

# THE WEEK IN REVIEW

August 24 – August 30, 8 (5), 2015

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# I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

## A. South Asia

### Afghanistan

(August 24-30, 2015)

- **Jundullah's chief killed in Kunduz; Dostum rejects massacre allegations; Helmand's Musa Qala district captured by Taliban; Aziz Haqqani added to List of "Specially Designated Global Terrorists"; Kabul- Ashgabad signed five MoUs; Pakistan is a weak country and won't stop terror in Afghanistan anytime soon.**

A prominent terrorist who was leading the Jundullah terrorist group in Afghanistan was killed in an airstrike in northern Kunduz province of Afghanistan. The Afghan intelligence – National Directorate of Security (NDS) said Abu Hazifa was killed in an airstrike launched in coordination with the intelligence department. A statement by NDS said the airstrike was carried out in Chahar Darea district around 4:30 pm local time. The statement further added that Abu Hazifa's deputy and three other commanders of the terror group were also among those killed in the air raid. NDS said Abdu Hazifa was one of the prominent terrorist leader who was leading fight against the Afghan security forces in north. According to NDS, the terror group was involved in the killing of dozens of innocent civilians, particularly in Kunduz province. This comes as northern Kunduz province has been witnessing growing insurgency activities by the anti-government armed militant groups during the recent months.<sup>1</sup>

The First Vice President Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum strongly rejected allegations of genocide during the operations led by him in northern parts of the country. Gen. Dostum said those who accuse him of genocide are speaking on behalf of the regional spy agencies directly involved in the ongoing violence across the country. He said such remarks are made by those who organized funerals for the former Taliban supreme leader Mullah Mohammad Omar. Gen. Dostum is currently in northern Faryab province of Afghanistan to coordinate military operations against the anti-government armed militant groups amid deteriorating security situation in this province. He joined the Afghan security institutions and top government officials for blaming Pakistan's military intelligence for the ongoing violence in the country. In his remarks following a series of deadly attacks in capital Kabul, Gen. Dostum said the Pakistani military generals and the country's powerful military intelligence – Inter service Intelligence (ISI) are plotting and coordinating attacks across Afghanistan, under the name of al Qaeda, Islamic State affiliates and Taliban militants. According to Gen. Dostum, the

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<sup>1</sup> "NDS: Jundullah Terror Group's Chief Killed In Kunduz Province", *Khaama Press*, August 24, 2015, at <http://www.khaama.com/nds-jundullah-terror-groups-chief-killed-in-kunduz-province-1431>

ongoing violence in Afghanistan could end only if Pakistan's military and ISI truly cooperate with the Afghan government.<sup>2</sup>

Taliban militants have captured Musa Qala District of southern Helmand province after severe clashes with security forces. Mohammad Sharif Khan, the district governor said that security forces resisted with Taliban until their last bullet but when they ran out of ammos and food Taliban captured the district last night. Without giving a specific number, the district governor said that a number of security forces have embraced martyrdom in last night's clashes and 15 others wounded. Khan further said that before Musa Qala falls it was surrounded by Taliban for several days. According to Khan, he yield for assistance but did not receive it which caused in the casualties to security forces and losing the district to Taliban. Khan earlier this week told media that Taliban are about two kilometres away from the district centre of Musa Qala. He had also warned that the district could fall to Taliban in case reinforcement does not arrive on time. In that time, a member of Helmand's provincial council said that Taliban have martyred several soldiers during an attack on their security post in Qasaban area of Musa Qala District.<sup>3</sup>

The United States Department of State has added Abdul Aziz Haqqani to its list of "Special Designated Global Terrorist". A statement by the State Department said "For several years, Aziz Haqqani has been involved in planning and carrying out improvised explosive-device attacks against Afghan government targets and assumed responsibility for all major Haqqani Network attacks after the death of his brother, Badruddin Haqqani." Aziz Haqqani is the brother of the head of the Haqqani network and has a bounty set by US of up to \$5 million for information leading to his location. Having lose ties to Al-Qaeda and hard-line elements in Pakistani military intelligence, the Haqqani terrorist network is accused of staging numerous cross-border attacks from their base in North Waziristan, including the 19-hour siege at the US Embassy in Kabul in September 2011.<sup>4</sup>

