

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

August 17 – August 23, 8 (4), 2015

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I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. South Asia

Bangladesh

(August 17-23, 2015)

- **OIC Secretary General visits Bangladesh; South Africa agrees to send back a key accused in the August 21, 2004 grenade attack cases.**

Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Secretary General Iyad Ameen Madani came to Bangladesh on August 22 on a three-day official visit, as part of his tour to four member states of the OIC. He was leading a six-member delegation on his second tour to Bangladesh, according to foreign ministry sources.¹

South Africa agreed to send back Maulana Mohammad Tajuddin, a key accused in the August 21, 2004, grenade attack cases, to Bangladesh. The decision came in a meeting between visiting South African delegation, led by Nomaindiya Mfeketo, deputy minister of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation of the country, and Bangladesh's Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan at the latter's secretariat office on August 19.²

Sri Lanka

(August 17-23, 2015)

- **UNP wins the Parliamentary Elections; PM Modi expresses hope to improve Indo-Lanka ties under new government; China, France intends to work with new government; Sri Lanka hailed for conducting peaceful Parliament elections.**

United National Party (UNP) emerged as the winner at the parliamentary elections held on August 17 to elect a new parliament. The United National Party claimed victory receiving 5,098,927 votes, 45.66 percent of the votes and 106 seats in the 225-member parliament. The main opposition United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) which backed the former president Mahinda Rajapaksa as the Prime Ministerial candidate, received 4,732,669 or 42.38 percent of votes and 95 seats. Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi (ITAK), the major constituent in the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) claimed victory in the Tamil-dominated Northern Province receiving 515,963 or 4.62 percent of votes and 16 seats. Sri Lanka's Marxist party, Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna received 4.87 percent of the vote amounting to 543,944 and gained 6 seats. Eelam People's Democratic Party and Sri Lanka Muslim Congress each received one seat. Ranil Wickremesinghe took oath as Prime Minister on August 21, 2015. Immediately

¹ "OIC Secretary General Arrives in Dhaka", *The Daily Star*, August 23, 2015 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/oic-secretary-general-arrives-dhaka-131047>.

² "S Africa to Send Back Tajuddin", *The Daily Star*, August 20, 2015 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/s-africa-send-back-tajuddin-129481>.

after the oath taking ceremony SLFP extended conditional support to UNP to form the government as the UNP falls short of 7 seats.³

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed hope that the bilateral ties between India and Sri Lanka will get stronger under the new government led by the Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe.⁴

China and France expressed their intentions to work with the new government of Sri Lanka to strengthen their respective bilateral relations with Sri Lanka.⁵

The independent Commonwealth Observer Group that was in Sri Lanka to observe the parliamentary elections on August 17 has concluded that the election was credible, met the key criteria for democratic elections, and that the outcome reflected the will of the people.⁶ US, UK, EU and the UN chief Ban Ki Moon commended Sri Lanka's commitment to democracy and rule of law as displayed by the peaceful parliamentary elections.⁷

B. East Asia

Japan

(August 17-23, 2015)

- **Japan protests Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev's visit to the disputed Etorofu Island; Prime Minister Abe to skip Chinese parade; Japan slams North Korea for artillery strike across border; Japan to extend ¥1 trillion aid to Africa.**

Japan registered protest against Russian Prime Minister Medvedev's visit to the contested Etorofu Islands on August 22. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe referred to the development as "extremely regrettable" during the House of Councillors' Budget Committee session. Meanwhile, Japan reiterated that dialogue will continue with Russia to address the

³ "Sri Lanka 2015 Parliamentary Elections: Final Results", *Colombo Page*, August 18, 2015 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Aug18_1439903586CH.php. "Sri Lanka's Ruling UNP Signs MOU with SLFP to Form a National Government", *ColomboPage*, August 21, 2015 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Aug21_1440144738CH.php.

⁴ "Indian PM Hopeful of Strengthening Bilateral Ties with Sri Lanka under New Government", *ColomboPage*, August 18, 2015 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Aug18_1439917128CH.php.

⁵ "France will Work with New Government of Sri Lanka to Strengthen Bilateral Relations", *ColomboPage*, August 20, 2015, http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Aug20_1440088967CH.php. "China Ready to Work with Sri Lanka to Elevate Strategic Cooperation Partnership", *ColomboPage*, August 19, 2015, at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Aug19_1440001867CH.php.

⁶ "Sri Lanka Election Credible, Revision of Constitution, Independent Election Commission Urgent - Commonwealth Group", *ColomboPage*, August 19, 2015 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Aug19_1439996999CH.php.

⁷ "UN Chief Encourages Sri Lanka's New Government To Make Progress On Good Governance", *ColomboPage*, August 19, 2015 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Aug19_1439951489CH.php. "US Commends Sri Lanka's Commitment To Democracy And Rule of Law", *ColomboPage*, August 19, 2015 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Aug19_1439953151CH.php. "EU Looks Forward To A Strong Partnership With The New Government of Sri Lanka", *ColomboPage*, August 19, 2015, at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Aug19_1439989148CH.php. "UK hails Sri Lanka Election Results, Congratulates PM", *ColomboPage*, August 19, 2015, at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Aug19_1439996415CH.php.

Northern Territories issue and make efforts to sign a peace treaty with Russia. Japan is negotiating the likelihood of Putin's visit to Japan before the end of 2015.⁸

On August 24, Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga confirmed that Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will skip attending Chinese military parade scheduled on September 3 marking the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II also referred to as the War of Resistance against Japan. Secretary Suga cited the developments related to the security bills in the Diet as the reason for such a decision and further confirmed that Prime Minister Abe is not scheduled to visit China in the near future. There were media reports earlier that Japan is negotiating Abe's visit to China and meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping.⁹

Japan articulated strong concern following Kim Jong Un's declaration of a "quasi state of war" and artillery strikes across the border. On August 21, Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga urged Pyongyang to abstain from provocation. North Korea allegedly fired ammunition towards the South Korean loudspeakers that relay anti-North propaganda. Japan has been strongly cooperating with the South Korean and Americans in gathering information related to the development. South Korean media reported that the US and South Korean surveillance identified vehicular movement transporting short-range Scud and medium-range Rodong missiles in a likely launch preparation.¹⁰

Media reports indicate that Japan is deliberating to give approximately ¥1 trillion in ODA to Africa starting from 2016 over three years.¹¹

The Korean Peninsula

(August 17-23, 2015)

- **Panmunjom hosted Inter-Korea High level meeting from 22-24 August; South Korean President Park Geun-hye and Chinese President Xi Jinping are scheduled to meet in Beijing; Russia invites Both Koreas to Eastern Economic Forum (EEC) in Vladivostok; Supreme Court convicted Former South Korean Prime Minister Han Myeong-sook for bribery.**

Discussion in the Inter-Korea High level meeting focussed on decreasing military tension among the South and North Korea. South Korea's Director of National Security Kim Kwan-

⁸ Abe Bemoans Visit to Disputed Isles by Medvedev, *Kyodo*, August 24, 2015 at <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/08/24/national/politics-diplomacy/abe-bemoans-visit-to-disputed-isles-by-medvedev/#.Ver83JdbhHR>

⁹ Yoshida, Reiji, "Abe Won't Visit Beijing for WWII Parade", *The Japan Times*, August 24, 2015 at <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/08/24/national/politics-diplomacy/abe-skip-trip-china-attend-military-parade-will-focus-security-bills-nhk-reports/#.Ver5sZdbhHR>

¹⁰ Yoshida, Reiji and Kameda, Masaaki, "Japan Condemns North Korean Border 'Provocation'; Experts Say Military Escalation Unlikely", *The Japan Times*, August 21, 2015 at <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/08/21/national/politics-diplomacy/japan-condemns-north-korean-border-provocation-experts-say-military-escalation-unlikely/#.VesCTZdbhHR>

¹¹ "Japan Mulling Three-Year, ¥1 Trillion Aid Package for Africa", *Kyodo*, August 20, 2015 at <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/08/20/national/politics-diplomacy/japan-mulling-three-year-%C2%A51-trillion-aid-package-africa/#.VesGBpdbhHR>

jin and Unification Minister Hong Yong-pyo took part in the meeting. Both Koreas decided to have meeting soon to improve inter-Korean relations. While North Korean representatives lifted the quasi-state of war and regretted the incident of injuries sustained by South Korean soldiers owing to the landmine explosions near Demilitarized Zone along the Military Demarcation Line, Seoul decided to suspend all loudspeaker broadcasts from August 25. Both Koreas decided to organize meetings of separated families during Chuseok.¹²

South Korean President Park Geun-hye and Chinese President Xi Jinping are scheduled to meet in Beijing from September 2-4. President Park will attend the Chinese military parade scheduled on 3 September marking Chinese victory over Japan in World War II. Both leaders are likely to discuss “important pending issues”.¹³

Russia extended invitation to the South Korean Unification Minister Hong Yong-pyo and North Korean Foreign Trade Minister Ri Ryong-nam to the EEC scheduled in Vladivostok from September 3-5. This development has reportedly increased the speculation of an inter-Korean ministerial talks is likely to happen in Vladivostok. Reports indicate that Russia is likely to negotiate methods to promote logistics project with both Korea in case Hong and Ri take part in the forum.¹⁴

The Supreme Court convicted Former South Korean Prime Minister Han Myeong-sook for bribery and sentenced her to two years of imprisonment. She received 880 million won illegal political funding from the head of a local construction company, during the presidential campaign in 2007.¹⁵

C. Russia

Russia

(August 17-23, 2015)

- **Russian GDP down 3.4 per cent in first half of 2015; Prime Minister Medvedev signs order to increase Russia's shelf by 50,000 square kilometres; Launch of OPAL pipeline at full capacity will not eliminate the risks of Ukrainian gas transit; Russian military holds exercises in Transdnistria; Russia to suspend spending of funds from National Wealth Fund.**

