

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. South Asia

Afghanistan

(January 11-24, 2016)

- **List of Taliban open to peace talks to Afghanistan; Consulates closed in Kunduz, Badakhshan; Cautiously optimistic about Afghan peace efforts; Wolesi Jirga approves draft budget, adds 12bn afs to outlay; Biden to meet Ghani, Sharif on renewed Afghan peace push; Taliban confirm participating Pugwash conference over Afghanistan's conflict in Doha.**

The Afghan government is expecting to receive a list of the Taliban group members willing to join peace talks, it has been reported. The list will be provided by Pakistan to the Afghan government and will also include a list of the Taliban groups who are not keen to sit-in for the peace talks. Javid Faisal, deputy spokesman for Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah, told *Associated Press* that Pakistan's list will include Taliban who do and do not want talks with Kabul on ending the 15-year war. He said Pakistan had agreed to cut off financial support to Taliban fighters based in Pakistani cities, including Quetta and Peshawar. Faisal further added that insurgents based in Pakistan would not be allowed to resettle in Afghanistan, he added. This comes as the first quadrilateral meeting between the representatives of China, United States, Pakistan and Afghanistan will kick off in Islamabad on January 11 to discuss the Afghan reconciliation process. The Afghan and Pakistani leaders agreed to revive the stalled Afghan peace talks during a meeting on the side-lines of the Heart of Asia conference in Islamabad last year. Pakistan hosted the first round of direct peace talks between the Afghan government and Taliban group earlier in July last year. The Afghan officials were expecting to sit-in for the second round of peace talks with the Taliban group representatives in Pakistan at the end of the same month.¹

The Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) on January 14 said Tajikistan had decided to temporarily close its consulates in northern Kunduz and northeastern Badakhshan provinces. The Tajikistan Embassy in Kabul informed the MoFA through a letter that the country had decided to close the consulates for minor security reasons, MoFA spokesman Shakib Mustaghni told *Pajhwok Afghan News*. In its letter, the Tajik Embassy had said they would reopen the missions after the security issues were removed, he said.²

President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani has said the Afghan government is cautiously optimistic about the ongoing efforts regarding the Afghan reconciliation process. During separate meetings with the members of the Afghan parliament, Afghan high peace council and council of Mujahideen in ARG Presidential Palace on January 14, President Ghani said the Afghan government has managed to ascertain its conditions for peace talks while working out the factors for ongoing violence in the country. President Ghani further added that the conditions of the Afghan government have been agreed during bilateral, trilateral and quadrilateral meetings with

¹ "Pakistan to Present List of Taliban Open To Peace Talks to Afghanistan", *Khaama Press*, January 11, 2016, at <http://www.khaama.com/pakistan-to-present-list-of-taliban-open-to-peace-talks-to-afghanistan-1962>

² "Tajikistan to Close Consulates in Kunduz, Badakhshan", *Pajhwok*, January, 14, 2016, at <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2016/01/14/tajikistan-close-consulates-kunduz-badakhshan>

Pakistan, United States and China. He said the government is cautiously optimistic about the regional movements regarding the peace process between the Afghan government and anti-government armed militant groups. President Ghani further added that the International community is convinced that the war in Afghanistan has different dimensions which includes insurgency led by International and regional terrorists, insurgency led by Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan which have been taken refuge in Afghanistan following Pakistani military operation, Haqqani network led insurgency, the Al Qaeda terrorist network and Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. He also added that the other factors include insurgency led by criminal groups in a bid to continue with the human smuggle and drugs smuggling. Ghani also emphasized that the different dimensions of war in Afghanistan should be thoroughly studied in a bid to make it clear to people regarding the true situation so that they can have realistic expectations regarding the peace efforts and persistence of war.³

The Wolesi Jirga (WJ), or lower house of parliament, on January 18 approved the draft budget for 2016 after necessary changes and a12 billion Afghanis addition to the outlay. Earlier, the assembly rejected by a majority vote the draft budget for the current fiscal year on account of what lawmakers called serious imbalances and other problems. Afghanistan info-icon's fiscal year begins on December 22. The draft budget was approved by the Council of Ministers and the Meshrano Jirgainfo-icon sent it to the Wolesi Jirga with some recommendations. Wolesi Jirga's Finance Commission head Amir Khan Yar, who placed the draft budget before the session, claimed there was no balance in provincial allocations. The draft contains no appropriate measures to create job opportunities. He told the house 1.8 billion Afghanis had been added to the general budget and 10 billion to the development spending. The addition amount will be spent on the education info-icon sector, construction of roads, retaining walls and supply of drinking water. He put the revised general budget at 276.1 billion Afghanis and development spending at 168.6 billion Afghanis. Of the 146 present lawmakers present, 140 voted in favour of the draft.⁴

US Vice President Joe Biden will meet Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and the Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in Davos on January 21, the White House said. Biden, Ghani and Sharif are currently in Switzerland to attend the World info-icon Economic Forum. The meeting is part of the Obama administration's efforts to help Kabul info-icon and Islamabad cooperate and coordinate on counter-terrorism measures. The three leaders will confer on ways of kick-starting the Afghan-led reconciliation process with the Taliban info-icon. This past week, two quadrilateral meetings, also involving China and the US, took place in Islamabad and Kabul on the resumption of peace parleys. Meanwhile, the State Department underlined the need for expediting the reconciliation process. "We agree that the best way to ensure a lasting peace and security in Afghanistan info-icon is through such an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process." State Department deputy spokesman Mark Toner told reporters at his daily news briefing the United States had long said it believed in an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned peace process. "Ultimately, we think that's the way forward for Afghanistan, so we support any efforts in that regard." The process could not be

³ "President Ghani Says Cautiously Optimistic about Afghan Peace Efforts", *Khaama Press*, January 15, 2016, at <http://www.khaama.com/president-ghani-says-cautiously-optimistic-about-afghan-peace-efforts-1994>

⁴ "Wolesi Jirga Approves Draft Budget, Adds 12bn afs to Outlay", *Pajhwok*, January 18, 2016, at <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2016/01/18/wolesi-jirga-approves-draft-budget-adds-12bn-afs-outlay>

deterred by those who sought to continue the conflict, he said, renewing America's support for the Afghan government in its efforts to initiate or keep the talks on-going.⁵

Taliban confirm participating Pugwash conference scheduled to begin January 23 over Afghanistan's conflict in Doha. "On 23/01/2016 members of the Political Office of Islamic Emirate will participate at a conference convened by Pugwash international NGO in the capital city of Qatar, Doha." States a statement released by the group's spokesperson on January 23. The press release further states they are participating in this conference based on the invitation of Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, a Nobel Peace Prize-winning group focused on resolving conflict. "It has once again invited the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to take part in a new conference aimed at finding a solution to the conflict in Afghanistan." The statement adds, "The Islamic Emirate has accepted this invitation and members of its political office shall take part in the research conference." Besides Taliban, Afghan government, members of parliament and civil society were also invited but government and High Peace Council have rejected sending official mediators to the conference. Shakib Mostaghni, spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has told *BBC* that four nations are already working on resuming the stalled peace talks with Taliban so the government does not deem the Doha conference appropriate.⁶

Pakistan

(January 11-24, 2016)

- **Litmus test for Pak diplomacy in Mideast; Deep sea phase of naval exercise concludes; Agreed to defer talks; Steering committee set up to oversee CPEC; Role in anti-terror coalition discussed with Saudi Arabia; Ex-envoy, India behind delay in US sale of F-16s to Pakistan; India condemns terrorist attack on Bacha Khan University in Pakistan.**

Through-out the past week, opposition parties have been cautioning the government against picking sides in the on-going standoff between Iran and Saudi Arabia, saying that it could have potentially dangerous sectarian fallout for the country. Led by PPP's Syed Khursheed Shah, Leader of Opposition in the National Assembly, leaders of nearly all opposition parties and some treasury members such as PkMAP's Mehmood Khan Achakzai have said that taking a partisan stance will only "create unrest in the streets". Similarly, after meeting the Iranian and Saudi ambassadors in Islamabad, *PTI* chief Imran Khan asked the government to simply play a role in easing tensions between the two countries. Their fears appear well-founded when examined in the perspective of information recently released by the interior ministry. A list of seminaries receiving foreign funding, compiled by the ministry, reveals that around one-third of the 285 such institutions receive funds from Shia-majority Iran and Iraq, while two-thirds receive funds from the Sunni-dominated Gulf states: Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Qatar. In Punjab, there are some 147 madrassahs that rely on various Middle Eastern countries for financial assistance. Of these, only 25 get funds from Iran, while the rest are financed by the Saudi bloc.⁷

⁵ "Biden to Meet Ghani, Sharif on Renewed Afghan Peace Push", *Pajhwok*, January 21, 2016, at <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2016/01/21/biden-meet-ghani-sharif-renewed-afghan-peace-push>

⁶ "Taliban Confirm Participating Pugwash Conference over Afghanistan's Conflict in Doha", *Khaama Press*, January 23, 2016, at <http://www.khaama.com/taliban-confirm-participating-pugwash-peace-conference-over-afghanistans-conflict-in-duha-4508>

⁷ "Choosing Sides in Mideast May Trigger Sectarian Unrest", *Dawn*, January 11, 2016, at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1232220/choosing-sides-in-mideast-may-trigger-sectarian-unrest>

The deep sea phase of the Pakistan Navy and China's People's Liberation Army — Navy (PLA-Navy) third bilateral exercise concluded at the Arabian Sea on January 12. The PLA Navy Task Group comprising two destroyers and one fleet tanker, headed by Rear Admiral Yu Manjiang, visited Karachi to participate in the exercise last week. The phase of the exercise covered a wide spectrum of maritime and naval operations by ships, helicopters, maritime patrol aircraft, fighters and Special Forces. Joint boarding operations by Special Forces, air defence exercises, communication drills and joint manoeuvres by ships were the hallmark of the events. A de-brief/hot wash-up of the exercise was also held at sea upon culmination of the exercise. Pakistan Navy and PLA (Navy) have been interacting since long, however, bilateral naval exercises are unique in the entire spectrum of multifaceted maritime operations. Earlier, the maiden exercise of the series was held in September 2014 at Karachi. It laid a solid foundation for the second exercise in Shanghai, China from December 28, 2015 to January 3, 2016. The third Pakistan Navy and PLA (Navy) bilateral exercise is reflective of the strong mutual desire to improve the level of coordination and inter-operability at operational and tactical levels.⁸

Pakistan and India have mutually agreed to defer their foreign secretaries' meeting planned for January 15 as the focus remained on Pakistan's action against alleged perpetrators of the Pathankot attack. "Pakistan and India have agreed to reschedule foreign secretary level talks," Pakistan's Foreign Office said in a brief state-ment after the Indian Exter-nal Affairs Ministry made a similar announcement in New Delhi. Foreign secretaries of the two countries were to meet to decide on the timetable and modalities of resumed dialogue that has been named as 'Com-prehensive Bilateral Dialogue'. No new dates have been given, except for an assertion by both sides that the meeting would be held "in very near future". The decision on postponing the meeting was taken during a telephonic conversation bet-ween For-eign Secretary Aizaz Chaudhry and his Indian counterpart S. Jaishankar.⁹

A consultative meeting on January 15 decided to form a steering committee headed by the prime minister to oversee the implementation of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project. The meeting was chaired by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif at his office and was attended by representatives of all political parties and provinces. Its aim was to allay the concerns and reservations over the construction of the economic corridor. Prime Minister Nawaz also directed fast track implementation of the western route of the corridor, as all political parties agreed to support it, said a statement from the PM Office. All four chief ministers will be included in the committee, which would meet every three months to review progress on the project's implementation. The statement added that the prime minister will personally supervise implementation of the western route of CPEC to ensure that reservations of all political parties are addressed with consultation. The meeting discussed the details of the project, its route and the setting up of economic zones at strategic locations. In the meeting it was agreed that the location and setting up of the economic zones along the CPEC route would be done in consultation with the provinces. Talking to reporters after the meeting, Planning and Development Minister Ahsan Iqbal said the corridor will benefit all provinces. "The premier will head a committee comprising all four chief ministers, federal ministers and chief secretaries to oversee implementation," he said,

⁸ "Deep Sea Phase of Pak-China Naval Exercise Concludes", *Dawn*, January 13, 2016, at, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1232676/deep-sea-phase-of-pak-china-naval-exercise-concludes>

⁹ "Pakistan, India Agree To Defer Talks", *Dawn*, January 15, 2016, at, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1233076/pakistan-india-agree-to-defer-talks>

adding that PM Nawaz has assured the political leadership their reservations will be addressed. Iqbal said work on the western route will be initiated after consultation with the political leadership. Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed mirrored Iqbal's comments and added that the entire political spectrum had expressed support for the government in completing the mega project.¹⁰

As Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Army Chief Gen Raheel Sharif embarked on a two-day visit to Saudi Arabia and Iran, their focus on the first leg of the trip looked to be on participation in a 'counter-terrorism coalition', even though the trip was billed by both the government and military as a mediation effort. In Riyadh, the PM and army chief held talks with Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud. The army chief separately also met Saudi defence minister Mohammad bin Salman. The government, while announcing the visit, had indicated that the visit was being made out of concern over the escalation of tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran. But from the Prime Minister Office's statement on the meetings in Riyadh it looked as if the emphasis was on bilateral relations and Pakistan's participation in the 34-nation 'counter-terrorism alliance', set up by Saudi Arabia. The mediation initiative, meanwhile, appeared to have been relegated down the priority list, with the PM offering Pakistan's good offices for the resolution of the Saudi-Iranian row.¹¹

Defence Minister Khwaja Muhammad Asif informed the National Assembly on January 19 that the Indian lobby and a former Pakistani ambassador to the US were lobbying against the deal to sell F16 fighter jets to Pakistan. However, he said the US government had agreed in principle to deliver these jets to Pakistan. Asif said Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif held encouraging talks with Saudi leadership to defuse the tension with Iran and there was good response from Riyadh. In his statement before the lower house of parliament, he said the prime minister held talks with the Iranian leadership on January 19 in the same spirit, and expressed the hope that his visit would be successful. He said the aim of the visit was to defuse tension between the two Muslim countries, adding that it also aimed at removing irritants in the unity of Muslim Ummah. He pointed out that Pakistan was playing the role of a mediator, which was also the desire of parliament. He said with the success of this mission, Pakistan's positive image would be promoted in the world. Referring to the 34-member alliance of Muslim countries, the minister said it was still evolving and its scope and participation was being discussed. He said the matter came under discussion during the visits of Saudi foreign and defence ministers.¹²