In response to the invitation by the Afghan government, the President of Turkmenistan, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow, arrived in Kabul on August 26 along with key delegates. The two sides signed five Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) on areas including economy, science and education, and sports. The Ministries of Finance, Energy and Water of the two countries signed the MoUs on power supply export, fight against terrorism and formation of a joint commission for the extension of trade and economic ties. In a joint press conference with his Afghan counterpart, the President of Turkmenistan, talked about how the two neighbouring countries will expand their bilateral relations in the areas of security and peace, economy, and counter-narcotics. "Both the nations are committed to fight international terrorism and narcotics. He said that his country is keenly interested in expanding trade and economic bilateral ties. Berdimuhamedow said the UN has been playing an effective role in addressing Afghanistan's issues however he vowed that Ashgabad was ready to facilitate peace talks being an impartial country. "We are ready to host the peace talks on our land so that our Afghan brothers can hold peace negotiations in a free and an impartial atmosphere,"

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<sup>2</sup> "Gen. Dostum Rejects Massacre Allegations During Operations in North", *Khaama Press*, August 25, 2015, at <http://www.khaama.com/gen-dostum-rejects-massacre-allegations-during-operations-in-north-1436>

<sup>3</sup> "Taliban Capture Helmand's Musa Qala District", *Khaama Press*, August 26, 2015, at <http://www.khaama.com/taliban-capture-helmands-musa-qala-district-3823>

<sup>4</sup> "US Adds Aziz Haqqani To Its List Of "Specially Designated Global Terrorists", *Khaama Press*, August, 27, 2015, at <http://www.khaama.com/us-adds-aziz-haqqani-to-its-list-of-specially-designated-global-terrorists-9600>

Berdimuhamedow said. Talking on key development projects, he said that his government wants to launch some mega projects in the fields of energy and railway construction in Afghanistan. Regarding the Turkmenistan – Afghanistan – Pakistan – India (TAPI) gas pipeline, he remarked that a major part of the project's work has been completed and he expected the practical work on the project would be started by the end of 2015.<sup>5</sup>

The former Afghan Intelligence – National Directorate of Security (NDS) Chief Amrullah Saleh has said Pakistan will not stop terror in Afghanistan anytime soon, being a strategically narrow-minded state and considering a depth in the region in a bid to put pressure on India in some way. In an interview with the online American magazine – International Policy Digest, Saleh said "Pakistan is a weak country. It has inherent and default weaknesses. Pakistan is not going to stop terror in my country anytime soon." He was responding a question on what can be done to make ISI stop its criminal and terrorist activities in Afghanistan? Saleh said "Therefore, it is up to the Afghan government to strategize ways of getting Pakistan to refrain from interfering in Afghanistan diplomatically. Creating trouble in a neighbouring country is not rocket science." "Pakistan is a politically insecure, psychologically nervous, and strategically narrow-minded state. It wants parity with India. In the belief of the Pakistani strategists, subordination of Afghanistan to the wishes and demands of Pakistan will give them a depth in the region and will in some way put pressure on India," Saleh added. "They also hate seeing Afghanistan have a democratic system," Saleh said, adding that "Pakistan sees democracy as an existential threat." According to Saleh "A real, robust democracy will transform Pakistan into a cultural and economic satellite state of India. Something that the Pakistani leaders want to avoid at any cost."<sup>6</sup>

## Bangladesh

(August 24-30, 2015)

- **Chinese Commerce Minister visits Bangladesh; Arakan Army attacks BGB patrol team; Bangladesh, Mexico sign MoU to boost relations.**

China has offered to invest about \$350 million in Bangladesh's various sectors for product diversification, value addition as well as boosting exports for the mutual benefits of the two countries. Visiting Chinese Commerce Minister Gao Huchen said this at a meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Gono Bhaban on August 25, 2015. After the meeting, PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim told reporters that the Chinese minister had termed Bangladesh a development partner of his country and urged the prime minister to form a committee to coordinate with the Chinese side over the investment it wants to make in Bangladesh. Gao Huchen said Bangladesh produces quality jute products, the export of which to China has increased by 10 per cent just in the first half of this year. A letter of exchange has been signed between Bangladesh and China for building Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Centre

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<sup>5</sup> "Kabul- Ashgabad Signed Five MoUs on Economy, Energy, Science And Sports", *Daily Afghanistan Times*, August 27, 2015, at <http://afghanistantimes.af/kabul-ashgabad-signed-five-mous-on-economy-energy-science-and-sports>