¹² Joint press release from the inter-Korean high-level meeting, the Office of the President, *Korea net*, August 25, 2015 at <http://www.korea.net/Government/Briefing-Room/Press-Releases/view?articleId=3123&pageIndex=1&gov>

¹³ “Park, China's Xi to Hold Meeting In Beijing Next Month”, *Yonhap News Agency*, August 24, 2015 at <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2015/08/24/0301000000AEN20150824006900315.html>

¹⁴ “Ministers of Two Koreas Invited To Forum in Russia”, *The Korea Times*, August 18, 2015 at http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2015/09/120_185078.html

¹⁵ “Former PM Imprisoned For Bribery Conviction”, *Yonhap News Agency*, August 24, 2015 at <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2015/08/24/0301000000AEN20150824009400315.html>

Russia's statistics service Rosstat has reported, on August 19, that the country's GDP dropped by 3.4 per cent in the first half of 2015. According to the Economic Development Ministry, GDP is expected to decline by 2.8 per cent in 2015.¹⁶

Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev has, on August 22, signed an order to increase Russia's continental shelf by 50,000 square metres. He said that 'we should not skip hydrocarbons and I have signed an order, which fixes the border at the continental shelf of the Sea of Okhotsk. There are huge sources of raw materials, sources of energy. The document is important, as it was adopted after consultations with the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS), it was agreed with our neighbours, with our Japanese counterparts'.¹⁷

Gazprom Alexei Miller has said, on August 21, that the launch of Opal, the eastern offshoot of the Nord Stream gas pipeline, at full capacity will not eliminate the risks of gas transit through Ukraine. He added that in order to ensure a reliable transit of gas to Europe this winter, Ukraine should inject another 3.2 billion cubic meters of gas into underground gas storage facilities.¹⁸

About 400 troops and more than 30 vehicles from the Operational Group of Russian Forces in Moldova's unrecognized Transdniestria Republic have taken part in a live firing drill held on August 19. At present, joint peacekeeping forces of Russia, Moldova and Transdniestria, as well as a group of military observers from Ukraine maintain peace on the two banks of the Dniester River. Moldova has said that the conflict is over and called for changing the existing peacekeeping format by deploying an international mission of OSCE observers. Transdniestria has stated that Russia's military presence in the unrecognized republic guarantees its security.¹⁹

Presidential aide Andrey Belousov has said, on August 18, that spending of funds from the National Wealth Fund should be suspended in the near future. He added that at present half of those funds are blocked in non-liquid forms and the remaining two trillion (roughly US\$ 30 billion) should be maintained as a safety cushion. He also said that one trillion from the fund (US\$ 61 billion) has already been spent on structural projects, including those providing logistics in Russia's Far East.²⁰

¹⁶ "Russian GDP Down 3.4% In First Half of 2015 — Report", *Itar-Tass*, August 19, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/815256>

¹⁷ "Medvedev Inks Order To Increase Russia's shelf by 50,000 Square Kilometres", *Itar-Tass*, August 22, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/russia/815862>

¹⁸ "Launch of OPAL at Full Capacity Won't Eliminate Risks Of Ukrainian Gas Transit — Gazprom", *Itar-Tass*, August 21, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/815794>

¹⁹ "Russian Military Hold Firing Drill in Transdniestria", *Itar-Tass*, August 19, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/world/815319>

²⁰ "Russia will Soon Suspend Spending Of Funds From National Wealth Fund — Kremlin Aide", *Itar-Tass*, August 18, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/814921>

Russia: International

(August 17-23, 2015)

- **Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev visits the Kuril Islands; Russia says Japan continues to challenge outcomes of World War Two; China's investments in Russia's economy dip by 20 per cent in 2015; Russia-China naval drills take place in the Far East; Russian and North Korean Deputy Foreign Ministers discuss situation in the Korean peninsula; Russia wants Germany and France to pressurise Kiev on peace plan; NATO holds largest airborne forces drills in Europe after the end of Cold War; Price of Russian gas for Armenia down 13 per cent in 2015; Russia increased its investments in US Treasury bonds in June 2015; Russia ready to discuss new regime for conventional arms control in Europe; Russia and Canada suspend project to build a joint aircraft; Russia and Iran confirm readiness to expand cooperation in all spheres; Putin offers easing visa regime for some categories of tourists from BRICS countries; Russia says Kiev preparing new offensive in Eastern Ukraine; Serbia's servicemen to train at Russia's military academies.**

Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev has visited the Kuril Island of Iturup on August 22, 2015. During his interaction, he stated that the Islands are Russia's gates into the Asia-Pacific region and promised to improve the living conditions of the Island's citizens. He also said that Moscow wants to maintain friendly relations with Japan but Russian officials will continue to the Kuril Islands in the future.²¹

The Russian Foreign Ministry has said, on August 22, that Japan's reaction to Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev's visit to the Kuril Islands indicates that Tokyo continues to challenge the outcomes of World War Two.²² Meanwhile, Japan's Kyodo News Agency has stated that Tokyo will postpone the visit of Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida to Russia scheduled for later this year. The agency quoted a Japanese diplomat as saying that the visit was simply unacceptable'.²³

The head of the Europe and Central Asia Department of the Chinese Ministry of Commerce Lin Zhi has said, on August 21, that China's direct investments in Russia's economy has decreased by 20 per cent year-on-year during the period January-July 2015. He stated that 'Direct investments to the real sector of economy are decreasing while the volume of portfolio investments is growing. We can't say that investors' activity is decreasing but it turns out that they choose new ways for investments in the Russian economy due to current economic

²¹ "Russian PM Says Kuril Islands Are 'Gates Into Asia-Pacific Region'", *Itar-Tass*, August 23, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/russia/815916>

²² "Russia Says Japan Continues Challenging Outcomes of World War Two", *Itar-Tass*, August 23, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/russia/815902>

²³ "Japan Postpones Foreign Minister's Visit to Russia", *Itar-Tass*, August 23, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/russia/815880>

difficulties. The inflow of Chinese investments to Russia was mainly constrained by the rouble devaluation. As of December 31, 2014, Chinese investments in the Russian economy totalled US\$ 4 billion. It is expected that in the next five years this figure will increase to US\$ 10 billion.²⁴

Russian-Chinese navy drills 'Joint Sea 2015 II' have started off in the coast of Vladivostok in Russia's Far East on August 21. A total of 22 ships and vessels, up to 20 jets and helicopters, more than 500 marines and 40 units of equipment will participate in the drills. The first Joint Sea naval exercise between the two countries was held in April 2012.²⁵

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Morgulov has met with his North Korean opposite number Kung Sok-un in Moscow on August 20 wherein they 'exchanged opinions on a range of pressing aspects of bilateral ties as well as on the current situation in the Korean peninsula'. Meanwhile, Russia has called on both North and South Korea to exercise maximum restraint against the backdrop of increased hostility between the two countries.²⁶

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has said, on August 19, that Russia wants the leaders of Germany and France to put more pressure on Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko to implement the February Minsk II peace plan for eastern Ukraine. He added that Kiev has failed to deliver on multiple provisions of the peace plan and that the Ukrainian authorities must hold direct talks with representatives of the self-proclaimed rebel "republics" of Donetsk and Luhansk, who are backed by Russia. The Ukrainian authorities have been unwilling to do that and have been negotiating with the rebels through a former Ukrainian president.²⁷

NATO has, on August 19, launched the largest airborne forces' drills in Europe after the end of the Cold War. The multinational manoeuvres dubbed Swift Response-2015 involve over 4,800 servicemen from Bulgaria, the United Kingdom, Germany, Greece, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, the United States and France. The exercises kicked off on Saturday and will last through September 13.²⁸

²⁴ "China's Investments In Russia's Economy Down 20% in 2015", *Itar-Tass*, August 21, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/815730>

²⁵ "Joint Russian-Chinese Naval Drills Kick Off in Far East", *Itar-Tass*, August 21, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/russia/815657>

²⁶ "Russian, North Korean Deputy FMs Discuss Situation On Korean Peninsula", *Itar-Tass*, August 20, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/world/815587>

²⁷ "Russia Wants Germany, France to Pressure Kiev on Peace Plan", *The Moscow Times*, August 19, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russia-wants-germany-france-to-pressure-kiev-on-peace-plan/528260.html>

²⁸ "NATO Holds Largest Airborne Forces' Drills in Europe after End of Cold War", *Itar-Tass*, August 19, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/world/815183>

Gazprom Armenia (a 100 per cent) subsidiary of Russia's Gazprom company has reported that the price of Russian gas for Armenia has been reduced by 13 per cent to US\$ 165 per 1,000 cubic meters in 2015.²⁹

Russia increased investments into US Treasury bonds in June 2015 by US\$ 1.4 billion to US\$ 72 billion. In June 2014, Russia's total investments in US securities had touched US\$ 113.9 billion.³⁰

Moscow has officially informed the United Nations that it is ready to discuss with partners ways of developing a new regime for conventional arms control in Europe. In a letter that Russia has sent to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Moscow has argued that the new regime should take into consideration current realities and address the concerns of Russia and those of other European states. The CFE treaty was signed in 1990 by 22 states (the then-16 NATO members and then-six Warsaw Treaty states), and entered into force in 1992. Russia had announced a unilateral moratorium on the CFE treaty in December 2007 amid concerns over NATO's eastward expansion and the US-planned Europe-based missile defence system.³¹

Canada and Russia have suspended the implementation of a joint project to build the DHC-6 Twin Otter Series aircraft in the Ulyanovsk special economic zone on Russia's Volga region but have not abandoned it completely. This was stated by the head of Ulyanovsk's special economic zone Denis Baryshnikov. DHC-6 Twin Otter Series is a turboprop passenger aircraft with short take-off and landing characteristics, developed by the Canadian subsidiary of de Havilland company. The aircraft is widely used on short destinations and on the airfields with short runways.³²