The President of India, Pranab Mukherjee has strongly condemned the terrorist attack on Bacha Khan University at Charasada, Pakistan on January 20, 2016. The President has said "I am deeply saddened to learn of the barbaric terrorist attack on Bacha Khan University at Charasada, Pakistan today. The attack is all the more condemnable as the terrorists chose for this heinous crime the death anniversary of the great Badshah Khan, who worked tirelessly for peace. The strongly condemnable attack once again shows that no difference can be made between 'good' and bad

¹⁰ "Steering Committee Set Up To Oversee CPEC", *Daily Times*, January 16, 2016, at <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/E-Paper/Lahore/2016-01-16/page-1/detail-1>

¹¹ "Role in Anti-Terror Coalition Discussed with Saudi Arabia", *Dawn*, January 19, 2016, at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1233904/role-in-anti-terror-coalition-discussed-with-saudi-arabia>

¹² "Ex-envoy, India Behind Delay in US Sale of F-16s to Pakistan, NA Told", *Daily Times*, January 20, 2016, at <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/E-Paper/Lahore/2016-01-20/page-1/detail-2>

terrorists and all forms of terrorism and all manner of support to them need to be completely eradicated.¹³

Bangladesh

(January 18-24, 2016)

- **India's Bhel gets Rampal contract; President seeks more S Korean investment; Dawood aide Abdul Rauf to be sent back to India: Bangladesh Minister; Bangladesh endorses OIC statement condemning attacks on Saudi missions in Iran; Bangladesh detains Singapore deportees over terror links.**

Indian power company Bhel has been selected to construct the 1,320-megawatt coal power plant in Rampal close to the Sundarbans. The Bangladesh-India Friendship Company has chosen Bhel out of three bidders and issued it with a notification award for the \$1.5 billion job. Bhel would have to arrange the finance from the Indian Exim Bank on behalf of the Friendship company. Of this finance, \$1.39 billion will be in foreign currency and another \$101 million in local currency. The Friendship Company will fund 30 per cent of the project cost and the rest comes in the form of loans.¹⁴

President Abdul Hamid in a meeting with visiting Deputy Speaker of South Korea Jeong Kab Yoon at Bangabhaban on January 17, sought more Korean investment in Bangladesh, and urged Korea to increase its import from Bangladesh. Hamid also stressed exchanging visits at different levels, including public and private ones, for further strengthening the existing bilateral relations.¹⁵

Bangladesh said that it is preparing to send Abdul Rauf alias Daud Merchant, an associate of mob Dawood Ibrahim who was convicted of the murder of music baron Gulshan Kumar, to India. Home minister Asaduzzaman Khan said Merchant, who was arrested in 2009 for illegally entering Bangladesh, would be sent to India after he completes his jail term.¹⁶

Bangladesh has endorsed an Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) joint communiqué condemning Iran's "aggressions" against the Saudi diplomatic missions and Tehran's "continued support for terrorism" in the region. The communiqué was adopted at an "extraordinary" meeting of OIC ministers held in Jeddah on January 21 following Saudi Arabia's request. Foreign Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali attended the meeting held to discuss the situation arising from attacks on Saudi Arabia's diplomatic missions in Iran. Bangladesh had condemned such attacks, saying they were in "clear violation" of the Vienna convention on diplomatic relations. Meanwhile,

¹³ "President of India condemns terrorist attack on Bacha Khan University in Pakistan", *PIB*, January 20, 2016, Release ID :134663 at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx>

¹⁴ Khan, Sharier, "India's Bhel Gets Rampal Contract", *The Daily Star*, January 18, 2016, at <http://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/indias-bhel-gets-rampal-contract-203518>.

¹⁵ "President Seeks More S Korean Investment", *The Daily Star*, January 18, 2016, at <http://www.thedailystar.net/city/president-seeks-more-s-korean-investment-203536>.

¹⁶ "Dawood Aide Abdul Rauf To Be Sent Back To India: Bangladesh Minister", *Hindustan Times*, January 18, 2016, at <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india/dawood-aide-abdul-rauf-to-be-sent-back-to-india-bangladesh-minister/story-WKGOicRF7HBEosTdcCzIhI.html>.

Bangladesh's Foreign Minister Ali discussed a range of bilateral issues with his Indonesian counterpart on the side-lines of the OIC meet.¹⁷

Bangladesh authorities say 14 of its nationals deported from Singapore are being held over links to a group blamed for attacking secular writers. The men were part of a larger group of 26 construction workers who were expelled from Singapore last year for supporting armed jihadist ideology. On January 21, Bangladeshi police confirmed they had arrested all of the deportees when they first arrived home on December 21. They released some after finding no evidence against them, but continued to detain 14 after uncovering links to Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT), a group that has been blamed for attacks on secular bloggers, authorities said. The released deportees have been put under police surveillance. Singapore said members of the group had been contemplating taking part in armed jihad in Middle East as well as in Bangladesh against the government.¹⁸

Sri Lanka

(January 18-24, 2016)

- **Three Chinese war ships arrive at Sri Lanka's Colombo port; Two Indian naval ships arrive in Sri Lanka for training interaction; INS Vikramaditya visits Sri Lanka; Indian, Sri Lankan navies hold joint medical clinic in the South; Fifth India-Sri Lanka Army to Army Staff Talks begin in New Delhi; Sri Lanka's Finance Minister attend the inaugural meeting of the AIIB; US Marine officers in Sri Lanka to plan training for Navy; Sri Lankan Prime Minister leaves for Switzerland to attend World economic Forum; Meeting of the Working Group on Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights under the European Union-Sri Lanka Joint Commission held in Colombo; Sri Lanka condemns terrorist attack on Pakistan university; Korea Eximbank opens office in Sri Lankan capital.**

Three People's Liberation Army-Navy (PLAN) ships, "Liuzhohu", "Sanya" and "Qinghaihu", arrived at the Port of Colombo on a goodwill visit on January 17, 2016 and departed on January 21, 2016.¹⁹ Secretary of Defence Karunasena Hettiarachchi attended a dinner reception organised on the occasion of the Chinese PLA Navy Task Force Port-Visit to Sri Lanka on board the Liu Zhou (FFG 573) Ship in Colombo Harbour on January 18. The event was hosted by the Commander of the 21st Escort Task Group of PLA Navy Rear Admiral Yu Manjiang. Chinese Ambassador to Sri Lanka, Yi Xianliang was also present at the event.²⁰

Indian Navy Sail Training Ships, "Tharangini" and "Sudarshini" arrived at the port of Colombo on January 17, 2016 on a training visit.²¹

¹⁷ "Bangladesh Endorses OIC Statement Condemning Attacks on Saudi Missions in Iran", *bdnews24.com*, January 22, 2016, at <http://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2016/01/22/bangladesh-endorses-oic-statement-condemning-attacks-on-saudi-missions-in-iran>.

¹⁸ "Bangladesh Detains Singapore Deportees over Terror Links", *BBC*, January 22, 2016, at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-35379056>.

¹⁹ "Three Chinese War Ships Arrive at Sri Lanka's Colombo Port", *ColomboPage*, January 18, 2016, at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_16A/Jan18_1453090790CH.php.

²⁰ "Sri Lanka Appreciates China's Support during Conflict", *ColomboPage*, January 19, 2016, at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_16A/Jan19_1453221164CH.php.

²¹ "Two Indian Naval Ships Arrive in Sri Lanka for Training Interaction", *ColomboPage*, January 18, 2016, at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_16A/Jan18_1453095319CH.php.

Indian Naval ships Vikramaditya and Mysore were on an official visit to Colombo from January 21-23, 16.²² Maithripala Sirisena, visited INS Vikramaditya. According to the *PIB* press release, this visit was very significant since it marks many firsts. It was not only the first visit of the President of Sri Lanka to a foreign warship after assuming office in January 2015, but also the first Head of State visit to the Indian Navy's biggest warship and aircraft carrier, INS Vikramaditya. The fact that this visit of the ship to Colombo was the first ever foreign port being visited by the ship after being inducted into the Indian Navy makes the visit of the President on board even more remarkable.²³

A medical camp jointly organised by the Sri Lanka Navy and the Indian Navy on January 23 at Neluwa in Southern Sri Lanka drew about 1,000 civilians, according to a statement released by the Ministry of Defence of Sri Lanka.²⁴

India-Sri Lanka Army to Army Staff Talks (AAST), which was organised for the fifth consecutive time, began in New Delhi on January 20, and continued till January 22, 2016. The Sri Lankan military delegation to the AAST is headed by Major General N.U.M.M.W. Senanayake, Military Secretary at Army Headquarters. Commander, Security Force Headquarters-East Major General N.J. Walgama, Commandant, Sri Lanka Military Academy Brigadier R.W.W.A.D.B. Rajaguru, Director Training Brigadier K.P.A. Jayasekara, Commandant, Officer Career Development Centre Brigadier Ralph Nugera, Additional Military Army Headquarters Secretary Brigadier S.S. Waduge, and Colonel Military Secretary, Army Headquarters Colonel S.A. Kulathunga, are the members of the Sri Lankan delegation. The Indian military delegation comprises Director General Military Training Lieutenant General A.L. Chavan, and Military Secretary Lieutenant General Amarjeet Singh.²⁵

US Marine officials visited the Sri Lanka Navy Headquarters on January 20, to participate in the initial planning conference on navy patrolmen training for the year 2016. During the visit they met the Commander of the Navy, Vice Admiral Ravindra Wijegunaratne and discussed matters related to the training of patrolmen branch personnel.²⁶

Finance Minister Ravi Karunanayake represented Sri Lanka at the inaugural meeting of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) on January 16 in Beijing.²⁷

Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe left for Switzerland on January 19, 2016 to attend the World Economic Forum to be held from January 20-23, 2016 in Davos-Klosters. This is the first time that a Sri Lankan political leader has been invited to attend the Davos meeting. The Prime Minister met with world leaders as well as heads of multinational corporations on the sidelines of Davos meeting. Mr. Wickremesinghe met Swedish Premier Stefan Löfven, President of the

²² "Indian Warships Visit Colombo, Sri Lanka", *PIB*, January 21, 2016 at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=134679>

²³ "Sri Lankan President Visits INS Vikramaditya at Colombo", *PIB*, January 23, 2016, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=135739>

²⁴ "Indian, Sri Lankan Navies Hold Joint Medical Clinic in the South", *ColomboPage*, January 24, 2016, at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_16A/Jan24_1453624652CH.php.

²⁵ "Fifth India-Sri Lanka Army to Army Staff Talks begin in New Delhi", *ColomboPage*, January 21, 2016, at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_16A/Jan21_1453315660CH.php.

²⁶ "US Marine Officers in Sri Lanka to Plan Training for Navy", *ColomboPage*, January 21, 2016, at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_16A/Jan21_1453359046CH.php.

²⁷ "Sri Lanka's Finance Minister Seeks Development Assistance from Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank", *ColomboPage*, January 18, 2016, http://www.colombopage.com/archive_16A/Jan18_1453136231CH.php.

Swiss Confederation Johann Schneider-Ammann, Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, the Prime Minister of the Netherlands Mark Rutte, President of Asian Development Bank (ADB) Takehiko Nakao, and heads of Microsoft and Virgin Group.²⁸

The EU, in a joint statement issued following the meeting of the Working Group on Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights under the European Union-Sri Lanka Joint Commission, on January 21, 2016 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Colombo, said the meeting provided a welcome opportunity to engage in an open and constructive dialogue, reflecting on concerns, best practices, trends and developments in the areas of human rights, the rule of law and governance. The meeting of the Working Group with the participation of senior officials from Sri Lanka and the European Union follows the 19th Session of the European Union-Sri Lanka Joint Commission held in April 2015 in Colombo. The delegation of the European Union was led by Ms. Paola Pampaloni, Head of Division, Asia and the Pacific Department of the European External Action Service. The Sri Lanka delegation was led by Mr. A.L.A. Azeez, Director-General for European Union, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka.²⁹

Sri Lanka strongly condemned terrorist attack at the Bacha Khan University in north-west Pakistan and reiterated its support to combat terrorism.³⁰

The Export-Import Bank of Korea (Korea Eximbank) has announced that it has opened the "Korea Eximbank Colombo Office" in the Sri Lankan capital city of Colombo on January 19, 2016 and began its operation. The office will help Korean companies export and import and attract foreign investment for their business in Sri Lanka, and seek and support social and economic infrastructure development projects through the Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF), playing a role as a regional office in Southwest Asia, Business Korea reported.³¹

Maldives

(January 18-24, 2016)

- **Bangladesh gifts MNDF 7 vehicles; India to gift Maldives helicopter, aircraft; Economic Minister Saeed appointed to the Board of AIIB; Former President Mohamed visits the UK for his medical treatment.**

Bangladesh government has gifted Maldives National Defence Force with seven vehicles. The vehicles were gifted by Bangladesh Chief of Army Staff General Abu Bilal Shafiqul Haq in a ceremony held at Kalhuthukkala Koshi on January 18. The gift of seven Toyota pickups was

²⁸ "Sri Lankan Prime Minister Leaves for Switzerland to Attend World Economic Forum", *ColomboPage*, January 19, 2016, at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_16A/Jan19_1453182057CH.php.

"The Netherlands Offers Sri Lanka Assistance in Water Management To Prevent Kidney Disease", *ColomboPage*, January 23, 2016, at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_16A/Jan23_1453526340CH.php. "Sweden to Support Sri Lanka To Get GSP+ Restored And Eu Fishing Ban Lifted", *ColomboPage*, January 22, 2016, at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_16A/Jan22_1453481666CH.php. "Sri Lanka PM Meets Swiss President, Business Leaders in Davos", *ColomboPage*, January 24, 2016, at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_16A/Jan24_1453576601CH.php.

²⁹ "EU Recognizes Significant Progress Sri Lanka Made in Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights", *ColomboPage*, January 21, 2016, at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_16A/Jan21_1453387737CH.php.

³⁰ "Sri Lanka Condemns Terrorist Attack on Pakistan University", *ColomboPage*, January 20, 2016, at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_16A/Jan20_1453300532CH.php.

