking-peacekeepers/articleshow/49671468.cms>

¹¹⁸ "Concerned Over Anti-India Sentiments In Nepal: Indian Envoy Ranjit Rae", *DNA News*, November 4, 2015, at <http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-concerned-over-anti-india-sentiments-in-nepal-indian-envoy-ranjit-rae-2142054>

¹¹⁹ "India's First Scrap With Nepal at UN- Neighbours Clash Over Constitution", *The Telegraph*, November 4, 2015, at http://www.telegraphindia.com/1151105/jsp/nation/story_51548.jsp#.Vm_pONJ97IU

¹²⁰ "Indian Rights Groups Write to Ban Ki-moon on AFSPA", *The Times of India*, November 5, 2015, at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/guwahati/Indian-rights-groups-write-to-Ban-Ki-moon-on-AFSPA/articleshow/49663942.cms>