The foreign ministers of Russia and Iran Sergey Lavrov and Javad Zarif held negotiations in Moscow on August 17. Mr. Zarif stated that the 'Vienna agreements will have a positive effect on cooperation between our countries in all spheres, in particular in economy and defence. Russia and Iran will also cooperate in the production of stable isotopes in accordance with the Vienna agreements on Fordow'. Mr. Lavrov on his part described cooperation between Moscow and Tehran as comprehensive as it 'encompasses all key spheres of cooperation between the countries. This includes economy, especially hi-tech sphere. There is also nuclear energy which bases upon the successful completion of Bushehr-1 project and on intergovernmental protocol and contract on construction of eight Russian-designed power

²⁹ "Price of Russian Gas for Armenia Down 13% in 2015 to \$165", *Itar-Tass*, August 18, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/815109>

³⁰ "Russia Increased Investments in US Treasury Bonds to \$72 bln in June 2015 — Report", *Itar-Tass*, August 18, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/815026>

³¹ "Russia is Ready To Discuss New Regime For Conventional Arms Control in Europe", *Itar-Tass*, August 18, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/russia/814940>

³² "Canada, Russia Suspend Joint Project To Build Aircraft in Ulyanovsk", *Itar-Tass*, August 17, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/814911>

units designed in Iran signed last year'. The two countries have also agreed to coordinate their counter-terrorism efforts. The foreign ministers "confirmed similarity of the sides' attitudes towards stabilisation of the situation in the Middle East and North Africa."³³

Russian President Vladimir Putin has offered to ease visa regime for some categories of tourists from BRICS countries. He stated that 'in order to attract foreign tourists, it is probably worth considering to further ease visa regime - for instance, to expand practice of visa-free group exchange'.³⁴

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has blamed Kiev for the increase in violence in Eastern Ukraine saying that he suspected Ukraine was preparing a new offensive against the separatists.³⁵

Russian deputy minister Anatoly Antonov has said that Serbian military men will be training at the Russian Defence Ministry's academies.³⁶

D. West Asia

Iran

(August 17-23, 2015)

- **Iran cautions the United States intends to disintegrate Iraq; Iran and Russia discuss bilateral and regional issues.**

Aliakbar Velayati, a top advisor to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, cautioned that the United States intends to disintegrate Iraq. This remark came after U.S. Army's outgoing Chief of Staff General Raymond Odierno stated that dividing up Iraq "might be the only solution" to settle crisis in the country because reconciliation between Shias and Sunnis in Iraq is becoming harder. However, Velayati is of the opinion that splitting of Syria, Iraq and Yemen whose nations have stood up to the avaricious policies of the bullying powers, is not a solution.³⁷

Uplifting of the UN sanctions has removed any obstacles to the economic relations between Iran and Russia, said Foreign Minister Zarif in a joint press conference with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey. He also added that Russia's cooperation in developing the Busher power

³³ "Russia and Iran Confirm Readiness To Expand Cooperation In All Spheres", *Itar-Tass*, August 17, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/russia/814848>

³⁴ "Putin Offers Easing Visa Regime For Some Categories Of Tourists from BRICS Countries", *Itar-Tass*, August 17, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/russia/814803>

³⁵ "Russia Says Ukraine Preparing New Offensive Against Separatists", *The Moscow Times*, August 17, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russia-says-ukraine-preparing-new-offensive-against-separatists/528058.html>

³⁶ "Serbia's Servicemen To Train At Russia's Military Academies", *Itar-Tass*, August 17, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/russia/814776>

³⁷ "Iran Warns Tehran of US Strategy To Split Iraq", *Tehran Times*, August 17, 2015 at http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=248744. Accessed on August 31, 2015.

plant will also continue. Commenting on Syria, he said that the crisis in the state will be solved with in and the people of Syria. Any form of international interference will be unacceptable.³⁸

Iraq

(August 17-23, 2015)

- **Maliki accuses Arbil and Ankara for the fall of Mosul to ISIS; Iraqi parliament approves reform measures in response to the demands of the Iraqis. New Yazidi infighting derails the process of land liberation from IS.**

Former Prime Minister, Nuri al Maliki, held Arbil and Ankara responsible for the fall of Mosul to ISIS. According to Maliki, it was “result of a conspiracy and a scheme that was made in Arbil in the region of Kurdistan in cooperation with the Turks and intelligence services in Ankara.” This comment came after a Parliamentary committee inquiry into the fall of Mosul came out with their report accusing 36 military and civilian officials.³⁹

On August 11, 2015, the Iraqi parliament approved Prime Minister, Haider al Abadi, and Parliament speaker, Salim al Jabouri’s reforms measure in response to the demands of the Iraqis. These reforms included- doing away with the position of Vice President of the republic and deputy Prime Minister, ending special allocations for the presidency, governmental bodies and institutions, reopening past and present corruption cases and placing them under the supervision of a supreme committee, and tasking a number of judges to investigate the cases and prosecute corrupt persons.⁴⁰

New conflicts have recently emerged between forces affiliated with minority groups in Nineveh derailing the process of land liberation, occupied by the Islamic State (IS). Various conflicts have emerged between the political parties and minority groups including Yazidis and Kurdish forces. This began after the IS took over Sinjar in Iraq in 2014. The Yazidis then formed an independent group known as Sinjar Defence Units led by Haide Shesho, to lead the process of liberation. However, the situation grew complicated after various political parties, like the Patriot Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdish Democratic Party, came to exert their influence, vying for power.⁴¹

³⁸ “Iran call Russia Its Most Important Nuclear Partner”, *Tehran Times*, August 18, 2015 at http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=248764. Accessed on August 31, 2015.

³⁹ “Nuri al Maliki Holds Arbil and Ankara Responsibility for the Fall of Mosul”, *Iraqi News*, August 19, 2015, at <http://www.iraqinews.com/baghdad-politics/nuri-al-maliki-holds-arbil-ankara-responsibility-fall-mosul/>. Accessed on August 31, 2015.

⁴⁰ “Will Abadi’s Reforms Work?”, *Al Monitor*, August 17, 2015, at <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/08/iraq-abadi-reform-measures-corruption-services-implement.html>. Accessed on August 31, 2015.

⁴¹ “Yazidi Infighting, Disputes Over Sinjar Stall Battle against Islamic State”, *Al Monitor*, August 18, 2015, at <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/08/kurdistan-yazidis-armed-forces-influence-sinjar.html>, accessed on 31 August 2015

Syria

(August 17-23, 2015)

- **Syrian Information Minister stresses the need for international cooperation to fight against terrorism in the region; Syrian deputy premier urges to stop funding and arming terror groups.**

Syrian Information Minister, Omran al Zou'bi, recently met with Egyptian journalists and has stressed the need for international cooperation in order to fight terrorism in the region. This, he said, requires political understanding among the countries of the region. It is, he believes, part of the broader agenda to divide the Arab world, on the one hand, and serve Israeli interest, on the other. Criticising the destructive role of al Jazeera in the country and called for new era marked by a distinctive Egyptian- Syrian cooperation.⁴²

Deputy Premier, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Walid al Moallem, called on the Security Council to implement a resolution in order to fight terrorism in the country and to urge organisations, within the region and from outside, to stop funding and arming such terror groups. It also stressed that Egypt and Iran, a regional country, could play an important and influential role in fighting against terrorism. He went on to say that terrorism is being exported to Syria by over a hundred countries and they are entering Syria from the Turkey-Jordanian borders. He also mentioned that the Arabs have betrayed Syria in their role and joined the West.⁴³

Israel and Palestine

(August 17-23, 2015)

- **Palestinian Autonomy president Abbas quits as the head of the PLO; Palestinian Foreign Minister al-Maliki confirms the ongoing dialogue to end the siege on the Gaza Strip.**

Palestinian Autonomy president Mahmoud Abbas has reportedly quit his post as the head of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which he held from 2004, alongside several other top lieutenants. Abbas will continue in his role as PA leader.⁴⁴

In an interview with *France 24*, Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki confirmed that an agreement is taking shape that will end the siege on the Gaza Strip. Hamas and Israel are seriously discussing reaching a long term agreement. It is not yet confirmed as to how long

⁴² “Al Zou’bi to Egyptian Journalists: Fighting Terrorism Requires International Cooperation”, *Syria Times*, August 20, 2015, at <http://syriatimes.sy/index.php/news/local/19244-al-zou-bi-to-egyptian-journalists-fighting-terrorism-requires-international-cooperation>. Accessed on August 31, 2015.

⁴³ “Al Moallem to Egyptian Al Nahar TV: Some Arab Countries Betrayed Syria, Colluded with the West against the Country”, *Syria Times*, August 20, 2015 at <http://syriatimes.sy/index.php/news/local/19246-al-moallem-to-egyptian-al-nahar-tv-some-arab-countries-betrayed-syria-colluded-with-the-west-against-the-country>. Accessed on August 31, 2015.