³¹ "Korea Eximbank Opens Office in Sri Lankan Capital", *ColomboPage*, January 21, 2016, at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_16A/Jan21_1453361758CH.php.

accepted on behalf of MNDF by Chief of Defence Force, Major General Ahmed Shiyam. During the speech given by Bangladesh Chief of Army during the ceremony, he noted that the friendly ties between the two countries dated back to a long time. He emphasised that military training programs and exercises between the two countries would further strengthen the ties and increase cooperation. He also said that Bangladesh was ready to provide education to Maldivian students in civil institutions in Bangladesh, as well as provide them with opportunities for higher studies in the field of military. He also expressed interest in Bangladesh to involve in Maldivian fishing industry. Major General Ahmed Shiyam said that Bangladesh government had discussed providing opportunity to join in on military exercises with them, and that it would be executed soon.³² During the visit, Abu Belal also met with President Abdulla Yameen and Defence Minister Adam Shareef. Bangladeshi Chief of Army Staff left Maldives on January 20 after concluding his official visit to the country.³³

Indian government has made the decision to gift Maldives another helicopter and a fixed-wing aircraft. Defence Minister Adam Shareef, who made a three-day official visit to India, posted on social media on January 20 that he met with Indian Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar and top military officers, and that Parrikar had vowed to gift Maldivian government a helicopter and a fixed-wing aircraft during the meeting.³⁴

Minister of Economic Development, Mohamed Saeed has been appointed to the Board of Directors of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the Chinese led Multilateral Development Bank (MDB) conceived for the 21st century. This was confirmed by the Housing Minister Dr. Mohamed Muizzu while talking to the press after his return from his official visit to China to take part in the official inauguration of AIIB. Minister Muizzu said that Economic Minister Saeed was appointed as the Alternative Director of AIIB and the Maldives would be Executive Director the bank until June. And he said that the position would be available to the Maldives in the future as well. Regarding the official inauguration of AIIB, Housing Minister Dr. Muizzu said that while the bank is set to issue developmental loans this year, the President of the Bank has assured that they would work to arrange the funds for development projects of the Maldives.³⁵

Former President Mohamed Nasheed left the country to UK for his medical treatment on January 18 on a 30 days period given by the government. Government has given Nasheed 30 days during which he needs to come back to the country and hand himself over to Maldives Correctional Service officials. Nasheed's brother, Dr. Ibrahim Nashid signed documents on behalf of Nasheed's family to act as a guarantor that he will return back to the country after medical treatment. In response to a question posed by a reporter during press conference held at Foreign Ministry Foreign Minister Dhunya Maumoon said that Nasheed being allowed to go to UK shortly after high level officials from other countries visited Maldives was just a 'coincidence'. Dhunya Maumoon has said that imprisoned Nasheed had not been granted permission to travel to UK for his surgery due to international pressure. She said that Nasheed was given permission to go

³² "Bangladesh Gifts MNDF 7 Vehicles", *SunOnline*, January 18, 2016, at <http://english.sun.mv/35783>.

³³ "Bangladesh Chief of Army Leaves Maldives after Official Visit", *SunOnline*, January 20, 2016, at <http://english.sun.mv/35816>.

³⁴ "India To Gift Maldives Helicopter, Aircraft", *SunOnline*, January 21, 2016, at <http://english.sun.mv/35835>.

³⁵ "Economic Minister Saeed Appointed to the Board of AIIB", *SunOnline*, January 20, 2016, at <http://english.sun.mv/35833>.

abroad after he sent a written letter requesting it.³⁶ Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and MP for East Devon, Hugo Swire has tweeted on January 19 saying that he is pleased that the former President Mohamed Nasheed has been allowed access to medical treatment in the UK and is a positive step for rule of law, HR and democracy in the Maldives.³⁷ American Ambassador to Maldives and Sri Lanka, Amb Atul Keshap also welcomed Maldivian government's decision to permit Nasheed to travel out of the country for his surgery.³⁸ Nasheed made a stop in Sri Lanka on his way to the UK, where he met with foreign diplomats including American Ambassador to Maldives and Sri Lanka, Amb Atul Keshap and discussed the state of Maldivian politics.³⁹

B. East Asia

China

(January 18-24, 2016)

- **China will handle terrorism with heavy handedness; China wants to protect cultural relics in downtown Beijing; China releases database of living Buddhas; China rejects any claims of its involvement in cyber espionage; Foreign Minister of Afghanistan scheduled to visit China; China asserts the civilian tracking system installed by the Philippines is illegal.**

According to statement released after the meeting of Chinese chief justices of higher courts, it was announced that the Chinese courts will be handing out "harsh" punishments for criminal offences that are perceived to be hurting the political and economic security of the country. This statement was released on January 23. As per the statement, "Violent crimes - such as murder and kidnapping - and crimes that severely infringe on women and children's rights should be cracked down in order to improve people's sense of security, along with illegal obtaining and disclosure of private information and corporate commercial secrets".⁴⁰

On January 23 Chinese local officials undertook a pledge asserting their desire to protect the cultural heritages which are present in downtown Beijing. According to Huang Yan, the director of Beijing Municipal Commission of Urban Planning, "Dongcheng and Xicheng districts are the core areas of Beijing and that there will be systematic measures to relocate excessive population to safeguard historic treasures".⁴¹

China recently announced that it had created a database identifying the 870 living Buddhas. This was announced by Master Qingyuan, vice-president of the Buddhist Association of China.⁴²

³⁶ "Dhunya: Nasheed wasn't Sent To UK Because of International Pressure", *SunOnline*, January 19, 2016, at <http://english.sun.mv/35802>.

³⁷ "Swire: Mohamed Nasheed's Access To Medical Treatment in the UK is a Positive Step for Democracy", *SunOnline*, January 19, 2016, at <http://english.sun.mv/35810>.

³⁸ "American Ambassador to Maldives Meets Nasheed", *SunOnline*, January 20, 2016, at <http://english.sun.mv/35815>.

³⁹ "President Nasheed Has Arrived in UK", *SunOnline*, January 21, 2016, at <http://english.sun.mv/35858>.

⁴⁰ "Chinese Courts Pledge Iron Hand on Terrorism, Graft", *China Daily*, January 24, 2016 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2016-01/24/content_23216672.htm, accessed on January 25, 2016

⁴¹ "Cultural Relics in Downtown Beijing under Protection", By Hu Yongqi, *China Daily*, January 23, 2016 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2016-01/23/content_23215030.htm, accessed on January 25, 2016

⁴² "Database Created To Track Legitimate Living Buddhas", By Xu Wei, *China Daily*, January 18, 2016 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2016-01/18/content_23131445.htm, accessed on January 25, 2016

As a response to claims of Beijing being involved in cyber espionage, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hong lei said on January 22 that the Chinese, “government and military are against and are not involved in cyber espionage and allegations that People’s Liberation Army officers had engaged in it are “purely ungrounded and serve an ulterior purpose”. Thus, denying any involvement.⁴³

The Chinese Foreign Ministry announced that the Foreign Minister of Afghanistan Salahuddin Rabbani is scheduled to visit China from January 25 to January 28. According to Hong, “Both countries “attach great importance” to the official visit, Rabbani’s first to China as Afghan foreign minister, and the first high-level visit between China and Afghanistan this year”.⁴⁴

The Chinese Foreign Ministry has asserted that that civilian flight tracking system which the Philippines is planning to install in the South China Sea is illegal as it is the sovereign territory of China. As per the Foreign Ministry, “China has indisputable sovereignty over the Nansha Islands, including Zhongye Island. Any activities carried out by the Philippines on occupied Chinese territory are illegal”.⁴⁵

C. Southeast Asia and Oceania

ASEAN

(January 18-24, 2016)

- **The Nineteenth meeting of ASEAN tourism ministers.**

The Nineteenth Meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers (19th M-ATM) was held on January 21, 2016 in Manila, the Philippines. Building on the momentum of the ATSP 2011-2015, the Ministers adopted the new ATSP 2016-2025 with the vision: “By 2025, ASEAN will be a quality tourism destination offering a unique, diverse ASEAN experience, and will be committed to responsible, sustainable, inclusive and balanced tourism development, so as to contribute significantly to the socio-economic well-being of ASEAN people”. In line with the establishment of the ASEAN Community in 2016 and to commemorate of the 50th Anniversary of ASEAN in 2017, the Ministers agreed to develop “Visit ASEAN@50”, an ASEAN tourism campaign to jointly promote and showcase ASEAN as a single tourism destination. Visit ASEAN@50 will feature iconic ASEAN tourism products, events and experiences, particularly those reflecting the richness of cultural, heritage and natural environment, as well as the warm hospitality extended by the people of ASEAN. The Ministers welcomed the finalization of the ASEAN Ecotourism Strategic Plan, which identified heritage trails and transboundary parks that could be promoted together as ASEAN tour packages linked with air networks. The Ministers noted that the Guideline of Culture

⁴³ “Beijing Firmly Rejects Cyber Espionage Allegations”, By Wang Xu, *China Daily*, January 22, 2016 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2016-01/22/content_23207046.htm, accessed on January 25, 2016

⁴⁴ “Afghan Foreign Minister To Visit China”, By Wang Qingyun, *China Daily*, January 20, 2016 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2016-01/20/content_23171893.htm, accessed on January 25, 2016

⁴⁵ “Philippine Flight-Tracking System ‘Illegal’”, By Li Xiaokun, *China Daily*, January 19, 2016 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2016-01/19/content_23154612.htm, accessed on January 25, 2016

& Heritage Travel Pattern in ASEAN had been finalized and its first training was conducted on December 4-5, 2015 in Jakarta.⁴⁶

Southeast Asia

(January 18-24, 2016)

- **Myanmar ethnic groups place faith in Suu Kyi govt for peace; Philippines: China's new runways heighten sea tension; Philippine plane warned by 'Chinese navy' in disputed sea; Philippines plans flight-tracking system in disputed South China Sea; Indonesia to export first ever Warship in boost for shipbuilding industry; PLAN makes inaugural visit to East Timor; Myanmar's powerful army picks lawmakers as transition moves forward; Indonesia starts construction of high-speed rail line; Vietnam's Communist Party meets to pick nation's leaders; 4th United States-Singapore Strategic Partnership Dialogue; Ruling communists in Laos promote VP as country's new leader; Myanmar releases political prisoners before power transfer.**

Rebel negotiators applauded talks with Myanmar authorities on January 16 at the end of five days of discussions, but said the real business of crafting peace rests with Aung San Suu Kyi's government-in-waiting. The delicate negotiations to end long-running wars between Myanmar's patchwork of ethnic minorities and the state have been steered by the current quasi-civilian government, which replaced a military junta in 2011. But the difficult task of implementing the peace process will be handed over to the new government, led by Suu Kyi's National League of Democracy (NLD) party, which will take office later this year after sweeping historic elections last November. "This peace talk was like a foundation for upcoming peace conferences", said Col. Khun Okkar, the head of the Pa-O National Liberation Organisation (PNLO), an ethnic rebel group in Myanmar's Shan State. "The next government will lead the real peace talk," he said. At the opening of the peace talks, Ms. Suu Kyi pledged to make peace a priority of her administration, citing "the mandate given to us by the people and ethnic minorities".⁴⁷ Current Vice President Sai Mauk Kham underlined the peace conference as a peaceful exchange of views on agenda items and building trust among stakeholder groups. He called for making great stride in building a democratic federal union that can ensure peace and prosperity and equality for the next generation. The conference, inaugurated by President U Thein Sein, was the biggest gathering of political forces since its independence in 1948.⁴⁸

The Philippines said on January 17 that China's building of additional runways in Panganiban (Mischief) Reef in the disputed Spratly Islands was a violation of international laws and would further contribute to tensions in the region. Presidential Communications Operations Office Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr. stressed that the Philippines was determined to "assert the importance of freedom of navigation and over flight" in the West Philippine Sea and South China Sea. The building of additional runways contributed to heightened tensions in the region. "We reiterate that these actions by China violate not only pertinent international laws but also the

⁴⁶ "The Nineteenth Meeting Of Asean Tourism Ministers", Joint Media Statement, *ASEAN.org*, January 21, 2016, at <http://www.asean.org/storage/2012/05/JMS-M-ATM-19-Final.pdf>

⁴⁷ "Myanmar Ethnic Groups Place Faith in Suu Kyi Govt For Peace", *Dawn*, January 17, 2016, at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1233460/myanmar-ethnic-groups-place-faith-in-suu-kyi-govt-for-peace>

⁴⁸ "Myanmar's Peace Process To Be Continued in Next Government Term", *Khmer Times*, January 17, 2016, at <http://www.khmertimeskh.com/news/20013/myanmar-s-peace-process-to-be-continued-in-next-government-term/>

Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea of which China is a signatory, along with the member countries of ASEAN,” he added, referring to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.⁴⁹

Philippine officials said on January 18 that they received two intimidating radio warnings identified as from the Chinese navy when they flew a Cessna plane close to a Chinese-constructed island in the South China Sea. The island, which the Philippines calls Pag-asa and is home to a small fishing community and Filipino troops, is close to Subi Reef, one of seven reefs in the disputed Spratly archipelago which China has transformed into islands in the last two years using dredged sand. The United States and governments with rival claims with China in the disputed region, including the Philippines and Vietnam, have expressed alarm over the Chinese construction, saying it raises tensions and threatens regional stability and could violate freedom of navigation and overflight.⁵⁰

The Philippines said on January 18 that it would install a civilian flight-tracking system in the disputed South China Sea after China landed several aircraft on one of its man-made islands in the potential flashpoint region. Rodante Joya, acting director of the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) said that the automatic dependent surveillance-broadcast (ADS-B) machine, which detects aircraft positions using satellite signals, would be operational by November on Pagasa island, the biggest Filipino-occupied feature in the disputed Spratlys. He further added that the Pagasa surveillance system was part of a broader 10-billion-peso (US\$209 million) effort to expand the country’s commercial flight radar coverage to 80 per cent from the current 30 per cent. “Our objective is to track all commercial flights passing over our airspace,” Joya said, adding the radars would not be used to monitor military aircraft.⁵¹

Indonesia’s state-owned shipbuilder PT PAL unveiled a new vessel on January 18 which will be the first ever warship exported by the country’s domestic shipbuilding industry. Indonesian president Joko “Jokowi” Widodo has been looking to boost the country’s domestic shipbuilding industry as part of a wider goal of revolutionizing the defence industry. The inaugural export of a locally-built warship to the Philippines, set to occur later this year, is a step in this direction.