<sup>6</sup> "Pakistan is a Weak Country And Won't Stop Terror In Afghanistan Anytime Soon: Saleh", *Daily Afghanistan Times*, August 27, 2015, at <http://www.khaama.com/pakistan-is-a-weak-country-and-wont-stop-terror-in-afghanistan-anytime-soon-saleh-9605>

at Purbachal on the outskirts of capital, the minister mentioned. Regarding Chinese investment, particularly in Bangladesh's garment sector, Hasina said her government had allocated land in Chittagong's Anwara upazila for Chinese Economic and Industrial Zone. The government is setting up 22 special economic zones to facilitate such investment, the PM said. Bangladesh and China have enormous potentials in joint venture industries, she commented. A key reason for Gao Huchen's Bangladesh visit was to review the progress in implementing the commitments already made by China. This also is part of the preparation for a prospective visit of the Chinese president or the prime minister to mark the 40th anniversary of diplomatic ties between the two countries.<sup>7</sup>

Myanmarese separatist group Arakan Army swooped on a Border Guard Bangladesh patrol team in Boro Modak area of Thanchi in Bandarban on August 26, leading to a gun battle that left one nayek injured. The joint force took the situation under control as the separatist group retreated.<sup>8</sup>

Bangladesh and Mexico have agreed to start a dialogue to expand bilateral relations including strengthening trade and commerce. The two countries signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on Foreign Office Consultation (FOC) to that effect. State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam, who was on an official visit to Mexico, and Mexican Foreign Minister José Antonio Meade Kuribreña signed the MoU on August 26. The Bangladesh state minister had a breakfast meeting with presidents and director generals of leading apparel manufacturing companies of Mexico. The entrepreneurs expressed eagerness to visit Bangladesh at the end of this year for exploring investment opportunities.<sup>9</sup>

## Sri Lanka

(August 24-30, 2015)

- **India officially gifts Coast Guard Ship to Sri Lanka Navy; U.S. officials discuss national reconciliation with Sri Lankan leaders; United States supports Sri Lanka's resettlement efforts in Sampur; U.S. to sponsor UN resolution supporting domestic probe in Sri Lanka; U.S. grants Sri Lanka \$ 3.2 million to develop schools in the East; Three new cabinet ministers take oaths in Sri Lanka.**

India today formally gifted Indian Coast Guard Vessel "Varaha" to the Sri Lanka Navy at a ceremony held at the port of Colombo according to naval customs and traditions. Varaha had been in service with Sri Lanka Navy as Sri Lanka Naval Ship (SLNS) Sagara since 2006. Indian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, Y. K. Sinha handed over the ship on behalf of Government of India and the Secretary of the Ministry of Defence, B. M. U. D. Basnayake accepted the ship on behalf of the Government of Sri Lanka.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> "China Offers To Invest \$350m in Various Sectors of Bangladesh", *The Daily Star*, August 26, 2015 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/china-offers-invest-350m-132718>.

<sup>8</sup> "Myanmarese Separatist Group Arakan Army Attack BGB Patrol Team", *The Daily Star*, August 27, 2015 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/myanmar-rebels-attack-bgb-team-133261>.

<sup>9</sup> "Bangladesh, Mexico Sign MoU to Boost Relations", *The Daily Star*, August 28, 2015 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/city/bangladesh-mexico-sign-mou-boost-relations-133921>.

<sup>10</sup> "India Officially Gifts Coast Guard Ship to Sri Lanka Navy", *ColomboPage*, August 27, 2015 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_15B/Aug27\\_1440699658CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Aug27_1440699658CH.php).

Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Nisha Biswal, accompanied by the Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labour Tom Malinowski met with Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena at the Presidential Secretariat on August 25. During her meeting with the President Biswal appreciated his initiatives towards democracy, peace and reconciliation in the island nation. Biswal extended best wishes on behalf of the U.S. Government and the Secretary of State, John Kerry to President Sirisena for conducting recently concluded Parliamentary Elections in a free and fair manner. The two high ranking U.S. officials also met with the Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe and the Foreign Affairs Minister Mangala Samaraweera to discuss issues relating to the national reconciliation, combating corruption and good governance.<sup>11</sup>

The United States joining other international donors and has decided to provide \$1 million to support resettlement efforts in Sampur in the East as part of its continuing commitment to strengthen Sri Lanka's peace and development. President Maithripala Sirisena handed over the land deeds to 234 war displaced families in Sampur, on Saturday. "Our goal is to help Sri Lankans around the country overcome the effects of conflict and displacement, improve the lives of their families and communities, and live with dignity," said U.S. Ambassador Atul Keshap. The first \$100,000 will be managed by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to provide newly-resettled communities with a range of services and means of support to meet their basic needs. Another \$900,000 is planned by the U.S. Embassy to build two schools in the Sampur region with facilities to support and house displaced families. This \$1 million in aid is part of broader U.S. efforts to build schools, hospitals, markets, and other facilities for people in former conflict-affected communities. Other programs include helping provide job opportunities and entrepreneurship skills for people across Sri Lanka.<sup>12</sup>