⁴⁴ “Mahmoud Abbas Resigns as Executive Chairman of PLO”, *Palestine Chronicles*, August 23, 2013, at <http://www.palestinechronicle.com/mahmoud-abbas-resigns-as-executive-chairman-of-plo/>. Accessed on August 31, 2015.

this might take, but there are indicators that suggest that negotiations are going to happen. It has been confirmed that Israel has a detailed outline for a truce formulated by Tony Blair. Hamas delegation is now waiting for authorities in Egypt to approve meetings with officials in Cairo, Turkey, and Qatar.⁴⁵

The Gulf

(August 17-23, 2015)

- **Emir Sheikh and the Yemeni President discussed the latest developments in Yemen; Candidates for the Oman's Majlis al Shura elections announced; Prime Minister Khalifa calls for the GCC and Arab states cooperation to address security challenges.**

HH the Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani met the Yemeni President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi, during which he briefed the Emir about the latest developments in Yemen and the international efforts for supporting legitimacy in the country. He extended thanks to the Emir, Qatar, and the coalition member states for supporting the achievement of security and stability of Yemen. Talks revolved around the latest developments, promote mutual interest, bilateral relations and other topics of mutual interest.⁴⁶

The list of candidates has been announced for the 8th term elections to the *Majlis al Shura* of all Sultanate in Oman.⁴⁷

His Royal Highness Prime Minister Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa ha called for a joint cooperative with the GCC and Arab states to address the security and stability challenges. HRH Prime Minister asserted that collective action should be taken to achieve GCC development, economic, and social goals, and fulfil the aspirations of the GCC people to aid in peace and security. He also noted that unilateral dealings will be difficult in resolving the issues and, therefore, such serious challenges require cooperation.⁴⁸

India and the West Asia

(August 17-23, 2015)

- **PM Modi stresses strengthening India-UAE strategic partnership on a broad range of issues; India and Qatar discuss the welfare of Indian workers in Qatar; India-Oman discuss expanding military cooperation;**

⁴⁵ ""Abbas Must Accept Gaza, West Bank will not Unite", *Al Monitor*, August 20, 2015, at <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/08/israel-gaza-hamas-truce-abbas-west-bank-renew-negotiations.html>. Accessed on August 31, 2015.

⁴⁶ "Emir Meets Yemeni President", *Gulf Times*, August 19, 2015, at <http://www.gulf-times.com/qatar/178/details/451748/emir-meets-yemeni-president->, accessed on 1 September 2015

⁴⁷ "List of Candidates to the Majlis al Shura Elections Announced", *Times of Oman*, August 23, 2015, at <http://timesofoman.com/article/66126/Oman/Government/Elections-Committee-in-wilayats-of-Oman-announce-initial-lists-of-candidates-for-Majlis-Al-Shura-8th-term-elections>. Accessed on August 31, 2015.

⁴⁸ "HRH Premier Calls for Stronger Collective GCC, Arab Action", *Bahrain News Agency*, August 17, 2015, at <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/682118>. Accessed on August 31, 2015.

UAE and India admitted that the pace of the relation has not been kept up to its potential. With the Indian community in the UAE crossing over 2.5 million, expanding trade- making India UAE's second largest trading partner- the need for a "strategic partnership between UAE and India has never been stronger or more urgent", said PM Narendra Modi. During the visit, various agreements were signed on anti- radicalisation, business, and defence.⁴⁹

The Joint Working Group on Labour and Manpower between India and Qatar conducted their third meeting on August 17, 2015, in Doha, Qatar. The meeting was led by Saleh Saied al-Shawi, Director, Department of Legal Affairs and, from the Indian side by, Mohanish Verma, protector general of emigrants and joint secretary, Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs. They discussed a wide range of issues related to the welfare of Indians in Qatar, focussing particularly on Indian workers. Also, specific humanitarian cases were also noted.⁵⁰

Lt. Gen Ahmed bin Harith Al Nabhani, chief of staff of the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF), received Arup Raha, air chief marshal and chief of air staff of the Indian Air Force, and his accompanying delegation visiting the Sultanate, in his office at Mu'askar Al Murtafa'a on August 17. During the meeting the two discussed a number of common issues related to military cooperation between the two countries. They also reviewed bilateral relations between the two countries.⁵¹

E. The United State of America

National

(August 17-23, 2015)

- **Defence Secretary Carter supports transferring of Guantanamo Bay detainees; First two women graduated from the U.S. Army's elite Ranger School; Fed officials balancing an improving job market against weak inflation; Presidential debate on undocumented immigrant heats-up and US targets illegal immigration; Political controversy over former Secretary of State Clinton's email files shows no sign of ending; Climate change sceptics challenge the Obama plan in courts; Presidential campaign staged of being personality-driven; Donald Trump leads the Republican presidential campaign.**

U.S. Defence Secretary Ashton Carter has expressed his full support for transferring Guantanamo Bay detainees. In a press conference August 20, Carter stressed that there has been no pressure from the White House to transfer Guantanamo prisoners. Under U.S. law, the defence secretary has final authority to approve any transfers from Guantanamo. He confirmed recent reporting by *Voice of America* (VOA) that Pentagon teams are looking at sites

⁴⁹ "UAE- India Relations Have Not Kept Pace with Potential", *Khaleej Times*, August 18, 2015 at <http://www.khaleejtimes.com/narendra-modi-visits-uae/uae-india-relations-have-not-kept-pace-with-potential>. Accessed on August 31, 2015.

⁵⁰ "Indian Official Discuss Workers' Welfare with Labour Minister", *Gulf Times*, August 17, 2015, at <http://www.gulf-times.com/qatar/178/details/451541/indian-officials-discuss-workers%27-welfare-with-labour-minister>. Accessed on August 31, 2015.

⁵¹ "Oman's Defence Chief Receives India Chief of Air Staff", *Times of Oman*, August 17, 2015, at <http://timesofoman.com/article/65773/Oman/Government/Indian-Air-Force-chief-holds-talks-in-Oman>. Accessed on August 31, 2015.

in the United States to move prisoners currently held at the U.S. naval base in Cuba. Carter said the two main sites under consideration are the military prison in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and Charleston, South Carolina's naval installation. He said about 50 detainees are eligible to be transferred to other nations, but that a second group must remain "in law of war detention."⁵²

On August 18, the U.S. Army Maneuver Centre of Excellence announced that 96 soldiers, including two women, met the standards of the Swamp Phase and will graduate from the Ranger Course on August 21. Ranger School is the Army's premier combat leadership course, teaching Ranger students how to overcome fatigue, hunger and stress to lead soldiers during small-unit combat operations. A graduation ceremony will be held on Victory Pond for those students, who met the standards of the entire Ranger Course.⁵³ The *CNN* that Capt. Kristen Griest and 1st Lt. Shaye Haver made history as the first two women to graduate from the U.S. Army's elite Ranger School. The two received their tabs as part of Ranger Class 08-15 at Fort Benning, Georgia, marking a historic moment in the integration of women in the U.S. military, after completing weeks of gruelling physical training across woods, mountains and swamplands.⁵⁴

The U.S. central bank officials are balancing an improving job market against weak inflation and problems overseas as they ponder when and how much to raise interest rates. Many economists however predict that the central bank will raise interest rates in September, the first such hike in more than nine years. Low interest rates were intended to boost the economy during the financial crisis, but may no longer be needed. The unemployment rate has fallen from 10 percent during the financial crisis to the current 5.3 percent, which is close to the level considered full employment in the United States. But Federal officials expressed concern about weak growth in overseas markets, slow growth in U.S. wages and inflation that is running persistently below the Fed's goal of a two percent annual rate. However, they also said the economy is "approaching" the point of being able to withstand an interest rate increase.⁵⁵ Inflation in the U.S. economy rose at a slower pace during July. Meanwhile, federal officials are watching inflation and the U.S. job market closely as they decide when and how quickly to raise interest rates.⁵⁶

On August 18, the head of U.S. Customs and Border Protection launched an advertising campaign aimed at dissuading Central Americans from trying to enter the United States illegally and avoid the influx of the tens of thousands who tried to come last year. Commissioner Gil Kerlikowske said the message of the campaign, which will appear on television, radio stations, social media and posters in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala, is very simple. "It is very, very dangerous," Kerlikowske said of the journey at the launch in

⁵² Snowiss, Mark, "US Defence Chief Fully Supports Moving Guantanamo Detainees", *VOA News*, August 20, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/us-defense-chief-fully-supports-moving-guantanamo-detainees/2926461.html>

⁵³ "Women Complete Swamp Phase, Earn Army Ranger Tab", *DoD News*, August 18, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/613997/women-complete-swamp-phase-earn-army-ranger-tab>

⁵⁴ Sanchez, Ray and Smith-Spark, Laura, "Two women make Army Ranger history", *CNN*, August 21, 2015 at <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/08/21/us/women-army-ranger-graduation/>

⁵⁵ "Fed Worries About Low Inflation, Overseas Markets", *VOA News*, August 19, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/fed-worries-about-low-inflation-overseas-markets/2924476.html>

⁵⁶ "Report: US Inflation Eases in July", *VOA News*, August 19, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/labor-department-report-shows-us-inflation-eases-in-july/2924229.html>

San Diego. The \$1.2 million campaign, called "Know the Facts," emphasizes that U.S. law and policy lead to immediate deportation and offer no relief for undocumented immigrants. Last year, nearly 80,000 people from the three Central American countries made the journey across Mexico and into the United States, triggering a humanitarian crisis. About 63,000 were children, many traveling without their parents.⁵⁷ Businessman and Republican presidential contender Donald Trump, in his latest statements about U.S. immigration reform, said children born to immigrants living in the U.S. illegally should be denied citizenship. Trump said, "When people come in, they have to come in legally." More than half of undocumented immigrants in the United States come from Mexico and about 25 percent more are from other countries in Central America. Trump's comments concern Maya, an undocumented immigrant from Mexico, whose 8-year-old daughter was born in Maryland and is a U.S. citizen.⁵⁸