According to the PT PAL’s director M. Firmansyah, the Strategic Sealift Vessel (SSV)-1, a Lloyd Register-class warship built entirely by PT PAL, will be delivered to the Philippine defence ministry in May 2016. It will be part of a contract PT PAL had secured back in 2014 worth \$92 million from the Philippine government for the construction of two SSVs after winning an international tender process. The other SSV is expected to be delivered by mid-2017.⁵²

The People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) deployed a flotilla to the Pacific island state of Timor Leste for the first time on January 16. The flotilla comprised the Type 052C Luyang II-class guided-

⁴⁹ Romero, Alexis, “Philippines: China’s New Runways Heighten Sea Tension”, *Philstar Global*, January 18, 2016, at <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/01/18/1543752/philippines-chinas-new-runways-heighten-sea-tension>

⁵⁰ Gomez, Jim, “Philippine Plane Warned By ‘Chinese Navy’ in Disputed Sea”, *Yahoo News*, January 18, 2016, at <http://news.yahoo.com/philippine-plane-warned-chinese-navy-disputed-sea-105250004.html>

⁵¹ “Philippines Plans Flight-Tracking System in Disputed South China Sea”, *South China Morning Post*, January 18, 2016, at <http://www.scmp.com/news/asia/southeast-asia/article/1902722/philippines-plans-flight-tracking-system-disputed-south>

⁵² Parameswaran, Prashanth, “Indonesia to Export First Ever Warship in Boost for Shipbuilding Industry”, *The Diplomat*, January 19, 2016, at <http://thediplomat.com/2016/01/indonesia-to-export-first-ever-warship-in-boost-for-shipbuilding-industry/>

missile destroyer Jinan(152), the Type 054A Jiangkai II-class guided-missile frigate Yi Yang (548), and the Type 903 Fuchi-class replenishment ship Qiandao Hu (886). The vessels were scheduled to stay in the capital Dili for five days and would participate in a number of military-to-military exchanges aimed at improving bilateral relationships between the two countries including sporting activities and an anti-piracy seminar.⁵³

Myanmar army Chief Min Aung Hlaing nominated military officers, who hold a quarter of seats in parliament, to their posts. Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) party swept the historic November 8 election, but Myanmar's military, which ruled the country for 49 years before giving way to semi-civilian government in 2011, remains a powerful political force.

A statement said that the election commission had confirmed the military lawmakers for both national and regional parliaments. The newly appointed military lawmakers will attend their first session on February 1, 2016. Major General Tauk Tun is the most senior military lawmaker selected for the lower house and major general Than Soe for the upper house.⁵⁴

Indonesia broke ground on January 21 on a joint project with China to build Southeast Asia's first high speed rail service, linking the Indonesian capital Jakarta with Bandung in western Java. The 142.3 kilometre (88.4 mile) railway worth \$5.5 billion is being constructed by PT Kereta Cepat Indonesia-China, a joint venture between an Indonesian consortium of four state-owned companies and China Railway International Co. Ltd. The ground-breaking ceremony was presided over by Indonesia's President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo, who signed an inscription on a large stone in Walini, a West Java town and location of one of the railway's eight stations. The rail deal was signed in October 2015 after Indonesia selected China over Japan for the three-year project. China agreed to complete railway without using Indonesian government money or requiring a government guarantee for loans. Indonesian companies have a combined 60 percent stake in the project. The trains are expected start operating in early 2019 with speeds of 250 kilometres (155 miles) an hour, and a fare of about \$16 for a journey of about 40 minutes. The existing trains to Bandung, the capital of West Java province, take about three hours and cost about \$8. The Jakarta-Bandung line is part of a 750-kilometer (466-mile) high-speed train plant that would cut across four provinces on the main island of Java and end in the country's second largest city of Surabaya.⁵⁵

Vietnam's ruling Communist Party on January 21 opened an eight-day congress to name the country's new set of leaders, who will determine the pace of critical economic reforms, the fight against corruption and relations with key trading allies, China and the United States. Held every five years, the Communist Party of Vietnam's Congress brought together 1,510 delegates representing the country's 63 provinces, ministries and party organizations. This is the 12th congress. It will end on January 28 when the names of the general secretary, the prime minister, the president, the chairman of the National Assembly and other top functionaries will be announced. The general secretary is the de facto Number 1 leader of the country,

⁵³ Rahmat, Ridzwan, "PLAN Makes Inaugural Visit to East Timor", *IHS Jane's 360*, January 18, 2016, at <http://www.janes.com/article/57298/plan-makes-inaugural-visit-to-east-timor>

⁵⁴ McLaughlin, Timothy and Zaw, Hnin, "Myanmar's Powerful Army Picks Lawmakers As Transition Moves Forward", *Yahoo News*, January 19, 2016, at <http://news.yahoo.com/myanmars-powerful-army-picks-lawmakers-transition-moves-forward-061829017.html>

⁵⁵ Alangkara, Dita, "Indonesia Starts Construction of High-Speed Rail Line", *Yahoo News*, January 21, 2016, at <http://news.yahoo.com/indonesia-starts-construction-high-speed-065610513.html>

although Vietnam professes a collective leadership through a Politburo that handles day to day affairs and a larger Central Committee that meets twice a year to decide policy.⁵⁶

Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs Permanent Secretary Chee Wee Kiong and United States Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Daniel Russel met in Singapore on January 22, 2016 to co-chair the 4th United States-Singapore Strategic Partnership Dialogue. The annual Dialogue served to strengthen bilateral cooperation and the strategic partnership between the two countries. Both sides affirmed the strong political, economic, and defence ties between Singapore and the United States. The co-chairs welcomed the signing of the enhanced Defence Cooperation Agreement (DCA) in December 2015, an update to the 2005 U.S.-Singapore DCA and part of the bilateral Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA) between both sides. The SFA underpins a close defence and security partnership that has contributed to maintaining regional peace and stability.

The co-chairs welcomed the renewal of the Singapore-U.S. Third Country Training Programme (TCTP) in August 2015, which has trained more than 500 officials from Southeast Asia in diverse areas such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, cybercrime prevention, public health, trade facilitation, and energy efficient buildings since its establishment in February 2012. They reaffirmed the importance of maintaining regional peace and stability and upholding the freedom of navigation in and overflight over the South China Sea (SCS). They also emphasized the importance for all parties to resolve their claims calmly and peacefully in accordance with international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and urged all parties to exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities and to avoid action that would escalate tensions, including the further militarization of outposts in the SCS.⁵⁷

The ruling communist party of Laos elected a new leader on January 22, putting Bounnhang Vorachit in charge of the single-party country as it takes its turn as the chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Bounnhang, 78, has been the country's vice president since 2006 and previously was prime minister and deputy prime minister. 685 permanent party members representing the country's more than 268,000 party members nationwide also elected a 77-member Central Committee and approved a new Politburo, the party's top leadership council. The leadership handover does not appear to herald major policy changes in the country that is one of Asia's most politically repressive but allows a large measure of free enterprise in its state-led economy.⁵⁸

Myanmar began releasing the first of about 100 prisoners on January 22, many of them political detainees. The freeing of some political prisoners by the outgoing administration of President Thein Sein came after U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Antony Blinken urged Myanmar to free all political prisoners during a visit on January 18. The amnesty gave a last-minute boost to the legacy of Thein Sein, whose semi-civilian government in 2011 replaced a junta that had run Myanmar for 49 years, ushering in a series of political and economic reforms. "There were 52 political prisoners

⁵⁶ "Vietnam's Communist Party Meets To Pick Nation's Leaders", *Al Jazeera America*, January 21, 2016, at <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2016/1/21/vietnams-communist-party-meets-to-pick-nations-leaders.html>

⁵⁷ "The 4th United States-Singapore Strategic Partnership Dialogue", Media Note, *U.S. Department of State*, January 22, 2016, at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/01/251668.htm>

⁵⁸ "Ruling Communists in Laos Promote VP as Country's New Leader", *Yahoo News*, January 22, 2016, at <http://news.yahoo.com/ruling-communists-laos-promote-vp-countrys-leader-122505983.html>

among those released today," said Bo Kyi, joint secretary of political prisoner watchdog Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP).⁵⁹

Oceania

(January 18-24, 2016)

- **Fiji to set up consular office in Chennai**

Yogesh Karan, Fiji's High Commissioner to India said that Fiji was in the process of setting up its first consular office in Chennai that was likely to be ready by April and would focus mainly on promotion of health and medical tourism, trade and agriculture. Mr. Karan said S.N. Srikanth, Chairman and Managing Director of Hauer Associates, will be Fiji's first honorary consul in Chennai. The Chennai office will be the archipelago's third consular office in India after Mumbai and Kolkata. "We are also looking to set up an office in Bengaluru", he said. "Chennai is a good producer of high quality medicines, medical equipment and is a fast growing economic hub. We see potential for our people to come here for medical referrals, which will also be cheaper compared to other places," he said.⁶⁰

India and Southeast Asia

(January 18-24, 2016)

- **Curbs on travel on Myanmar border**

To tackle the movement of extremists along the porous Myanmar border, the government is mulling over to change the "free border movement" arrangement in existence in the bordering States of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur since Independence. This will lead to a radical shift in India's policy towards Myanmar, a friendly country, with which it shares unfenced borders and unhindered movement of people across the border. Based on a high-level committee report submitted by Joint Intelligence Committee chief R.N Ravi, the government is all set to change the "misnomer" related to "free border movement" and will try to replicate the model prevalent along the Bangladesh border. The report has suggested dedicated crossing points in border villages, where policemen would be in charge of regulating the movement of people. "The movement of people will not be curtailed, as they have strong social and cultural ties across the border, but instead it will be regulated. Every citizen would need to have an identity proof like a passport," said a senior official.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Tun, Soe and Mclaughlin, Timothy, "Myanmar Releases Political Prisoners Before Power Transfer", *Yahoo News*, January 22, 2016, at <http://news.yahoo.com/myanmar-release-political-prisoners-power-transfer-032627166.html>

⁶⁰ Rohit T.K., "Fiji to Set Up Consular Office in Chennai", *The Hindu*, January 18, 2016, at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/fiji-to-set-up-consular-office-in-chennai/article8120025.ece>

⁶¹ Singh, Vijaita, "Curbs on Travel on Myanmar Border", *The Hindu*, January 22, 2016, at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/curbs-on-travel-on-myanmar-border/article8136850.ece>

D. Russia

Russia

(January 18-24, 2016)

- **Russia to fortify western flank against NATO exercises; Russia's Justice Ministry defines political activity of 'foreign agents'; Russia says it is open for large scale joint projects in the Arctic; Lukoil plans reduction of oil output in 2016 due to low oil prices; Lukoil says most projects in the oil sector likely to be put on hold if oil prices go below US\$ 24 a barrel; Putin says Advanced Research Fund projects should lay the basis for Russia's armament system.**

Russian Ground forces commander Colonel-General Oleg Salyukov has said, on January 22, that the Russian military will reinforce its positions in western and central Russia this year in response to a planned intensification of NATO exercises in 2016. He stated 'in 2016, three divisions will be created in the western region, and one in the central region'.⁶²

Russia's Justice Ministry has prepared a bill specifying the definition of "political activity" that is mentioned in the country's law on "foreign agents." The document was published on the official website for new bills and draft laws on January 22. The bill 'proposes to establish that political activity can constitute participating in organizing and carrying out public events, such as rallies, protests, demonstrations, marches or pickets, ... by organizing and carrying out public discussions or speeches'. In addition, it defines political activity as publicly "appraising the government's decisions and policies" and appealing to the government. President Vladimir Putin had signed the so-called foreign agents law in 2012, requiring all NGOs that receive funding from abroad and engaged in political activity to declare that their materials were produced by a 'foreign agent'. The law has been broadly criticized for its loose definition of what constitutes "political activity."⁶³

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has said, on January 25, that Russia is ready for jointly implementing large-scale projects in the Arctic zone, including the development of oil and gas fields, use of the Northern Sea Route as the shortest cargo transit route between Europe and Asia, and the development of industrial, transport and tourist infrastructure. Mr. Lavrov stressed that Russia believes that "the economic development of the Arctic should be pursued in compliance with the highest environmental standards, and with due respect for the people living in that region and the traditional lifestyle of the indigenous peoples."⁶⁴

Lukoil's Vice-President Leonid Fedun has said that his company does not plan to keep its last year's record oil production level of 100 million tonnes in 2016. He stated 'amid high uncertainty it's at least unreasonable to chase records and increase supply on an oversupplied market'. According to Fedun, the strategy of flooding the market with cheap oil at any cost is incorrect as it could be sold for double what it costs within 6 months or one year. For doing this Russian

⁶² "Russia To Fortify Western Flank Against NATO Exercises", *The Moscow Times*, January 22, 2016 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russia-to-fortify-western-flank-against-nato-exercises/556534.html>

⁶³ "Russia's Justice Ministry Defines 'Political Activity' of 'Foreign Agents'", *The Moscow Times*, January 22, 2016 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russias-justice-ministry-defines-political-activity-of-foreign-agents/556536.html>

⁶⁴ "Lavrov: Moscow Open For Joint Large-Scale Projects In Russia's Arctic Zone", *Itar-Tass*, January 25, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/politics/851874>

companies have a degree of safety as they're not burdened with debts or any tough financial commitments.⁶⁵

Lukoil President Vagit Alekperov has said, on January 21, that many projects in the Russian oil sector may be put on hold in case oil price goes below US\$ 24 a barrel. He stated 'we are currently preparing a reduction of investment program by around US\$ 1.2-1.5 billion at US\$ 30 per barrel oil price. Refinery won't be cut. Production is likely to be reduced somewhere in the Siberian fields by 0.5-0.6 per cent depending on what investment programme we'll be able to stand'.⁶⁶

President Vladimir Putin has said that Russia's Advanced Research Fund projects should serve as the basis for the domestic armament system. He stated 'it is obvious that the fund's projects are intended to play a crucial role in the development of key new-generation weapons, military and special hardware. They should serve as the basis for the Russian armament system in 2025-2030'.⁶⁷

Russia: International

(January 18-24, 2016)

- **Putin and Qatari Emir hold discussions in Moscow; Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe calls for thaw in relations with Russia; Putin's spokesman calls Litvinenko inquiry a 'quasi-investigation'; Lukoil signs oil prospecting deal in Iran; Russian and Venezuelan Presidents discuss global oil market; Kremlin refutes media reports that Russia called upon Assad to resign; Russia hit Islamic State camp in Syria using opposition-provided data; Russian Army to hold first mountain drills with Pakistan in 2016; Ukraine to impose a fine of US\$ 3.4 billion on Gazprom; Hollande says France ready to cooperate with Russia against the Islamic State in Syria; Russia and Iran to start the construction of 2nd power unit of Bushehr nuclear plant by March 20; China supports Ukraine's proposal on Trans-Caspian route from China to Europe; Russia and China set up a US\$ 500 million investment fund; Russia seeks to turn CSTO into universal organization; Gazprom expects price of gas supplied to Europe at US\$ 184 per 1,000 cubic meters during the first quarter of 2016.**

Russian President Vladimir Putin and the Emir of Qatar Tamim Al Thani have met in Moscow on January 18. The two leaders agreed to intensify efforts to search for the settlement of the Syrian conflict. It was also agreed to ensure that the Syrian people can exercise their will while a split on religious grounds was considered inadmissible.⁶⁸ Meanwhile, Russia and Qatar have expressed their desire to achieve stability in the energy markets, for which they called for a dialogue between producers and consumers of hydrocarbons.⁶⁹

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has called for a thaw in relations with Russia, urging dialogue in order to resolve flaring violence in the Middle East. "We need the constructive

⁶⁵ "Lukoil Plans Reduction Of Oil Output In 2016 Due To Low Price", *Itar-Tass*, January 25, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/851850>

⁶⁶ "Lukoil: Most Projects In Oil Sector May Be Put On Hold Amid Crude Price Below \$24/Barrel", *Itar-Tass*, January 21, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/851246>

⁶⁷ "Putin: Advanced Research Fund Projects Should Lay Basis For Russia's Armament System", *Itar-Tass*, January 19, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/defense/850638>

⁶⁸ "Putin, Qatari Emir Agree To Intensify Efforts To Search For Syrian Conflict Settlement", *Itar-Tass*, January 19, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/politics/850463>

⁶⁹ "Moscow, Doha Unanimous In Desire To Achieve Stability In Energy Markets", *Itar-Tass*, January 25, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/politics/850448>

engagement of Russia," Abe said in an interview with the *Financial Times* newspaper published on January 18, pointing to the war in Syria, tense relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran and the threat posed by radical Islam. Japan this year chairs the Group of Seven advanced economies group and is set to host a G7 summit in May. Abe told the *Financial Times* that he was considering going to Moscow or inviting Russian President Vladimir Putin to Tokyo in his function as G7 chair.⁷⁰

"As chair of the G7, I need to seek solutions regarding the stability of the region as well as the whole world," he was cited as saying.

Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov has called the British inquiry into the murder of Alexander Litvinenko — a former Federal Security Service (FSB) agent poisoned in London in 2006 — a "quasi-investigation" and said it may "poison" bilateral relations between Russia and the U.K. Meanwhile, Russia's Foreign Ministry has deemed the inquiry "politically motivated".⁷¹

Russia's oil major Lukoil has signed a contract on two exploration projects in Iran's south-western oil-rich Khouzestan province. The project cost is estimated US\$ 6 million.⁷²

Russian and Venezuelan Presidents – Vladimir Putin and Nicolas Maduro – have telephonically discussed the evolving global oil market, and the bilateral political-trade-economic cooperation between the two countries. The conversation took place on January 22 and was initiated by Venezuela.⁷³

The Kremlin has refuted media reports that Moscow had called upon Syrian President Bashar Assad to resign. Earlier, *Financial Times* stated, citing unnamed sources in Western intelligence services, that Colonel-General Igor Sergun, director of Russia's GRU military intelligence service, went to Damascus and delivered a message from President Putin asking Assad to resign. According to *FT*, Assad refused.⁷⁴

Russia's Sukhoi-25 fighter-bomber has, on January 19, hit a field camp of the Islamic State in Syria's Homs province using data provided from the opposition forces. Defence Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov has said that Russia's air group is continuing interacting with patriotic opposition groups in Syria and fighting against terrorist groups such as Islamic State and Jabhat al-Nusra.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ "Japan's Abe: 'We Need Putin for Global Peace'", *The Moscow Times*, January 18, 2016 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/japans-abe-we-need-putin-for-global-peace/556169.html>

⁷¹ "Putin's Spokesman Calls Litvinenko Inquiry a 'Quasi-Investigation'", *The Moscow Times*, January 21, 2016 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/putins-spokesman-calls-litvinenko-inquiry-a-quasi-investigation/556492.html>

⁷² "Russia's Lukoil Signs Oil Prospecting Deal in Iran — Press TV", *Itar-Tass*, January 25, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/851826>

⁷³ "Putin, Maduro Discuss Situation On Global Oil Market, Bilateral Cooperation", *Itar-Tass*, January 22, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/politics/851652>

⁷⁴ "Kremlin Refutes Media Reports That Moscow Offered Assad To Resign", *Itar-Tass*, January 22, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/politics/851563>

⁷⁵ "Russian Attack Aircraft Hit Is Camp In Syria Using Opposition-Provided Data — Official", *Itar-Tass*, January 19, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/defense/850618>

Russian Army Commander-in-Chief Oleg Salyukov has said, on January 22, that Russian ground forces will hold seven international drills in 2016, including the first ever military exercises with Pakistan.⁷⁶

Ukraine's Antimonopoly Committee has decided to impose a fine of 85 billion hryvnia (approx. US\$ 3.4 billion) on Gazprom for breaching monopoly regulations for transit of gas and for violating a contract with Naftogaz of Ukraine. Earlier, Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseny Yatsenyuk had said that he planned to invite the European Union to jointly investigate the case of Gazprom's monopoly in the EU and Ukraine. He stated that the amount of fine can be up to 10 per cent of the total revenue obtained by Gazprom in Ukraine.⁷⁷

French President Francois Hollande has said, on January 21, that France is ready to cooperate with Russia in the fight against the Islamic State in Syria. He stated 'I would like us to strengthen cooperation and coordination with Russia to act against the IS, but only against the IS, because this is our enemy. I told Vladimir Putin we should exchange information and hit the terrorist organization into the heart without putting the moderate opposition in complicated conditions'.⁷⁸

The Head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization Ali Akbar Salehi has said, on January 21, that the construction of the second power unit at the Bushehr nuclear power plant (NPP) will start by March 20. He stated 'all steps necessary to start construction have already been made. The capacity of each new Bushehr power unit will stand at 1050 MW'. The second and third power units at the Bushehr NPP will be constructed together with Russia's Rosatom State Nuclear Energy Corporation in accordance with the contract signed in Moscow in November 2014. The project is worth US\$ 11 billion. Meanwhile, Salehi also stated that Iran will grant special privileges to Russia in peaceful nuclear energy cooperation. He said 'we will grant special privileges to our friends who supported us in difficult times, even considering the fact that many countries, from which are now receiving proposals (on the construction of new nuclear power plants), are at times offering even better financial conditions'.⁷⁹

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying has said, on January 25, that Beijing supports Ukraine's proposal of creating a Trans-Caspian transport corridor from China to Europe via Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan bypassing Russia, in addition to the existing transit routes. The spokesperson also noted the importance of existing railway freight routes from China to Europe "on the basis of the Trans-Siberian Railway and the new Eurasian trans-continental bridge" to develop the Silk Road economic belt. Earlier, Ukraine had announced a plan to develop an export route bypassing Russia. On January 14, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Georgia and Ukraine signed a protocol in Baku on establishing preferential tariffs for cargo carriages along the Trans-Caspian international transport route. By mid-February, the sides plan to agree a common tariff policy. On January 15, Ukraine launched the first experimental carriage along the Ukraine-Georgia-Azerbaijan-Kazakhstan-China route from the sea port of Ilyichevsk in the Odessa region.

⁷⁶ "Russian Army to Hold First Mountain Drills With Pakistan in 2016", *Itar-Tass*, January 22, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/defense/851484>

⁷⁷ "Kiev Decides To Fine Russia's Gazprom for \$3.4 bln", *Itar-Tass*, January 22, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/851473>

⁷⁸ "Hollande: France Ready To Cooperate with Russia against IS in Syria", *Itar-Tass*, January 21, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/world/851256>

⁷⁹ "Iran, Russia will Start Construction of Bushehr NPP 2nd Power Unit by March 20 — Official", *Itar-Tass*, January 21, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/851123>

According to Kiev's plans, the new route will run from the station of Izov on the border between Ukraine and Poland to the station of Dostyk on the Kazakhstan-China border and will include ferries across the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea and take no more than two weeks.⁸⁰

Russia's nanotechnology corporation Rusnano and China's Zhongrong have signed an agreement on January 19 on establishing a joint Russia-Chinese investment fund. At the first stage, the Rusnano Zhongrong United Investment Fund will have US\$ 500 million of capital under management while its partners will provide their equity investments in equal portions and establish a joint management company. Its focus will be on projects in the growth stage aimed at application, development, and transfer of high technologies, oil and gas industry and microelectronics and biotechnologies to Russia.⁸¹

Deputy Russian Security Council Secretary Yevgeny Lukyanov has said, on January 18, that Russia will take steps to transform the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) into a universal international organization capable of countering a broad range of modern challenges and threats.⁸²

Gazprom expects to supply gas to Europe at US\$ 184 per 1,000 cubic meters in the first quarter of 2016 as compared to US\$ 284 during the same period last year. As such, it plans to supply 160 billion cubic meters of gas to Europe in 2016.⁸³

India-Russia Relations

(January 18-24, 2016)

- **Russian Embassy in India condemns deportation of Russian Orthodox priest from Chennai; Russia steps up the import of Indian fruits; Indian and Russian negotiators agree on Fifth Generation Fighter Aircraft (FGFA) development.**

The Russian Embassy in India has, on January 18, condemned the deportation of Russian citizen Father Hegumen Seraphim by the migration service of Chennai International Airport on the ground of visa violation. The embassy stated 'the fact that Russian diplomats were denied the opportunity to make contact with the priest for seven hours is unacceptable'. The statement noted that "he had been denied basic assistance, including food, in spite of requests from the embassy and Russia's Consulate General in Chennai." "Such disrespect to a clergyman from a friendly country runs counter to the spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation typical of the Russian-Indian relations".⁸⁴

Russia has stepped up the import of kinnnows from the Abohar-Malout belt of south-west Punjab. This is seen as an attempt to make up the shortfall that has risen due to its sanctions on Turkey. At

⁸⁰ "Beijing Supports Kiev's Proposal On Trans-Caspian Route from China to Europe", *Itar-Tass*, January 21, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/851885>

⁸¹ "Russian Rusnano, Chinese Zhongrong Set up \$500 mln Investment Fund", *Itar-Tass*, January 21, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/850525>

⁸² "Russia Seeks To Turn Post-Soviet Military Bloc Into Universal Organization — Official", *Itar-Tass*, January 18, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/politics/850266>

⁸³ "Gazprom Expects Price Of Gas Supplies to Europe at \$184 per 1,000 Cubic Meters in Q1", *Itar-Tass*, January 20, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/850749>

⁸⁴ "Russian Embassy in India Condemns Deportation Of Russian Orthodox Priest from Chennai", *Itar-Tass*, January 23, 2016 at <http://tass.ru/en/politics/850472>

least '5.94 lakh kilograms' of kinnows in 22 containers from this pocket have already been shipped to St Petersburg and Novorossiysk ports.⁸⁵

Business Standard has reported that Indian and Russian negotiators have achieved a major breakthrough by agreeing to develop the Fifth generation Fighter Aircraft (FGFA) at a lowered cost of US\$ 4 billion (Rs 27,000 crore spread over seven years) in India. In the first year after signing, each side would pay \$1 billion (Rs 6,750 crore), and another \$500 million (Rs 3,380 crore) in each of the following six years. Sukhoi is already test-flying the FGFA's precursor, which Russia calls the PAK-FA (Perspektivny Aviatsionny Kompleks Frontovoy Aviatsii, or "Prospective Airborne Complex of Frontline Aviation"). The FGFA project involves improving the PAK-FA significantly to meet the IAF's specifications. The IAF wants some 50 improvements to the PAK-FA, including a 360-degree radar and more powerful engines. The proposal for a \$4 billion research and development contract (R&D contract) will now come before a defence ministry "cost negotiation committee", and then to the Defence Minister Shri Manohar Parrikar. The R&D contract visualises a prototype fighter flying in India within three years. In total, 11 prototypes will be built - eight for the Russian Air Force and three for India. Each country has already spent \$295 million (Rs 1483 crore) on a "preliminary design contract" (PDC). The PDC, which spelt out the fighter's detailed configuration, was completed in June 2013.⁸⁶

E. West Asia

Iran

(January 11-17, 2016)

- **Rouhani: Iran firm to implement nuclear deal if other side fulfils obligations; JCPOA goes into force; Rouhani says new chapter opens with the world.**

President Hassan Rouhani has reiterated that Iran is "serious" and "determined" to implement the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, commonly called nuclear deal, if the other side fulfils its commitments. During a meeting with former German chancellor Gerhard Schroder in Tehran, Rouhani said that it should be shown to the world that dialogue can lead to a "positive" result. He also said that Iran is ready to hold dialogue, consultation and cooperation with other countries in the fight against terrorism in the Mideast region and its consequences.⁸⁷

With the International Atomic Energy Agency confirming that Tehran has complied with the requirements of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the implementation day of the JCPOA formally started on January 16, 2016. Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini issued a joint statement declaring the implementation of the JCPOA.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ "Russia Opts For Punjab Kinnow", *The Tribune*, January 22, 2016 at <http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/russia-opts-for-punjab-kinnow/186536.html>

⁸⁶ "Indian, Russian Negotiators Agree on FGFA Development", *Business Standard*, January 25, 2016 at http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/indian-russian-negotiators-agree-on-fgfa-development-116012500035_1.html

⁸⁷ "Rouhani: Iran Firm To Implement Nuclear Deal If Other Side Fulfills Obligations", *Tehran Times*, January 13, 2016 at http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=252177. Accessed on February 13, 2016

⁸⁸ "JCPOA Goes into Force; Rouhani Says New Chapter Opens with the World", *Tehran Times*, January 17, 2016 at http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=252271. Accessed on February 13, 2016

Iraq and Syria

(January 11-17, 2016)

- **PMF foils ISIS attack in northern Salahuddin; Syria affirms commitment to cooperate with UN in delivering aid to civilians; Terrorist organizations steal humanitarian aid, use civilians as human shields- Al-Jaafari.**

Leader in al-Hashd al-Shaabi Jabbar al-Maamouri announced, that the security forces backed by al-Hashd al-Shaabi forces foiled a massive attack carried out by the ISIS organization in Tal Kasiba area in northern Salahuddin, while inflicted heavy losses on the organization. Maamouri said in a statement followed by *IraqiNews.com*, "The ISIS organization has carried out a massive attack on Tal Kasiba and Albu Ogail areas north of Salahuddin," pointing out that, "ISIS carried out the attack on the first defence lines using 17 vehicles carrying militants, in addition to three booby-trapped vehicles." He added, "The joint security forces backed by al-Hashd al-Shaabi and Shamr tribe fighters, in addition to the Iraqi Air Force managed to foil the attack and inflicted heavy losses on ISIS."⁸⁹

Acting Charge d' Affairs of the delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic in New York Munzer Munzer affirmed Syria's commitment to cooperate with the UN and the International Red Cross to deliver humanitarian aid to the civilians in all Syrian regions without any discrimination, including regions described by the UN as "besieged or difficult areas." "We sent two identical letters to the UN Secretary General and President of Security Council about the humanitarian and relief act assumed by the Syrian government," Munzer said at a Security Council session on "the state in the Middle East", SANA reported.⁹⁰