The political controversy over the email files of Hillary Clinton shows no sign of ending, engulfing her standing as the leading 2016 Democratic presidential contender. A federal judge has set a hearing for later this week on whether the State Department is ensuring the retrieval of all official records that Clinton and her aides had on personal email accounts or devices from 2009 to 2013, when she stepped down as the country's top diplomat. Clinton has said she did not send any classified documents on her personal email account or receive any that were marked classified at the time. Clinton has said that she used her personal email account for State Department work for her own convenience, but the Justice Department is now conducting a review whether classified government documents ended up on her computer server.⁵⁹ Although a few dozen of Hillary Clinton's publicly released work emails from her time as secretary of state are now stamped "Classified," the U.S. State Department, and Clinton herself, have maintained these classifications are new. The declassify dates suggest either that the department did not follow standard government classification regulations. According to a presidential executive order, a government official classifying something for the first time must pick a declassification date at least 10 years "from the date of the original decision," so long as there is no earlier moment when the information loses its sensitivity.⁶⁰

The Obama administration's proposal to fight climate change by cutting carbon pollution is opening yet another round of political debate in the United States. And the fallout will be seen in contentious legal challenges from states in the coming months. Climate change has long been a politicized issue in the U.S. to a degree not found in other countries, even though its impacts span the globe. An Ipsos Mori Global Trends poll found that Americans are generally much more sceptical about climate change and what should be done about it than people in other developed countries. That debate spawned a movement of so-called climate change sceptics. Those who initially cast doubt on climate change largely came from the political right

⁵⁷ "US Ads Target Illegal Immigration From Central America", *Reuters*, August 18, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/us-ads-target-illegal-immigration-from-central-america/2923491.html>

⁵⁸ Block, Deborah, "In US, Debate Over Undocumented Immigrants Heats Up", *VOA News*, August 18, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/us-illegal-immigration/2922851.html>

⁵⁹ Bredemeier, Ken, "No End in Sight for Controversy Over Hillary Clinton's Emails", *VOA News*, August 18, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/no-end-in-sight-for-controversy-over-hillary-clinton-emails/2922611.html>

⁶⁰ "Declassify Dates of Some Clinton's Emails Raise Questions", *Reuters*, August 21, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/reu-some-clinton-emails-newly-classified-but-declassify-dates-raise-questions/2926711.html>

who “saw climate change as a threat to free market economics,” said Naomi Oreskes, a professor of the history of science at Harvard University. That sentiment remains strong today. At least 15 states plan to challenge the Obama plan in courts this fall, saying, among other claims, that the federal government has overreached its authority.⁶¹

The U.S. presidential election is more than a year away. The campaign is in the stage of being personality-driven. This year, more than ever, the strongest, wildest comments get the most traction -- especially on the Republican side. As Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump arrived in his personal helicopter to campaign at the Iowa State Fair, one youngster thought he was Batman. Trump might not be a superhero, but he is the Republican frontrunner who gets the most publicity because of what he says. Political Historian Allan Lichtman says personalities are leading the publicity because there are 17 Republican candidates for the party's nomination. And each is trying to stand out.⁶²

Two of the leading 2016 U.S. Republican presidential contenders, Donald Trump and Jeb Bush, are taunting each other five months before the country's first party primary election. Trump and Bush held duelling town hall rallies with voters just a few kilometres apart on August 19 in [the north-eastern state of] New Hampshire, where Republicans will vote in February. Early political surveys of Republicans have shown Trump in the lead nationally and among party members in the states with the first 2016 Republican contests. Trump called Bush a “low-energy person.” Earlier, he told reporters, “I do not see how he is electable.”⁶³

The latest *CNN/ORC* poll has Trump leading the Republican field nationally with 24 percent, followed by former Florida Governor Jeb Bush at 13 percent and retired neurosurgeon and political newcomer Ben Carson at 8 percent. A Fox News poll a day earlier had Trump at 25 percent and Carson in second, with 12 percent. Trump has led national polls among Republicans for weeks now, despite a range of controversial comments that might have undone other contenders.⁶⁴

International: Asia

(August 17-23, 2015)

- **Obama administration yet to make a decision on blocking the next military aid disbursement to Pakistan; American Jewish community divided on Iran nuclear deal; A leaked IAEA memo shows let Iran carry out its own inspections; President Obama urges Congress members to support Iranian nuclear deal; Another Democrat Senator opposes the nuclear deal; Field tests shows the presence of sulfur mustard used by IS militants to attack Kurdish forces in Iraq; Coalition airstrikes appear to have killed another top IS leader; Ash Carter says Russia poses an existential threat to the US; US-South Korea**

⁶¹ Hilburn, Matthew, “Climate Change Fight Sparks Renewed Debate in US”, *VOA News*, August 22, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/climate-change-fight-sparks-renewed-debate-in-us/2927086.html>

⁶² Presutti, Carolyn, “Strong Personalities Lead US Presidential Race”, *VOA News*, August 21, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/strong-personalities-lead-us-presidential-race/2926618.html>

⁶³ Bredemeier, Ken, “Trump, Bush Trade Barbs in New Hampshire”, *VOA News*, August 20, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/trump-jeb-bush-taunt-each-other-in-new-hampshire/2925555.html>

⁶⁴ Malone, Jim, “US Presidential Frontrunners Face Different Challenges”, *VOA News*, August 18, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/trump-clinton-challenges-white-house-race/2922803.html>

discuss regional security issues; China has reclaimed more land in the disputed Spratly Islands of SCS.

Amid media reports the payment is being withheld due to lack of progress in fighting the Haqqani network, the Obama administration says it has not yet made a decision to block the next military aid disbursement to Pakistan. According to Pentagon spokesman Major Roger Cabiness, "No decision has been made regarding certification requirements". On August 20, Pakistani media had reported that the administration had decided not to certify to Congress that the Pakistani military's counter terrorism offensive in the country's north had damaged the Haqqani network. Without this certification, the next payment of Coalition Support Funds to Pakistan would get suspended. The spokesman however said that "We strongly support Pakistani counterterrorism efforts and their commitment to combat all terrorists and ensure that militant groups are not able to maintain safe havens in Pakistan".⁶⁵ The Haqqani network declared a terrorist organization by the U.S. State Department, is one of the deadliest groups under the umbrella of the Afghan Taliban.⁶⁶

Four notable polls were conducted since the Iranian nuclear deal was announced which demonstrate that the American Jewish community is divided on it. Figures also show a significant number of Jewish Americans are still undecided, along with the general U.S. population.⁶⁷

The United States says it has confidence in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to probe Iran's alleged past efforts to build an atomic bomb after a leaked IAEA memo shows the agency will let Iran carry out its own inspections at a suspected nuclear site. The *Associated Press* reported on August 19 that it has seen what it calls a "secret agreement" between Iran and the IAEA and endorsed by the six world powers that negotiated the nuclear deal with Iran - Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia, and the U.S. *AP* says, under the agreement, Iran itself will send its own inspectors and equipment to the Parchin nuclear site, where Iran has been suspected of trying to develop a nuclear weapon. Iran has consistently denied the charge and has refused to allow international inspectors into the site. Meanwhile, the US State Department spokesman John Kirby said that he could not comment on what he says is a "purported draft document" by the IAEA. But he said the U.S. is comfortable with any arrangements the IAEA has with Iran.⁶⁸

U.S. President Barack Obama is continuing to call on members of Congress to support the Iran nuclear deal, stressing that the U.S. could still take military action or reinstate sanctions against Tehran if it violates terms of the agreement. Obama wrote in an August 19 letter addressed to Representative Jerrold Nadler, a New York Democrat that "Should Iran seek to dash toward a nuclear weapon, all of the options available to the United States, including the

⁶⁵ Tanzeem, Ayesha, "US: No Decision on Blocking Military Aid to Pakistan", *VOA News*, August 21, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/us-no-decision-on-blocking-military-aid-to-pakistan/2926949.html>

⁶⁶ Tanzeem, Ayesha, "Pakistan Media: US Blocked Military Aid Payment", *VOA News*, August 20, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/pakistan-media-reports-us-blocks-military-aid-payment/2925319.html>

⁶⁷ Hilleary, Cecily, "Iran Nuclear Debate Fracturing American Jewish Community", *VOA News*, August 22, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/iran-nuclear-debate-fracturing-american-jewish-community/2927371.html>

⁶⁸ "Document: IAEA to Let Iran Inspect Own Site", *VOA News*, August 19, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/document-says-un-to-let-iran-inspect-alleged-nuke-work-site/2924525.html>

military option, will remain available through the life of the deal and beyond".⁶⁹ Another well-known Senate Democrat Robert Menendez says he will vote against the nuclear deal with Iran, making Congressional passage look even more uncertain. He believes the deal will leave Iran with what he calls a "the core element of a robust nuclear infrastructure." Menendez said President Barack Obama is wrong when he says the deal will permanently stop Iran's nuclear programme. The senator said Iran has broken past promises to give up its nuclear ambitions.⁷⁰

U.S. Brigadier General Kevin Killea, head of military operations against the Islamic State (IS) group in Iraq and Syria, said that the initial field tests showed the presence of sulfur mustard, a class one chemical agent, on mortars used by IS militants to attack Kurdish forces in Iraq. Final tests are underway to make a clear assessment. Though it is unclear from where the IS militants would have obtained the weapon.⁷¹

U.S. airstrikes raining on Iraq and Syria appear to have killed another top leader of the group known as the Islamic States (IS). Officials said on August 21 the man thought to be the Islamic State's second-in-command, Fadhil Ahmad al-Hayali, was killed August 18 while traveling near the Iraqi city of Mosul. An Islamic State media operative known as Abu Abdullah also was killed. "Al-Hayali's death will adversely impact ISIL's operations given that his influence spanned ISIL's finance, media, operations, and logistics," National Security Council spokesman Ned Price said in a statement.⁷² On August 23, Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve officials reported that the U.S. and coalition military forces have continued to attack Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorists in Syria and Iraq.⁷³