Syria's Permanent Representative to the UN Bashar al-Jaafari asserted that the terrorist organizations steal the humanitarian aid and use civilians as human shields in the areas under their control, SANA reported. "There is humanitarian crisis that doesn't reach the limit of starving people in some areas, and the terrorist organizations, that burgle the humanitarian aid convoys presented by the Syrian government in cooperation with the United Nations, are responsible for it," al-Jaafari said in an interview with al-Mayadeen TV.⁹¹

Israel and Palestine

(January 11-17, 2016)

- **PA Hails Swedish Calls to Probe Israeli Crimes; PM, security chiefs sketch out law enforcement plan for Arab towns.**

The Palestinian Authority (PA) on January 13 hailed the Swedish Foreign Minister's response to the large number of Palestinian deaths, calling her "humane and courageous". Israel has

⁸⁹ "PMF Foils ISIS Attack in Northern Salahuddin", *Iraqi News*, January 14, 2016 at <http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/pmf-foils-isis-attack-in-northern-salahuddin/>. Accessed on February 13, 2016

⁹⁰ "Syria Affirms Commitment To Cooperate With Un In Delivering Aid To Civilians", *Syria Times*, January 16, 2016 at <http://syriatimes.sy/index.php/news/local/21702-syria-affirms-commitment-to-cooperate-with-un-in-delivering-aid-to-civilians>. Accessed on 13 February 2016

⁹¹ "Terrorist organizations Steal Humanitarian Aid, Use Civilians As Human Shields- Al-Jaafari", *Syria Times*, January 12, 2016 at <http://syriatimes.sy/index.php/news/local/21654-terrorist-organizations-steal-humanitarian-aid-use-civilians-as-human-shields-al-jaafari>. Accessed on February 13, 2016

summoned the Swedish ambassador over Foreign Minister Margot Wallström's call for a probe into Tel Aviv's "extrajudicial executions" of Palestinians. *Anadolu Agency* said that it received a statement issued from the PA foreign ministry welcoming Wallström's comments. The PA ministry called for the adoption of an international stance similar to Sweden, away from "political fear". The PA also stressed that it is "eager to keep up with the peace process" with the Israelis.⁹²

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with the country's domestic security chiefs Sunday to discuss laying the groundwork for a programme to increase law enforcement in Arab communities in Israel. Netanyahu met with Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan, Israel Police chief Roni Alsheich, Shin Bet head Yoram Cohen and his bureau director Eli Gruner and sketched out the details of a "comprehensive program" to crack down on crime. The officials agreed on the need to establish additional police stations in Arab communities with continuous operations, increase oversight into illegal construction and collect illegal firearms, Israel Hayom reported. The parties agreed that the Prime Minister's Office would be responsible for pooling the resources and funds necessary for executing the plan.⁹³

The Gulf

(January 11-17, 2016)

- **Al Houthis release two Saudi religious teachers; Kuwait sentences two to death for links with Iran, Hezbollah.**

Two Saudi religious teachers have arrived home after their release from more than nine months' detention by Al Houthi militiaman in Yemen, official media reported. Abdul Rahman Al Sharari and Salem Al Gamdi landed in Riyadh from Djibouti, the *Saudi Press Agency* said. They were accompanied by the kingdom's ambassador to Yemen and UN envoy Esmail Ould Shaikh Ahmad who finished a five-day mission to the rebel-held Yemeni capital Sana'a, SPA said.⁹⁴

A court in Kuwait sentenced a Kuwaiti citizen and an Iranian national to death after they were found guilty of intelligence links with Iran and the Lebanese militia Hezbollah. The court described the first defendant as a traitor who masterminded the plot targeting Kuwait, used weapons and recruited 14 other traitors. The court also sentenced one defendant to life in jail, 15 others to 15 years and one to five years, Kuwaiti news site Al Aan reported. One suspect was fined KD 5,000 and four others were acquitted.⁹⁵

⁹² "PA Hails Swedish Calls to Probe Israeli Crimes", *Palestinian Chronicles*, January 14, 2016 at <http://www.palestinechronicle.com/pa-hails-swedish-calls-to-probe-israeli-crimes/>. Accessed on February 13, 2016

⁹³ "PM, Security Chiefs Sketch out Law Enforcement Plan for Arab Towns", *Times of Israel*, January 11, 2016 at <http://www.timesofisrael.com/pm-security-chiefs-sketch-out-law-enforcement-plan-in-arab-towns/>. Accessed on February 14, 2016

⁹⁴ "Al Houthis Release Two Saudi Religious Teachers", *Gulf News*, January 15, 2016 at <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/saudi-arabia/al-houthis-release-two-saudi-religious-teachers-1.1654177>. Accessed on February 14, 2016

⁹⁵ "Kuwait Sentences Two To Death For Links with Iran, Hezbollah", *Gulf News*, January 12, 2016 at <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/kuwait/kuwait-sentences-two-to-death-for-links-with-iran-hezbollah-1.1652322>. Accessed on February 14, 2016

India and West Asia

(January 11-17, 2016)

- **Syria ready to cooperate with India in counter terrorism**

Deputy Premier, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Walid al-Moallem and the Indian National Security Advisor Ajit Doval discussed the political situation in the Middle East, anti-terror efforts, ways to attain political solution in Syria and methods of enhancing bilateral ties between Syria and India. During the meeting, al-Moallem stressed Syria's readiness to cooperate with the Indian side in combating terrorism to serve the interests of the two countries and to preserve international peace and security which are being exposed to the growing danger of takfiri terrorism.⁹⁶

F. United State of America

National

(January 18-24, 2016)

- **Military and the people need to understand the profound impacts of technologies; U.S. Cyber Command's strategic priorities for 2016 include continued defence of DoD networks and systems; Carter provides the department's condolences to families of 12 Marines who've gone missing; U.S. begins implementation of changes to the visa waiver programme; Global security environment calls for a continued strong nuclear deterrent: Stratcom; U.S. seeks to strengthen the international response to the global refugee crisis.**

The vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Paul J. Selva, said at the Brookings Institution on January 21 that the military, the people of the United States and the people of the world need to understand the profound impacts of technologies on the horizon today. Air Force Gen. Selva told a packed room that the world will be facing the "Terminator Conundrum" sooner rather than later, and that now is the time to discuss the affects new technologies will have on the nation and on warfare.⁹⁷

The Cybercom commander and National Security Agency chief, Mike Rogers, at the Atlantic Council, on January 21 said that U.S. Cyber Command's strategic priorities for 2016 include continued defence of DoD networks and systems, applying Cyber Mission Force capabilities more broadly and expanding international partnerships. Cyber and its challenges are not just relevant to the U.S. military or the United States, Rogers said in his opening remarks. "It's a challenge we're all going to have to deal with, and it's getting harder -- not easier."⁹⁸

⁹⁶ "Al-Moallem: Syria Ready to Cooperate with India in Counter Terrorism", *Syria Times*, January 12, 2016 at <http://syriatimes.sy/index.php/news/local/21649-al-moallem-syria-ready-to-cooperate-with-india-in-counter-terrorism>. Accessed on February 13, 2016.

⁹⁷ Garamone, Jim, "Vice Chairman: Military, Nation Need Dialogue About New Technologies", *DoD News*, January 21, 2016 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/643978/vice-chairman-military-nation-need-dialogue-about-new-technologies>

⁹⁸ Pellerin, Cheryl, "Cybercom Chief Details Strategic Priorities for 2016", *DoD News*, January 21, 2016 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/643954/cybercom-chief-details-strategic-priorities-for-2016>

Defence Secretary Ash Carter provided the department's condolences to the loved ones and families of 12 Marines who've gone missing since two Marine Corps CH-53E Super Stallion helicopters, each with six crew members aboard, are presumed to have crashed off Hawaii's Oahu Island January 14. The U.S. Coast Guard suspended the search for the missing Marines January 19. Carter said, "Our hearts go out to the loved ones and family members of 12 Marines missing since an apparent helicopter collision off the coast of Hawaii last week". Carter said he also wanted to extend his gratitude to the Air Force, Coast Guard, Navy, and Marine personnel "who have been absolutely unwavering in their efforts to locate and rescue their colleagues."⁹⁹

On January 21, the United States began implementing changes under the *Visa Waiver Programme Improvement and Terrorist Travel Prevention Act of 2015* (the Act). U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) welcomes more than a million passengers arriving to the United States every day and is committed to facilitating legitimate travel while maintaining the highest standards of security and border protection. Under the Act, travellers in the following categories are no longer eligible to travel or be admitted to the United States under the Visa Waiver Programme (VWP):

- Nationals of VWP countries who have travelled to or been present in Iran, Iraq, Sudan, or Syria on or after March 1, 2011 (with limited exceptions for travel for diplomatic or military purposes in the service of a VWP country).
- Nationals of VWP countries who are also nationals of Iran, Iraq, Sudan, or Syria.

These individuals will still be able to apply for a visa using the regular immigration process at US embassies or consulates.¹⁰⁰

The Stratcom commander, Cecil D. Haney said the global security environment calls for a continued strong nuclear deterrent along with modernization for elements of the nuclear triad and advanced training for U.S. Strategic Command's workforce. On January 22, Navy Adm. Haney addressed an audience at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, discussing strategic deterrent forces as a foundation for national security. Haney said today's security environment is complex, dynamic and volatile, compounded by asymmetric methods, proliferation of advanced technologies, and provocative and destabilizing behaviour by current and potential adversaries. At the same time, he said, while the United States is engaged in a campaign against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant and other violent extremists, the behaviour on an international stage by Russia, China, North Korea and Iran warrants U.S. attention.¹⁰¹

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry announced in Davos, Switzerland, on January 22 that "the United States is seeking significant new international commitments to strengthen the international response to the global refugee crisis". Kerry said that "this effort responds to the growing numbers and needs of refugee populations around the world, and reflects our sense of urgency about expanding the humanitarian safety net and creating more long-term, durable opportunities for refugees." He said, "The United States will work with partners to advance the initiative over

⁹⁹ "Carter Expresses Condolences for 12 Missing Marines", *US PACOM*, January 21, 2016 at <http://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/tabid/5693/Article/643996/carter-expresses-condolences-for-12-missing-marines.aspx>

¹⁰⁰ "United States Begins Implementation of Changes to the Visa Waiver Programme", *US Department of State*, Washington, DC, January 21, 2016 at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/01/251577.htm>

¹⁰¹ Pellerin, Cheryl, "Stratcom Chief Talks Nuclear Deterrence, Modernization", *DoD News*, January 22, 2016 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/644215/stratcom-chief-talks-nuclear-deterrence-modernization>

the coming months, culminating in a high-level event to be hosted by President Obama on the margins of the 71st session of the UN General Assembly."¹⁰²

International: Asia

(January 18-24, 2016)

- **NATO allies to continue the alliance's commitment to Afghanistan: Dunford; Carter meets with Ghani on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum; U.S. discusses the political crisis in Nepal; U.S. to make recommendations to position troops with Iraqi security forces; Coalition military forces continue to attack ISIL terrorists; Effort to isolate the Syrian city of Raqqa in the fight against ISIL producing success; Deputy Secretary Blinken travels to Naypyitaw to meet with leaders; Sixth U.S.-Uzbekistan annual bilateral consultations; Kerry meets with Lavrov to discuss Syria, Ukraine, and other issues of mutual concern; Malaysia is an important country with a shared history: Brooks; Blinken travels to Beijing; Carter says China as a rising power is a major factor in Asia and the South China Sea; Virginia-class attack submarine USS Texas (SSN 773) arrives as part of its Indo-Asia-Pacific deployment; Guam Exercise (GUAMEX) between the U.S. and Japan; U.S., Australian, Japanese, Air Forces unite for annual Guam Exercise.**

Speaking to reporters in Paris on January 22 about the NATO chiefs of defence meeting he attended yesterday in Brussels, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joseph F. Dunford Jr. said NATO allies are in full agreement to continue the alliance's commitment to Afghanistan. Dunford said the 2015 fighting season in Afghanistan could be characterized as a "draw." But he noted the Afghan forces were operating last year with just a fraction of international troops, compared to previous years. Dunford added that he does not want 2016 to be a draw for the Afghan forces. He added, there is still work to be done and Afghanistan needs the support from the alliance.¹⁰³

Defence Secretary Ash Carter met with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on the side-lines of the World Economic Forum annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland on January 22. In a statement summarizing the meeting, Pentagon Press Secretary Peter Cook said Carter and Ghani discussed the ongoing mission to train, advise and assist the Afghan forces as they confront the Taliban, secure their country and work closely with the United States to prevent terrorist groups from using Afghanistan as a safe haven.¹⁰⁴

Deputy Secretary Blinken spoke with Nepali Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli via phone on January 22 to discuss the political crisis in Nepal. The Deputy Secretary urged Prime Minister Oli to represent the interests of all Nepalis and take concrete steps to resolve the political impasse, emphasizing the importance of all sides working toward a compromise and not taking unilateral steps. Deputy Secretary Blinken called for Nepali authorities to exercise restraint in responding to protests. The Deputy Secretary told Prime Minister Oli the United States stands ready to further

¹⁰² "Strengthening the International Response to the Global Refugee Crisis", Fact Sheet, *US Department of State*, Washington, DC, January 22, 2016 at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/01/251642.htm>

¹⁰³ Ferdinando, Lisa, "Afghanistan Mission Has Universal NATO Support, Dunford Says", *DoD News*, January 22, 2016 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/644251/afghanistan-mission-has-universal-nato-support-dunford-says>

¹⁰⁴ "Carter, Afghan President Meet on Sidelines of Economic Forum", *DoD News*, January 22, 2016 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/644254/carter-afghan-president-meet-on-sidelines-of-economic-forum>

partner with Nepal to ensure earthquake reconstruction efforts are efficient, transparent, and inclusive.¹⁰⁵

The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joseph F. Dunford Jr., said that the United States potentially will make recommendations to position U.S. troops with Iraqi security forces in northern Iraq to support the next phase of isolating the key city of Mosul.¹⁰⁶ On January 22, Defence Secretary Carter at the World Economic Forum in Davos said that defeating the extremist ISIL at its core in Syria and Iraq and globally is critical among his many global defence concerns.¹⁰⁷ Meanwhile, U.S. and coalition military forces have continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria and Iraq.¹⁰⁸

On January 21, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Dunford said that the effort to isolate the Syrian city of Raqqa in the fight against ISIL is producing some success. Ahead of the NATO military chiefs of staff meeting, he said, isolating Raqqa, ISIL's stronghold and administrative capital, entails finding moderate Syrian opposition forces, supporting them with ammunition, and having them take action on the ground to cut access.¹⁰⁹

Deputy Secretary Blinken travelled to Naypyitaw on January 18 to meet with leaders of the current and incoming governments in the wake of the country's historic national elections at the end of last year. The Deputy Secretary was joined by Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labour Tom Malinowski. In meetings with President Thein Sein, Foreign Minister Wunna Maung Lwin, and Deputy Commander in Chief General Soe Win, the Deputy Secretary commended the government on its conduct of last year's peaceful elections, and called upon its leaders to seize this moment of great opportunity and work together with Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy to ensure a peaceful transition to a new government and the further strengthening of civilian authority in the country.¹¹⁰

On January 19, Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Nisha Desai Biswal welcomed an Uzbek Government delegation led by Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Kamilov to Washington for the sixth U.S.-Uzbekistan Annual Bilateral Consultations. As part of the consultations, the delegation met with Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources Heather Higginbottom and other senior U.S. officials to discuss political developments, regional

¹⁰⁵ "Readout of Deputy Secretary Blinken's Call with Nepali Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli", *US Department of State*, Washington, DC, January 22, 2016 at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/01/251665.htm>

¹⁰⁶ Ferdinando, Lisa, "Dunford: Recommendations Forthcoming on U.S. Troop Presence in Northern Iraq", *DoD News*, January 24, 2016 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/644278/dunford-recommendations-forthcoming-on-us-troop-presence-in-northern-iraq>

¹⁰⁷ Cronk, Terri Moon, "Carter Lists ISIL's Defeat Among Critical Global Concerns", *DoD News*, January 22, 2016 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/644248/carter-lists-isils-defeat-among-critical-global-concerns>

¹⁰⁸ "Operation Inherent Resolve Strikes Continue in Syria, Iraq", *DoD News*, January 24, 2016 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/644277/operation-inherent-resolve-strikes-continue-in-syria-iraq>

¹⁰⁹ Ferdinando, Lisa, "Effort to Isolate Key Syrian City Showing Success, Dunford Says", *DoD News*, January 21, 2016 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/643967/effort-to-isolate-key-syrian-city-showing-success-dunford-says>

¹¹⁰ "Readout of Deputy Secretary Blinken's Trip to Burma", *US Department of State*, Washington, DC, January 19, 2016 at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/01/251348.htm>

stability and security, human rights and labour, education and cultural exchanges, and economic development and trade, and other issues of mutual interest.¹¹¹

On January 20, Secretary Kerry met in Zurich with Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov to discuss Syria, Ukraine, and other issues of mutual concern. The Secretary and Foreign Minister discussed plans for the UN-led negotiations between the Syrian parties on January 25 and the importance of maintaining progress toward a diplomatic solution to the crisis in Syria. Secretary Kerry pressed for Russia to use its influence with the Asad regime to ensure immediate, unimpeded and sustained humanitarian access to all Syrians in need, especially those in besieged areas such as Madaya, in compliance with UNSCR 2254 and as agreed by the ISSG in New York in December. On Ukraine, they discussed how to accelerate the full implementation of Minsk commitments, including the urgent need to restore the ceasefire and allow full OSCE access. Finally, they discussed the importance of a strong and united international response to North Korea's nuclear test in defiance of Security Council resolutions.¹¹²

The Malaysian army welcomed Gen. Vincent K. Brooks January 18, 2016, for his fourth visit since taking command of U.S. Army Pacific in July 2013. Lauding Malaysia's contributions to security in South East Asia, Brooks said, "Malaysia is holding a strong line in countering extremist ideologies in the region." "Malaysia is an important country with a shared history. It's geographically important. This is a great opportunity for professional exchange and building the next generation of leaders," Brooks said, speaking to Malaysian press before delivering remarks and answering questions at the Malaysian Armed Forces Defence College. He said, "We continue to build on an already strong relationship between the Malaysian army and the U.S. Army". The assembled students at the college, including senior military officers from all branches of the Malaysian armed forces, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Nigeria, Brunei, Singapore, Philippines, and the U.S., had just begun a yearlong course.¹¹³

Deputy Secretary Blinken travelled to Beijing on January 21 for meetings with Chinese officials, including for the second round of the Interim Strategic Security Dialogue (ISSD). The dialogue, co-chaired by Deputy Secretary Blinken and Chinese Executive Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Yesui, was characterized by frank, constructive discussions on topics of mutual interest, including the response to North Korea's recent nuclear test and maritime issues. The dialogue is designed to enhance mutual understanding of strategic security issues and reiterate the importance of continued in-depth, sustained, and open communication, to further develop a stable and cooperative strategic security relationship between China and the United States. Separately, the Deputy Secretary met with Taiwan Affairs Office Minister Zhang Zhijun to discuss cross-strait relations. The Deputy Secretary reiterated the United States' abiding interest in continued cross-strait peace and stability.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ "U.S.-Uzbekistan Annual Bilateral Consultations", *US Department of State*, Washington, DC, January 20, 2016 at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/01/251531.htm>

¹¹² "Secretary Kerry's Meeting With Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov", *US Department of State*, Washington, DC, January 20, 2016 at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/01/251522.htm>

¹¹³ "Army Pacific's Brooks Continues Goodwill Tour in Malaysia", By U.S. Army Pacific Public Affairs Office, *US PACOM*, January 21, 2016 at <http://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/tabid/5693/Article/643995/army-pacifics-brooks-continues-goodwill-tour-in-malaysia.aspx>

¹¹⁴ "Deputy Secretary Blinken's Trip to China", *US Department of State*, Washington, DC, January 21, 2016 at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/01/251551.htm>; "Deputy Secretary Blinken's Trip to China", By Office

Defence Secretary Ash Carter at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, on January 22 said China as a rising power is a major factor in Asia and the South China Sea (SCS) that's welcomed by the United States in almost every way. While Carter said he does not believe conflict between the United States and China is inevitable, he added, "It's certainly not desirable. I don't think it's likely."¹¹⁵

Virginia-class attack submarine USS Texas (SSN 773) arrived at Fleet Activities Sasebo January 20 for a visit as part of its Indo-Asia-Pacific deployment. The visit strengthens the already positive alliance between the U.S. and Japan through the crews' interaction with the Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force. It also demonstrates the U.S. Navy's commitment to regional stability and maritime security in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations.¹¹⁶

Guam Exercise (GUAMEX), an annual bilateral training exercise between the U.S. Navy and Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF), began January 20 off the coast of Guam. Exercises like GUAMEX provide a training environment for enhancing mutual understanding of each country's tactics, communication protocols, procedures and general cooperation. Bilateral operations strengthen U.S.-Japan interoperability and defence capabilities.¹¹⁷

U.S. Air Force, Japan Air Self-Defence Force, and Royal Australian Air Force service members will conduct two media flights and host a media day at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, from February 10 to February 26 as part of Cope North 2016. The 87th annual CN 16 exercise is a long-standing multilateral engagement designed to enhance air operations and interoperability between participating militaries.¹¹⁸

India-US Relations

(January 18-24, 2016)

- **Relationship between India and the US will continue to remain high priority; Lockheed Martin planning to revive its pending bid to sell Javelin missiles; U.S. is committed to supply eight F-16 fighter jets to Pakistan despite India's efforts to block.**

Richard Verma, US ambassador to India, in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, on January 22 said that regardless of who wins the 2016 American presidential election, relationship between India and the USA will continue to remain high priority. Ambassador Verma said, "There is not only bipartisan support for the Indo-US relationship, it is now a non-partisan issue. I am confident that regardless of who wins the 2016 presidential election, Indo-US relationship will continue to be

of the Spokesperson, US PACOM, January 21, 2016 at <http://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/tabid/5693/Article/643993/deputy-secretary-blinkens-trip-to-china.aspx>

¹¹⁵ Cronk, Terri Moon, "Carter: U.S. Welcomes Rise in Power of Asia-Pacific Nations", *DoD News*, January 23, 2016 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/644261/carter-us-welcomes-rise-in-power-of-asia-pacific-nations>

¹¹⁶ "Texas Visits Sasebo during Indo-Asia-Pacific Deployment", By Lt. j.g. Eric Wootten, *US PACAOM*, January 20, 2016 at <http://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/tabid/5693/Article/643788/texas-visits-sasebo-during-indo-asia-pacific-deployment.aspx>

¹¹⁷ "US and Japanese Ships Start Tactical Exercise Near Guam", By Lt. Courtney Keiser, Commander, *US PACOM*, January 20, 2016 at <http://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/tabid/5693/Article/643784/us-and-japanese-ships-start-tactical-exercise-near-guam.aspx>

¹¹⁸ "U.S., Australian, Japanese, Air Forces Unite for Annual Guam Exercise", By Headquarters Pacific Air Forces, *US PACOM*, January 22, 2016 at <http://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/tabid/5693/Article/644184/us-australian-japanese-air-forces-unite-for-annual-guam-exercise.aspx>

high priority". Commenting on the bilateral relation and trade, he said: "It is not about having US companies coming to India, it has to be two-way trade which is more sustainable. Right now it is about 2 per cent of US export coming to India and 2 per cent of India's export to USA. That is not good enough given the size of two economies." On issue of growing concerns in India about US increasing fees for H-1B and L-1 visas, Mr. Verma said: "It was Congressional decision on 9/11 victim fund provisioning, not directed towards any country."¹¹⁹

US defence major Lockheed Martin is planning to revive its pending bid to sell Javelin missiles under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Make in India' campaign. The plan to buy Javelin missiles from Lockheed Martin were shelved a couple of years ago. However, the proposal got a fresh lease of life when Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar visited the US last month where US Defence Secretary Ashton Carter pushed for the deal, sources told *BusinessLine*. Sources said Lockheed Martin is even ready to co-produce these shoulder-fired anti-tank guided Javelin missiles in India, albeit at a later stage. For this, the US government is also planning to put the deal under US-India Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) to expedite the process, sources said. But to revive the deal, the US government will have to grant its permission to Lockheed Martin once it gets a request for buying these missiles from the Ministry of Defence (MoD).¹²⁰

Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said on January 19 that the US was committed to supply eight F-16 fighter jets to Pakistan despite India's efforts to block its delivery. Asif's statement comes days after reports said that the Republican-controlled US Congress has stalled sale of F-16 jets to Islamabad, amid growing anti-Pakistan sentiments on Capitol Hill over its reluctance in taking action against terrorist groups. Pakistani lawmakers in the National Assembly during a debate assailed US Congress for stalling the sale of the jet, prompting the minister to intervene.¹²¹

II. DEFENCE REVIEWS

National

(January 18-24, 2016)

- **Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena visits INS Vikramaditya which is on its first foreign port visit in Colombo; Two Royal Oman Navy ships arrive in India to participate in the 10th bilateral exercise NASEEM AL BAHR.**

The Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena visited INS Vikramaditya which is on its first foreign port visit to Colombo on January 23, 2016. It was not only the first visit of the President of Sri Lanka to a foreign warship after assuming office in January 2015, but also the first Head of

¹¹⁹ "Indo-U.S. Relations High Priority Regardless Of Poll Results: Envoy", *The Hindu*, January 22, 2016 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/indous-relations-high-priority-regardless-of-poll-results-envoy/article8142107.ece>; "India to Remain Priority for US, no Matter Who Rules: US Ambassador", *The Economic Times*, January 22, 2016, at http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2016-01-22/news/69989599_1_richard-rahul-verma-india-caucus-us-india

¹²⁰ "Lockheed Martin Looks At Reviving Bid To Sell Javelin Missiles to India", *The Hindu BusinessLine*, January 19, 2016 at <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/lockheed-martin-looks-at-reviving-bid-to-sell-javelin-missiles-to-india/article8124381.ece>

¹²¹ "Despite Indian Hurdles, US Committed To Providing 8 F-16s: Pakistan", *The Indian Express*, January 19, 2016 at <http://indianexpress.com/article/world/world-news/despite-indian-hurdles-us-committed-to-providing-8-f-16s-pakistan/>

State visit to the Indian Navy's biggest warship and aircraft carrier, INS Vikramaditya. This visit of the President of Sri Lanka, who is not only the Commander-in-Chief of the Sri Lanka defence forces, but is also the current Defence Minister of Sri Lanka - to INS Vikramaditya is reflection of the strong bonds the two nations and navies have fostered between them over the years.¹²²

Two Royal Oman Navy ships RNOV Al-Shamikh, a Corvette and RNOV Al-Seeb, a Fast Attack Craft have arrived in India on their way to participate in the International Fleet Review (IFR) scheduled at Visakhapatnam from February 4 to February 9, 2016. Prior to their participation in the IFR 2016, the Indian Navy and the Royal Navy of Oman will conduct a bilateral maritime exercise NASEEM AL BAHR in the Arabian Sea from January 22 to January 27, 2016. NASEEM AL BAHR epitomises the strong long term strategic relationship between the two countries. The exercise was inaugurated in 1993 and has matured over the years with increasing scope, complexity of operations and level of participation. The current exercise will be the tenth such exercise. The primary aim of this exercise is to increase interoperability amongst the two navies and develop common understanding and procedures for maritime security operations. The scope of NASEEM AL BAHR 16 includes wide-ranging professional interactions during the Harbour Phase and a diverse canvas of operational activities at sea across the spectrum of maritime operations. During the exercise, the Indian Navy will be represented by INS Trikand and INS Trishul. In addition, Fast Attack Craft, Maritime Patrol Aircraft and integral helicopters are scheduled to participate in the bilateral exercise. The Omani Navy will be represented by RNOV Al-Shamikh, a Corvette and RNOV Al-Seeb, a Fast Attack Craft. The exercise will be progressed in two phases, i.e., the Harbour Phase (January 22 to January 24, 2016) at Goa and the Sea Phase (January 24 to 27, 2016) off Goa.¹²³

International

(January 18-24, 2016)

- **Pakistani defence minister says deal with the United States for the sale of eight new F-16 fighters had been delayed due to Indian pressures; US State Department approves the sale of over 16,000 bombs and missiles for Iraq's Lockheed Martin F-16 multirole fighters.**

Reports say that the Pakistani defence minister Khawaja Asif has informed the Pakistan's lower house of parliament, the national assembly that a deal with the United States for the sale of eight new F-16 fighters had been delayed due to Indian pressures as well as Pakistan's former ambassador to the US, Hussain Haqqani, lobbying against it. The agreement, which was finalised in October 2015, was being held up due to opposition from some members of the US Congress. However, the minister said that despite delay as of today the US government was committed to supplying the F-16s. He added that the delivery of the fighters could take place in another two years.¹²⁴

Meanwhile, according to reports, The US State Department has approved the sale of over 16,000 bombs and missiles for Iraq's Lockheed Martin F-16 multirole fighters. The Defence Security

¹²² "Sri Lankan President Visits INS Vikramaditya at Colombo," *PIB*, January 23, 2016, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=135739>