In language rarely heard since the end of the Cold War, Defence Secretary Ash Carter said that Russia again poses an "existential threat" to the United States and in many ways behaves like an antagonist. "Russia poses an existential threat to the United States by virtue simply of the size of the nuclear arsenal that it's had," Carter said at a Pentagon briefing on August 20, responding to a question about whether he agreed with recent assessments by top military officials that Moscow today constitutes a larger threat to the U.S. than the Islamic State group. Carter acknowledged that for a quarter century the U.S. has not regarded Russia as an adversary, but that with President Vladimir Putin at its helm this has now changed. The U.S. needs to adjust to this new reality, he added.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Verma, Sam, "Obama Letter to Congress Urges Support for Iran Deal", *VOA News*, August 21, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/obama-letter-to-congress-urges-support-for-iran-nuclear-deal/2926804.html>

⁷⁰ "Another Senate Democrat Opposes Iran Nuclear Deal", *VOA News*, August 19, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/nuclear-experts-issue-support-for-iran-nuclear-deal/2922623.html>

⁷¹ "US Military: Tests Show IS May Have Used Chemical Weapon", *VOA News*, August 21, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/us-military-says-test-show-islamic-state-may-have-used-chemical-weapons/2927399.html>

⁷² Seldin, Jeff, "US Claims Airstrike Kills Islamic State's Second-in-Command", *VOA News*, August 21, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/reports-us-drone-strike-kills-a-number-2-islamic-state-leader/2927339.html>

⁷³ "Airstrikes Continue in Iraq, Syria", *DoD News*, August 23, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/614523/airstrikes-continue-in-iraq-syria>; "Anti-ISIL Airstrikes Continue in Syria, Iraq", *DoD News*, August 22, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/614520/anti-isil-airstrikes-continue-in-syria-iraq>

⁷⁴ "Pentagon Chief: Russia Poses 'Existential Threat' to US", *VOA News*, August 20, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/russia-poses-existential-threat-to-us-says-defense-secretary-carter/2926889.html>

The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, has met his Korean counterpart on August 21 to discuss the unwavering commitment of the United States to Korea's defence. Dempsey reiterated the strength of the U.S.-Korea alliance, Navy Capt. Greg Hicks, joint staff public affairs officer. Pentagon report that the two leaders "concurred they would watch North Korea's actions closely in the coming days...and would ensure that the U.S. and ROK continue to work closely with one another to deter further North Korean provocations and defuse tensions."⁷⁵

China has reclaimed more land in the disputed Spratly Islands of the South China Sea (SCS) than previous known, according to a new report by the U.S. Defence Department on Beijing's controversial island-building campaign. The report says that since China began the effort in December 2013, it has reclaimed land at seven of its eight Spratly outposts. The document (Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy) notes this is 17 times more land in nearly two years than other claimants combined in the past 40 years. China has been creating the artificial islands in waters where countries that include Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and the Philippines have overlapping claims. China says it stopped the reclamation work in the South China Sea in June. David Shear, the assistant secretary of defence for Asian and Pacific security affairs said that "It's not clear to us that they have stopped or if they are finishing up".⁷⁶

India-US Relations

(August 17-23, 2015)

- **The United States move to oppose major UNSC reforms contradicts its support for India's membership; India to get Pacific Island nations support for UNSC membership; Growing bilateral relationship has lasting effect on global peace, prosperity and security; US sees India as a model country and a force of stability in Asia; US country report on terrorism sees no action from Pakistan against terrorist groups; US says its upto India and Pakistan to resolve their differences; Pentagon has developed a three-pronged approach to maritime cooperation with India; Aircraft carrier working group holds inaugural meeting.**

The move by the United States to oppose any large-scale reforms in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) does not match the promise President Barack Obama made to India, that it would back New Delhi's candidacy for a permanent seat at the global decision-making body. Though U.S. Ambassador to India Richard Verma later said his country remained committed to its promise, Washington's policy towards UNSC reforms still lacks clarity. Meaningful reform of the Security Council to make it more representative and democratic would strengthen the UN to address the challenges of a changing world more effectively. India's demand for a permanent seat has to be looked into, duly considering the merits of the case.⁷⁷ On August 20, addressing the heads of the Pacific Island nations who are in New Delhi

⁷⁵ "Chairman, Korean Counterpart Discuss U.S.-Korea Defence Commitment", *DoD News*, August 22, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/614515/chairman-korean-counterpart-discuss-us-korea-defense-commitment>

⁷⁶ Williams, Candace, "Pentagon: China's Reclamation Increasing in South China Sea", *VOA News*, August 21, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/pentagon-says-china-reclamation-increasing-in-south-china-sea/2927330.html>

⁷⁷ "Much-needed Reform", *The Hindu*, August 18, 2015 at <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/restructuring-the-uns-c-much-needed-reform/article7550930.ece>

for the summit, President Pranab Mukherjee said: "UNSC reform and expansion will be discussed and concrete proposals are expected to be considered in the forthcoming UNGA session next month. An inter-governmental negotiating text is already on the table, for which India needs their support." Of the 14 Pacific Island nations, 12 have a vote in the United Nations, and India asserts it has "firm stated commitment of support" from at least 10 of these.⁷⁸

Noting growing Indian students in his country, US Ambassador to India Richard Verma on August 20 said educational exchange programmes help deepen bilateral ties which will in turn have lasting effect on global peace, prosperity and security. Ambassador Verma told students at Isabella Thoburn College in Lucknow that "I often speak about how the rise of India and the deepening relationship between our countries will have a lasting effect on global peace, prosperity and security". He said, "Indians account for the second-largest group of foreign students in the US, with over 1,02,000 students studying in America in 2013-14. At the same time, a growing number of Americans are choosing to study in India, with over 4,000 students annually making journey to India".⁷⁹

Prof Stephen Tankel, Assistant Professor in the School of International Service at American University, said in Bangaluru, India on August 21 that the United States does not see India as a country to counter or a balance against China in the South Asia Region, but rather as a model country and a force of stability in the region. In his perception, the US is not worried about China's rise or growing capabilities which is a natural evolution, but rather its behaviour. Tankel said, "This is the behaviour US tries does not want and wants to see China also as a force of stabilising factor like India". Pointing out to US President Barak Obamas visits to India in January 2015, he said, "'US is very enthusiastic about Indo-US relationship...'India, probably, receives more attention from the US policy-makers from on defence side than any other country that is not in crisis".⁸⁰

The US country report on terrorism released on August 21 states that Pakistan "did not take action against other groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba, which continued to operate, train, rally, propagandize, and fundraise in Pakistan." But the report stopped short of citing the government or the army use of terrorism as state policy, or calling for punitive action. The report further stated that "Lashkar e-Taiba (LeT) and its alias organizations continued to operate freely in Pakistan, and there were no indications that Pakistan took significant enforcement actions against the group". In fact, the report went so far as to say UN-designated terrorist organizations continued to skirt sanctions in Pakistan "by reconstituting themselves under different names, often with little effort to hide their connections to previously banned

⁷⁸ Ramachandran, Smriti Kak, "UNSC: India Eyes Support From Pacific Island Nations", *The Hindu*, August 21, 2015 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/unsc-india-eyes-support-from-pacific-island-nations/article7562731.ece>

⁷⁹ "India, US Relations Have Lasting Effect on Global Peace: Ambassador Richard Verma", *Press Trust of India*, August 20, 2015 at <http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/india-us-relations-have-lasting-effect-on-global-peace-ambassador-richard-verma-1209332>

⁸⁰ Pinto, Stanley, "US sees India as a Force Of Stability In The Region: US Defence Expert", *The Times of India*, August 21, 2015 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/US-sees-India-as-a-force-of-stability-in-the-region-US-defence-expert/articleshow/48585942.cms?prtpage=1>

groups, and the government does not prosecute 'countering the financing of terrorism' (CFT) cases."⁸¹

Meanwhile, describing terrorism as a shared challenge, the US has asked all nations including India and Pakistan to work in concert and coordination to deal with terror groups like the Islamic State that pose a "very real threat". The US State Department spokesman John Kirby told reporters on August 18 that "We all recognise and our partners in that region recognise that terrorism is a shared challenge, a shared responsibility, for all of us to work together". When asked about tension between India and Pakistan, Kirby said America's position has not changed on the matter and its upto the two nations to resolve their differences.⁸²

With strategic convergence of India's Act East policy and America's re-balance to the Asia Pacific region, the US has developed a three-pronged approach for maritime cooperation with the country. This approach includes maintaining a shared vision on maritime security issues, upgrading bilateral maritime security partnership and collaborating to both build regional partner capacity and improve regional maritime domain awareness. The Pentagon said in a report sent to the US Congress on August 20 that "Given our broad shared interests in maritime security, the Department (of Defence) has developed a three-pronged approach to maritime cooperation with India".⁸³

As part of the three-day visit, senior U.S. and Indian naval officers visited the shipyard in Newport News, Virginia, where Huntington Ingalls Industries Inc (HII.N) is building the USS Gerald R. Ford, the first in a new class of aircraft carriers. The group also met with Pentagon acquisition Chief Frank Kendall, was briefed about how the U.S. manages carrier development, and visited a U.S. Navy test site for carrier launch and recovery systems in Lakehurst, New Jersey. India wants to use state-of-the-art U.S. technology to boost the range and potency of a planned aircraft carrier, in a move that would expand cooperation between both countries and counter China's military influence in the region.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Rajghatta, Chidanand, "US Report Again Highlights Pakistan's Two-Timing On Terrorism", *The Times of India*, June 19, 2015 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/pakistan/US-report-again-highlights-Pakistans-two-timing-on-terrorism/articleshow/47738567.cms?prtpage=1>

⁸² "US Asks India, Pakistan To Resolve Tensions To Combat Terrorism", *The Economic Times*, August 19, 2015 at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/us-asks-india-pakistan-to-resolve-tensions-to-combat-terrorism/articleshow/48538063.cms?prtpage=1>

⁸³ "US Develops Three-Pronged Approach For Maritime Cooperation with India", *The Economic Times*, August 21, 2015 at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/us-develops-three-pronged-approach-for-maritime-cooperation-with-india-heres-what-it-includes/articleshow/48576709.cms>; Garamone, Jim, "U.S. Outlines Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy", *DoD News*, August 21, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/614488/us-outlines-asia-pacific-maritime-security-strategy>; and, "US to Upgrade Maritime Security Partnership with India", *The Times of India*, August 21, 2015 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/US-to-upgrade-maritime-security-partnership-with-India/articleshow/48578485.cms>.

⁸⁴ Shalal, Andrea, "U.S.-India Aircraft Carrier Working Group Holds Inaugural Meeting", *Reuters*, August 21, 2015 at <http://in.reuters.com/article/2015/08/21/usa-india-carrier-idINKCN0QQ00B20150821>

II. Defence Reviews

National

(August 17-23, 2015)

- **INS Trikand makes port call to Israel; Air Chief on a four day visit to Oman and United Arab Emirates.**

A frontline warship of the Indian Navy, INS Trikand made a port call at the port of Haifa, Israel on August 19, 2015. During the warship's four day stay at Haifa, extensive engagements are planned with the Israeli Navy. In addition to professional interactions, various sports and social engagements are planned to further enhance cooperation and understanding between the two navies. The previous port call at Haifa by an Indian Navy warship was in 2012. The visit is part of the Indian Navy's mission of building 'bridges of friendship' and strengthening international cooperation with friendly countries. The four day visit also aims at reaffirming the Indian Navy's peaceful presence and solidarity with the countries in the region, thereby allowing both Israel and India, to meet the ever growing challenges of the maritime environment. India has acquired critical defence technologies from Israel, notable among them being the Barak-I missile system for the Indian Navy. INS Trikand is the latest warship of the Indian Navy equipped with a versatile range of weapons and sensors enabling to address threats in all the three dimensions – air, surface and sub-surface. The visiting ship is part of the Indian Navy's Western Fleet and expected to bolster the robust ties between Israel and India.⁸⁵

Air Chief Marshal Arup Raha, is on a four day visit to Oman and United Arab Emirates (UAE). The first part of Air Chief Marshal Arup Raha's visit would be to Oman followed by UAE where he will interact with the Ambassador of India to Oman and Chief of the Royal Air Force of Oman (CRAFO). The visit to the UAE would include a visit to the F-16 and Mirage-2000 Squadrons. A visit to the Missile Air Warfare Centre, transport Squadron, KBZ Air college, aviation Squadron and Al Minhad Air Base has been planned thereafter. The Commonalities and exchange of best safety practices between both the Air Forces will also be discussed during the visit.⁸⁶

International

(August 17-23, 2015)

- **Australian Border Force launches a combined maritime security enforcement training programme with Indonesia; Turkish Aerospace Industries completes the delivery of the first batch of T129 attack helicopters to the Turkish Armed Forces.**

Reports say that the Australian Border Force (ABF) has launched a combined maritime security enforcement training programme with Indonesia. The initiative was unveiled by ABF commissioner Roman Quaedvlieg during a visit to the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement

⁸⁵ "INS Trikand Enters Haifa, Israel," *PIB*, August 19, 2015 at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=126175>

⁸⁶ "Air Chief Marshal Arup Raha visits Oman and UAE," *PIB*, August 17, 2015, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=126098>

Cooperation (JCLEC) in Semarang, Indonesia. JCLEC was established in November 2004 by Australia and Indonesia, primarily to provide training for law enforcement officers involved in multi-jurisdictional investigations. The two countries will also formalise a framework under which further combined maritime security initiatives can be discussed.⁸⁷

Meanwhile, according to reports, Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) has completed the delivery of the first batch of T129 attack helicopters to the Turkish Armed Forces. The batch comprises nine T129A helicopters built to an Early Delivery Helicopter (EDH) standard, with the final aircraft handed over on July 31. The T129s have already been involved in the recently renewed fighting against the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). Production has now begun in Ankara of the main batch of 50 T129B advanced helicopters. The first of these is expected to be delivered in the fourth quarter of 2015, with deliveries running until 2018. The first 30 T129Bs will be of an initial T129B1 standard, and the final 20 helicopters will be of the T129B2 (TUC-2) standard.⁸⁸

III. Internal Security Reviews

Jammu & Kashmir

(August 17-23, 2015)

- **Separatist leader Asiya Andrabi booked for waving Pak flag; Militants attacked police post in Sopore, killed cop, civilian; Pakistan cancels Commonwealth Parliamentary Union meet over J&K Speaker invitation row; India-Pakistan NSA-level talks called off.**

The Jammu & Kashmir Police on August 18 booked Dukhtaran-e-Millat chief Asiya Andrabi for hoisting Pakistani flags at her residence at Buchpora in Srinagar on August 14, the neighbouring country's independence day. She had also addressed Lashkar-e-Taiba activists in Lahore via mobile phone that day. An FIR was registered against the chief of the radical women's outfit under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act at Soura police station in Srinagar, said a police officer.⁸⁹

A policeman and a civilian were killed in a militant attack near a mosque in north Kashmir's Sopore district on August 18. The attack took place at a police post near the shrine in a Sopore village, about 52km from Srinagar. According to police, the militants came on a motorcycle and opened fire at the policemen guarding the shrine. The civilian who was killed in the attack was identified as 70-year-old Abdul Raheem Lone. He was differently abled. The

⁸⁷ "Australia, Indonesia Establish Combined Maritime Security Training Programme," *IHS Jane's*, August 24, 2015, at <http://www.janes.com/article/53801/australia-indonesia-establish-combined-maritime-security-training-programme>

⁸⁸ "Turkey Receives First Batch of T129s," *IHS Jane's*, August 19, 2015, at <http://www.janes.com/article/53737/turkey-receives-first-batch-of-t129s>

⁸⁹ Pandit, Saleem M, "Asiya Andrabi Booked For Hoisting Pakistani Flag", *The Times of India*, August 18, 2015 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Asiya-Andrabi-booked-for-hoisting-Pakistani-flag/articleshow/48521408.cms>

attackers fled with the rifle of the deceased policeman, Fayaz Ahmad, after killing him. Police have launched search operations in the area.⁹⁰

Pakistan on August 20 announced that it will not host next month's Commonwealth Parliamentary Union meeting amid a row with India over its refusal to invite the speaker of Jammu & Kashmir assembly for the conference. India had threatened to boycott the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference to be held in Islamabad from September 30 to October 8 after Islamabad refused to invite Jammu & Kashmir assembly speaker Kavinder Gupta for the event. The event will now be held in New York.⁹¹

Ending the suspense over the NSA-level talks scheduled in New Delhi, Islamabad said on August 22 night that "it cannot be held on the basis of the preconditions set by India". The Pakistani response came five hours after External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj said Sartaj Aziz, Advisor to the Pakistan Prime Minister on National Security and Foreign Affairs, was welcome if Pakistan could give an assurance by midnight that talks would be confined only to terror and that he won't meet the Hurriyat leaders in New Delhi. She delinked the NSA-level talks from the composite dialogue between the two countries. At 10 pm, two hours before Swaraj's deadline and after 40 hours of brinkmanship that started on August 21 morning, the Pakistan Foreign Ministry cleared the air when it said Islamabad had "carefully analyzed" Swaraj's statements and had come to the conclusion that the "proposed NSA level talks between the two countries would not serve any purpose, if conducted on the basis of the two conditions laid down by the Minister". On the meeting with Hurriyat leaders, Islamabad said it had "repeatedly" mentioned this was a "long-standing practice", that whenever Pakistani leaders visited India in the last twenty years, they had met Hurriyat leaders. Further, maintaining that the issue of terrorism was always a part of the composite dialogue and discussed simultaneously with other issues, the Pakistan statement said, "It is not reasonable for India to now assume the right to decide unilaterally that from now onwards, other issues will be discussed after terrorism has been discussed and eliminated."⁹²

Northeast India

(August 17-23, 2015)

- **Task Force recommends immediate reorganisation of Assam Rifles; India asks Myanmar to hand over Khaplang, 3 others; Security forces arrest three militants in Manipur; Assam: Police nab six Maoists cadres; NSCN-KK rejects NSCN-IM peace deal; ULFA still in touch with ISI, says DGP Assam.**

The Task Force constituted by the Prime Minister to examine the problems of management of the India-Myanmar border has recommended immediate reorganisation of the Assam Rifles as the possibility of rebellion in the force under the present system cannot be ruled out. The

⁹⁰ Rashid, Toufiq "Cop, Civilian Killed After Militant Attack in J-K's Sopore", *Hindustan Times*, August 18, 2015 at <http://www.hindustantimes.com/jandk/militants-attack-police-post-in-kashmir/article1-1381324.aspx>

⁹¹ "Commonwealth Meet Shifted to New York as Pakistan Refuses To Invite J&K Speaker", *The Times of India*, August 20, 2015 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Commonwealth-meet-shifted-to-New-York-as-Pakistan-refuses-to-invite-JK-speaker/articleshow/48558628.cms>

⁹² Roy, Subhagit, "NSA-level talks off: After War Of Words, India and Pakistan Decide Not To Talk", *The Indian Express*, August 23, 2015 at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/pak-calls-of-nsa-level-talks-with-india-says-meet-cant-be-held-on-preconditions-set-by-india/>

Task Force, along with the recommendation to replace the force with Indo-Tibetan Border Police in the international border, has suggested that the Force should be reorganised so that it can become like the other Central paramilitary forces. At present, the administrative control of the Assam Rifles is under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), which also controls the budget of the Force. But at the same time, the operational control of the Force is under the Defence Ministry. This creates serious problems for the Force from time to time. The Task Force recommended that the Assam Rifles should be brought under the MHA like the other Central paramilitary forces.⁹³