¹²³ "Ships of Royal Oman Navy Arrive For Bilateral Maritime Exercise 'NASEEM AL BAHR,'" *PIB*, January 22, 2016, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=135706>

¹²⁴ "Delay to F-16s Down To 'Indian Lobby', Says Pakistani Defence Minister," *IHS Jane's*, January 21, 2016, at <http://www.janes.com/article/57400/delay-to-f-16s-down-to-indian-lobby-says-pakistani-defence-minister>

Cooperation Agency (DSCA) package also includes 150 AGM-65 Maverick air-to-ground missiles, 24 AIM-9M Sidewinder air-to-air missiles, and a single 20 mm M61 Vulcan cannon, one of which is carried internally by each F-16. The DSCA estimated the package to be worth USD1.95 billion, with major defence equipment accounting for USD550 million. The deal includes associated spares, training, and support services. Iraq had ordered 36 F-16s in two tranches and received its first four in July 2015.¹²⁵

III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEWS

Jammu & Kashmir

(January 18-24, 2016)

- **Lashkar militant killed in Pulwama encounter; HuM module busted in J&K: Police; Army troopers recover IEDs from militant hideout in J&K.**

In an overnight encounter in Pulwama district of J&K, a Lashkar-e-Taiba militant was gunned down by security forces following which some locals indulged in violent protests that resulted in the killing of a youth in police firing on January 20. LeT militant Shariq Ahmad Bhat, a resident of Awantipora, was killed in encounter with security forces in Naina Batapora village, an army official said. One AK assault rifle and some ammunition have been recovered from the scene of the gun battle, the official added.¹²⁶

Security forces in J&K have arrested five Harkat-ul-Mujahideen militants, who had planned to carry out IED blasts and firing at busy markets of Baramulla, police said on January 23. "Acting on intelligence input, a joint operation was conducted by Police and 52 Rashtriya Rifles of the Army in Sangrama area of Baramulla district, during which, two militants -- Ishfaq Ahmad Sofi alias Umer and Aijaz Ahmad Gojri alias Chota Kalimullah -- were arrested on January 22," a police spokesman said in Srinagar. A Chinese pistol, one pistol magazine, two hand grenades and other ammunition were recovered from their possession. Further investigation led to the arrest of their three more associates, he said, adding the militants were identified as Danish Gaffer Gojri alias Kalimullah, Javaid Ahmad Dar and Mohammad Sameer Kandoo alias Sameer Baba. "It came out that Danish Gojri and Javaid Ahmad Dar joined the terrorist outfit in September 2015 after they got motivated by local terrorist Ishfaq Ahmad Sofi who was handled by Sajad Shaheen alias Sajad Afgani, a resident of Pakistan to rejuvenate the HuM terrorist outfit in the valley," the spokesman added. He said both of them were in close touch with Sajad Afgani through social media.¹²⁷

The troopers of 12 Maratha Regiment of the Army, on January 22, unearthed a militant hideout near the Line of Control in Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir and recovered five IEDs

¹²⁵ "US Clears More Weapons For Iraqi F-16s," *IHS Jane's*, January 20, 2016, at <http://www.janes.com/article/57365/us-clears-more-weapons-for-iraqi-f-16s>

¹²⁶ "Lashkar Militant Killed In Encounter; Youth Dies In Subsequent Protest By Locals", *The Times of India*, January 20, 2016 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Lashkar-militant-killed-in-encounter-youth-dies-in-subsequent-protest-by-locals/articleshow/50657924.cms>

¹²⁷ "Harkatul Mujahideen Module Busted in Baramulla", *Business Standard*, January 23, 2016 at http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/harkatul-mujahideen-module-busted-in-baramulla-116012300921_1.html

(weighing 500 gm each), 35 metres of electric wire and three detonators, a police official said on January 23.¹²⁸

Northeast India

(January 18-24, 2016)

- **Huge cache of ammunition seized in Imphal East; Bodo groups urge PM to solve Bodoland issues; Armed NSCN-IM area commander arrested in Arunachal Pradesh.**

A combined team of police and Assam Rifles recovered a huge cache of ammunition from a forest at Sagolmang Pukhao area in Manipur's Imphal East district on January 16. Police said 300 rounds of M-16 rifle, 44 rounds of AK-47 rifle, two detonators and two local-made magazines were found wrapped in a big polythene bag. It was yet to be ascertained which group or militant outfit kept the ammunition there and for what purpose.¹²⁹

Three Bodo organisations in Assam have called upon the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, to come up with a clear-cut decision on the creation of Bodoland and other related issues during his visit to Kokrajhar on January 19. Leaders of All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU), Peoples' Joint Action Committee for Bodoland Movement (PJACBM) and NDFB (Progressive) said that Modi's announcement of economic package for the BTC is nothing but a sop to Bodo voters in the BTAD. In a press conference at Bodo House in Bongaigaon, the leaders of the organisations said that they backed the BJP in last Lok Sabha polls believing its commitment on Bodo issues, but as days passed on, the Union Government headed by Modi had lost the interest on addressing the issues.¹³⁰

In a major breakthrough, security forces on January 19 arrested a dreaded area commander of NSCN (IM) - the self-styled lieutenant Tenyang Kungkho alias Saka Tutusa from Ngoitong village under Namtok circle of Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh. A China made 9 mm loaded pistol, 12 bore barrel gun, six cartridges and other incriminating articles like village tax collection slips were recovered from his possession. Saka Tutusa has been involved in extensive extortion and was arrested from his residence.¹³¹

Left-wing Extremism

(January 18-24, 2016)

- **Naxal commander killed in Chhattisgarh encounter; Police; Maoist commander, RPC member arrested in Telangana; 37 on Naxal hit list in Maharashtra; One Naxal held after encounter with cops in Warangal, Telangana.**

¹²⁸ "IEDs Recovered From Militant Hideout in J&K", *The Times of India*, January 23, 2016 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/srinagar/IEDs-recovered-from-militant-hideout-in-JK/articleshow/50694933.cms>

¹²⁹ "Ammunition Seized in Manipur", *The Assam Tribune*, January 18, 2016 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan1816/oth052>

¹³⁰ "Bodo Groups Urge PM to Solve Bodoland Issues", *The Assam Tribune*, January 19, 2016 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan1916/state050>

¹³¹ "NSCN-IM Area Commander Nabbed", *The Assam Tribune*, January 21, 2016 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan2116/oth054>

A Naxal commander carrying a reward of Rs one lakh on his head was killed in an encounter with police in Chhattisgarh's insurgency-hit Sukma district on January 18, police said. The body of 'black uniform-clad' Naxalite, identified as Kartam Deva, was recovered from the encounter site that took place in the forest near Burumapad village, Sukma District Superintendent of Police D Shraavan told *PTI* over phone. Four loaded guns, detonator and other material were recovered from the spot.¹³²

A Maoist 'commander' Kanithi Paparao alias Vijay, involved in almost 60 criminal cases and carrying a bounty of Rs four lakh on his head, and a member of Revolutionary People's Committee were arrested from a forest area in Khamam district of Telangana, police said on January 18. Area Committee Member (ACM) of the Naxals, Kanithi Paparao, was arrested on January 18 while RPC member Nupa Lakka was nabbed on January 18 from Venkatapuram mandal in Bhadrachalam sub-division of the district, Bhadrachalam Assistant Superintendent of Police R Bhaskaran told *PTI*. Bhaskaran said Lakka cannot be called a Maoist as he is an "organisational fellow".¹³³

Contrary to the Maharashtra government's recent claim that left-wing extremism is on the wane, the State faces a renewed red cadre that has vowed to eliminate 37 senior police officers and informants in 2016. The latest hit list has been issued by Naxals in response to the State's lucrative surrender policy, which, the government claims, has taken off in a big way resulting in a substantial drop in violence. But the latest data show that this claim could be exaggerated. Intelligence inputs have revealed that to execute the hit list, the extremists have brought in several units of 'Company-10' from Chhattisgarh, each with a cadre strength of 30 men trained in killing with precision. "This [the latest hit list] is a matter of serious concern for the State, even as inputs show new strategies are being adopted to attract youth with fresh vigour," an intelligence note in possession of *The Hindu* reads.¹³⁴

An exchange of fire took place between the police and Naxals affiliated to CPI (ML) New Democracy in the forest abutting Kothaguda mandal in Warangal District of Telangana on January 24. Rural Superintendent of Police Ambar Kishore Jha, while confirming the firing incident said the police could arrest only one squad member Sarangam while the rest of the members escaped from the spot.¹³⁵

Radicalisation & Terrorism

(January 18-24, 2016)

- **Two al-Qaeda suspects arrested from Haryana; NIA arrests six terror suspects from Karnataka.**

¹³² "Naxal Commander Killed in Encounter with Police", *The Economic Times*, January 18, 2016 at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/naxal-commander-killed-in-encounter-with-police/articleshow/50624260.cms>

¹³³ "Maoist Commander, RPC Member Arrested in Telangana", *The Economic Times*, January 18, 2016 at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/maoist-commander-rpc-member-arrested-in-telangana/articleshow/50623186.cms>

¹³⁴ Vyas, Sharad, "37 on Naxal Hit List in Maharashtra", *The Hindu*, January 21, 2016 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/37-on-naxal-hit-list-in-maharashtra/article8131535.ece>

¹³⁵ Rao, Gollapudi Srinivasa, "Exchange of Fire with Naxals in Warangal", *The Hindu*, January 24, 2016 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/telangana/exchange-of-fire-with-naxals-in-warangal/article8147818.ece>

Two men, suspected of having links with terror group al-Qaeda have been arrested from Haryana's Mewat district in a joint operation by Delhi Police and Intelligence Bureau, Mewat Police said on January 19. The suspected terrorists have been identified as Mohamad Qasim and Abdul Sami, residents of Jamshedpur district in Jharkhand. Abdul Sami is believed to be a key operative of al-Qaeda, who allegedly received arms training in Pakistan. Qasim and Sami had reached Punhana sub-town in Muslim-dominated Mewat district two days ago and were residing in a mosque situated on Punhana Hodal Road, Punhan Police said.¹³⁶

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested six suspected Islamic State (IS) terrorists from Karnataka, of whom, four were held in Bengaluru, Home Minister G Parameshwara said on January 22. The other two were picked up from Tumakuru and Mangaluru, the minister added. NIA sleuths have seized AK-47 and explosives from those arrested in Bengaluru, sources said. Preliminary investigation has revealed that they planned to disturb the upcoming Republic Day celebrations. The arrests are based on information revealed by Maulana Syed Anzar Shah Qasmi, who was picked up from Bengaluru a couple of weeks ago by the Delhi Anti-Terrorist Squad.¹³⁷

IV. UNITED NATIONS REVIEWS

India and the UN

(January 18-24, 2016)

- **India underlines POC in peacebuilding; India leads in world migration; FDI flows to India double; Cop 21 follow-up: ISA headquarters set up, India submits first BUR; Modi addresses ECOSOC.**

India's Permanent Representative to the UN in New York, Syed Akbaruddin, participated in a Security Council debate on 'Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict' on January 19 and argued that since it is mainly a national responsibility, the role of external actors must be that of national capacity building. He recalled the bravery of the Indian contingent in the peacekeeping operation in Congo in 1962 for doing so.¹³⁸

UN data on migration that is published every five years reveals that at 15.6 million people, India has the largest diaspora in the world today. In the last five years alone, 2 million Indians have moved to live outside the country. This is a rise of 17 per cent compared to the years 2005-10. Women account for 48.2 per cent of the migrants.¹³⁹

¹³⁶ "Two Al-Qaeda Men Arrested from Haryana", *The Economic Times*, January 19, 2016 at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/two-al-qaeda-men-arrested-from-haryana/articleshow/50631880.cms>

¹³⁷ "NIA Arrests Six Suspected IS Terrorists, Four from Bengaluru", *The Economic Times*, January 22, 2016 at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/nia-arrests-six-suspected-is-terrorists-four-from-bengaluru/articleshow/50682281.cms>

¹³⁸ "Statement by Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin, Permanent Representative at the United Nations Security Council Open Debate on 'Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict' ", January 19, 2016, at <https://www.pminewyork.org/pages.php?id=2365>

¹³⁹ "This Map Shows Where India's Huge Diaspora Lives", *The Wall Street Journal*, January 19, 2016, at <http://blogs.wsj.com/indiarealtime/2016/01/19/india-has-worlds-biggest-diaspora-and-this-map-shows-where-they-are/>

FDI flows to India rose to \$ 59 billion in 2015, nearly doubling from 2014. According to the 'Global Investment Trends Monitor' released by the UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), While the US topped the list at \$384 billion, as a region Asia received the highest share of FDI.¹⁴⁰

In a step forward from its plan to bring together an International Solar Alliance (ISA) that was proposed at the Climate Change conference on November 30, 2015, the headquarters of the 121-member alliance was proposed to be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and visiting French President Francois Hollande on January 25 at Gurgaon, Haryana. The interim secretariat is at the premises of National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE). India has also announced a contribution of \$ 100 million to the corpus for the alliance. The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has set up an Interim Administration Committee (IAC) to help set up the ISA.¹⁴¹ Related to this, India submitted its first Biennial Update Report (BUR) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on January 13. India's emissions stood at 2,136.84 million tonnes of CO2 equivalent greenhouse gases in 2010. The intensity of emissions is less by 12 per cent from 2005 levels.¹⁴²

PM Narendra Modi addressed the 70th Anniversary meeting of the ECOSOC in New York via weblink. He recalled the role of Arcot Ramaswamy Mudaliar, the architect and first President of the ECOSOC, and urged the body to take centre stage in addressing issues of poverty.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ "FDI Inflows to India Doubled to Reach \$59 Bn in 2015: UNCTAD", January 21, 2016, at <https://www.thedollarbusiness.com/fdi-inflows-to-india-doubled-to-reach-59-bn-in-2015-unctad/>

¹⁴¹ "Modi, Hollande to Lay Foundation Stone of ISA Headquarters in Gurgaon", January 21, 2016, at <http://netindian.in/news/2016/01/21/00036553/modi-hollande-lay-foundation-stone-isa-headquarters-gurgaon>

¹⁴² "India's Greenhouse Emission In 2010 More Than 2000 mn ton of CO2 Equivalent", *The Financial Express*, January 22, 2015, at <http://www.financialexpress.com/article/economy/indias-greenhouse-emission-in-2010-more-than-2000-mn-ton-of-co2-equivalent/200464/>

¹⁴³ "Commemoration of the 70th Anniversary of ECOSOC Special Event Keynote Address (via video) by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Mr. Narendra Modi", January 22, 2016, at <https://www.pminewyork.org/pages.php?id=2367>.