India has asked Myanmar to hand over four top leaders of Naga outfit NSCN-K, including its chief S S Khaplang, holding them responsible for killing of 18 army soldiers in Manipur on June 4. Besides Khaplang, India sought the custody of Niki Sumi, Kirichu and Asang, who were believed to have planned and supervised the attack in Manipur's Chandel district. The request was placed during the meeting of India-Myanmar Joint Consultative Committee held in Delhi last month, government sources said. The sources said the Myanmar delegation, however, remained non-committal over India's request to hand over the NSCN-K leaders.⁹⁴

Three militants were arrested by security forces from different places in Bishnupur district and Imphal East district of Manipur, a police official said on August 19. Two cadres of Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL) were arrested on August 20 by a combined team of Bishnupur police commando and Assam Rifles personnel from different places. Also another militant of Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP) was arrested from a rented house at Khurai Chaithabi Leirak in Imphal East district during the search operation. On the disclosure of later rebel, one 9 mm pistol along with three live rounds and other incriminating articles were seized by the security forces on August 18.⁹⁵

Assam police on August 20 arrested six Maoist cadres from Cachar district in Assam. A police official said, "Among those arrested, two are senior cadres including a woman. They are identified as Amiruddin Ahmed and N Biswas." He added that Amiruddin hails from Assam and Biswas from Nadia district of West Bengal. Other four persons are all from Cachar district.⁹⁶

In the backdrop of the Naga Peace Accord signed between the Government of India and the NSCN-IM in New Delhi on August 3, NSCN (Khole-Kitovi) has said it will not accept

⁹³ Choudhury, R Dutta, "Call for Immediate Reorganisation of Assam Rifles", *The Assam Tribune*, August 17, 2015 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=aug1715/at054>

⁹⁴ "India Asks Myanmar To Hand Over Khaplang, 3 Others", *Business Standard*, August 18, 2015 at http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/india-asks-myanmar-to-hand-over-khaplang-3-others-115081801055_1.html

⁹⁵ "Three Militants Arrested By Security Forces in Manipur", *The Economic Times*, August 19, 2015 at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/three-militants-arrested-by-security-forces-in-manipur/articleshow/48546186.cms>

⁹⁶ Singh, Bikash, "Six Maoist Cadres Arrested in Assam", *The Economic Times*, August 20, 2015 at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/six-maoist-cadres-arrested-in-assam/articleshow/48556437.cms>

“imposition” of NSCN-IM peace deal in Nagaland because the political future of tribes of Nagaland is best understood and to be decided by them alone. The NSCN-KK led by its chairman Khole Konyak and general secretary N Kitovi Zhimomi asserted that the people of Nagaland will not embrace the “undignified peace accord” and said Nagas of Nagaland cannot be sacrificed to fulfil the political aspiration and desire of Nagas from other neighbouring States, the outfit said in a press release.⁹⁷

The United Liberation Front of Asom (Independent) is still in touch with the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), said Director General of Assam Police, Khagen Sarma. The DGP said that according to information available with the police and security agencies, the Pakistani agency still has influence over the ULFA (I) and leaders of the outfit are in touch with operatives of the ISI. He said that the militant group is also receiving assistance in different forms from the Pakistani agency. The ISI is still imparting training to members of the ULFA (I). But instead of being trained in Pakistan, the militants are trained in different countries, said the DGP. He also said that only small groups are taken abroad for training.⁹⁸

Left-wing Extremism

(August 17-23, 2015)

- **Maoists inflict security forces' casualties in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand; CPI-Maoist says committed 'mistakes' during Lalgarh stir; Chhattisgarh: Maoists attack STF platoon, kill Assistant commandant in Darbha.**

A CRPF Jawan was killed and three others critically injured in an encounter with Naxals in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh on August 18. According to reports, a team of CRPF personnel involved in road sanitization patrol was ambushed by suspected Naxals in Basaguda police station area. The CRPF team of 168 Battalion, comprising about 70-80 men, had reportedly left their Timmapur base camp for the road opening operation. The three injured jawans were reportedly flown to Raipur for treatment.⁹⁹ In yet another incident at Khunti village in Jharkhand on the same day, a constable was killed and Ranchi SSP Prabhat Kumar and his bodyguard were injured when a group of suspected Maoists opened fire on the police team deployed for anti-Maoist operation in the area. SSP Kumar was leading a joint team of CRPF jawans and district (Ranchi and Khunti) police to Dulmi village on the border of Ranchi and Khunti districts. Police said Maoist zonal commander Kakila Munda alias Chandal and one of his aides were also killed in the cross-firing, but only Munda's body could be found.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ “NSCN-KK Rejects NSCN-IM Peace Deal”, *The Assam Tribune*, August 23, 2015 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=aug2315/oth051>

⁹⁸ “ULFA Still In Touch with ISI, Says DGP”, *The Assam Tribune*, August 23, 2015 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=aug2315/at050>

⁹⁹ Jaiswal, Anuja, “CRPF Jawan Killed In Gun-Fight with Maoists in Chhattisgarh”, *The Times of India*, August 18, 2015 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/CRPF-jawan-killed-in-gun-fight-with-Maoists-in-Chhattisgarh/articleshow/48528853.cms>

¹⁰⁰ “Maoists Kill Cop, Injure SSP Near Ranchi”, *The Times of India*, August 19, 2015 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ranchi/Maoists-kill-cop-injure-SSP-near-Ranchi/articleshow/48533350.cms>

The banned CPI (Maoist) has said it committed "mistakes" during the Lalgarh movement by killing people and removing their bodies covertly and said that it had wrongly believed that Trinamool Congress would withdraw joint forces from Jangalmahal after coming to power in the state. In a six-page review report of the so called central committee of its eastern bureau, a copy of which is available to the media, the Naxalite outfit said, "We had a belief that if the CPI-M is defeated, then the joint forces will be withdrawn and all political prisoners released, but we were wrong." The Maoists' admission of mistakes came at a time when there are reports that the ultras were trying to stage a comeback in Jangalmahal after a hiatus of four years since the death of CPI (Maoist) politburo member Kishenji in November, 2011.¹⁰¹

An assistant platoon commandant of Special Task Force (STF) was killed while a constable suffered injuries when outlawed Communist Party of India (Maoist) ambushed a team of STF in Darbha region of tribal Bastar district in Chhattisgarh. The incident took place at 2am on August 23 when a contingent of STF team was carrying out an operation in Darbha region, following a tip-off that Maoists had blocked NH-30, which connects Jagdalpur to Sukma. As security personnel reached the village, Maoists unleashed an attack and opened indiscriminate firing on security forces. Thereafter, forces retaliated and engaged the rebels in an encounter for about two hours. Later, rebels retreated into forests.¹⁰²

IV. United Nations Reviews

India and the UN

(August 17-23, 2015)

- **Ban urges restraint on LoC; Anupam Kher associates with UN Women; On role of regional organisations in peace and security, India conservative and Pakistan liberal.**

After the UNMOGIP observers' visit to the site of ceasefire violations, UN Secretary General Ban-ki Moon urged India and Pakistan to maintain the ceasefire along the LoC and minimize civilian casualties. He hoped that some progress would be made on this front in the forthcoming dialogue between the NSAs of the two countries.¹⁰³

UN Women has selected actor Anupam Kher as an advocate for the "HeforShe" campaign. Lakshi Puri, Executive Director of organisation said Kher's association with the campaign will

¹⁰¹ "CPI-Maoist Says Committed 'Mistakes' During Lalgarh Stir", *Business Standard*, August 20, 2015 at http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/cpi-maoist-says-committed-mistakes-during-lalgarh-stir-115082000118_1.html

¹⁰² "Maoists Attack STF Platoon, Kill Asst Commandant", *The Times of India*, August 23, 2015 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/raipur/Maoists-attack-STF-platoon-kill-asst-commandant/articleshow/48634938.cms>

¹⁰³ "Concerned by Violence along India and Pakistan 'Line of Control,' Ban Urges Countries to Resume Dialogue", *UN News*, August 18, 2015, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=51670#.VdsBpiWqqko>

help the cause greatly as he has been associated with work related to gender equality for a long time.¹⁰⁴

At a Security Council session on Regional Organizations and Contemporary Challenges of Global Security, India's acting Permanent Representative, Bhagwant S Bishnoi, reiterated India's concerns regarding regionalisation of peacekeeping in Africa which could bring into question the impartiality of peacekeeping. He urged that regional organisations should take the lead in resolving conflicts through peaceful means rather than deploying militaries for peacekeeping. The Secretary General however felt that regional organisations must support UN efforts for peace and security.¹⁰⁵ At the same meeting, Pakistan's Permanent Representative, Maleeha Lodhi, said organisations such as the OIC could also play a role in furthering peace and security in Palestine, the conflicts in Middle East as well as the 'dispute' in Jammu and Kashmir.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ "Anupam Kher Named Advocate for UN's 'HeForShe' Campaign", *Zee News*, August 19, 2015, at http://zeenews.india.com/entertainment/celebrity/anupam-kher-named-advocate-for-uns-heforshe-campaign_1649375.html

¹⁰⁵ "UN Should Not Sub-Contract Peacekeeping: India", *UN News*, August 19, 2015, at <http://www.oneindia.com/international/un-should-not-sub-contract-peacekeeping-india-1842734.html>

¹⁰⁶ "Pakistan Raises Kashmir Issue at United Nations, Seeks OIC Intervention", *India Today*, August 19, 2015, at <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/pakistan-raises-kashmir-issue-at-united-nations-seeks-oic-intervention/1/459668.html>