Indicating a major shift in policy towards Sri Lanka, the United States said that it would sponsor a resolution at United Nations Human Rights Council session in Geneva supporting the government of Sri Lanka to conduct its own domestic probe into the alleged war crimes. Visiting Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Nisha Biswal at a media briefing in Colombo said her government will work together with Sri Lanka to move the resolution at the UNHRC to address responsibility for alleged human rights abuses and propose a framework for reconciliation. The U.S will assist Sri Lanka to draft the resolution to hold a local investigation with the support of the Sri Lankan government and other stakeholders.<sup>13</sup>

The United States has agreed to grant US\$ 3.2 million for the development of schools in the Eastern Province. The signing of the agreement took place under the patronage of Eastern Province Governor Austin Fernando at his office on August 28. David Christine of the U.S. Embassy in Colombo and Chief Secretary of the Eastern Province Sarath Abeygunawardena signed the agreement in the presence of Representatives of the U.S. State Department. New

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<sup>11</sup> "U.S. Officials Discuss National Reconciliation with Sri Lankan Leaders", *ColomboPage*, August 25, 2015 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_15B/Aug25\\_1440519887CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Aug25_1440519887CH.php).

<sup>12</sup> "United States Supports Sri Lanka's Resettlement Efforts in Sampur", *ColomboPage*, August 25, 2015 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_15B/Aug25\\_1440509432CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Aug25_1440509432CH.php).

<sup>13</sup> "U.S. to Sponsor UN Resolution Supporting Domestic Probe in Sri Lanka", *ColomboPage*, August 26, 2015 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_15B/Aug26\\_1440601834CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Aug26_1440601834CH.php).

U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka Atul Keshap assured the Eastern Governor another US\$ 1million for education development in the Eastern Province.<sup>14</sup>

Three Cabinet Ministers took oath before Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena at the Presidential Secretariat on August 24. Mangala Samaraweera has been appointed as the Minister of Foreign Affairs while Dr. Wijedasa Rajapakshe has been appointed as the Minister of Justice. D.M. Swaminathan took oaths as the Minister of Resettlement and Rehabilitation.<sup>15</sup>

## Maldives

(August 17-30, 2015)

- **Mohamed Nasheed taken back to prison; A delegation from MDP has left for Sri Lanka to update on the political state; Japanese Foreign Minister invited to the Maldives; MDP's National Congress decides to discontinue talks with the Government; India hands over Kadhdhoo radar system to MNDF; Agreement signed for \$53 million development project.**

Former President Mohamed Nasheed who was sentenced to 13 years in prison and was under house arrest has been taken back to prison.<sup>16</sup>

A delegation from Maldives Democratic Party (MDP)'s Foreign Relations Committee including MDPs' Foreign Relations head and the former President of the Parliament, Abdullah Shahid, Ahmed Thasmeen Ali and from President Nasheed's Defence Team, lawyer Hassan Latheef went to Sri Lanka on August 28 to share President Nasheed's transfer back to prison, for First Lady's summon to the Police and the political state of the country with the international community.<sup>17</sup>

Foreign Minister Dhunya Maumoon has invited the Japanese Foreign Minister, Fumio Kishida to make an official visit to the Maldives. Minister Dhunya Maumoon extended the invitation at a meeting at the Japanese Foreign Ministry on August 28. At the meeting Minister Dhunya noted the close relations between the two countries and expressed her gratitude for the Japanese support. The Maldivian Ambassador to Japan, Ahmed Khaleel and Joint Secretary, Aishath Azeema also took part in the meeting. Minister Dhunya's official visit to Japan was to take part in the Hope for Women conference in Japan.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> "U.S. Grants Sri Lanka \$ 3.2 Million to Develop Schools in the East", *ColomboPage*, August 29, 2015 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_15B/Aug29\\_1440787961CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Aug29_1440787961CH.php).

<sup>15</sup> "Three New Cabinet Ministers Take Oaths in Sri Lanka", *ColomboPage*, August 24, 2015 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_15B/Aug24\\_1440400172CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Aug24_1440400172CH.php).

<sup>16</sup> "President Nasheed has been Brought onto the Vehicle to Be Taken Back to Prison", *SunOnline*, August 23, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/31814>.

<sup>17</sup> "A Delegation from MDP has Left for Sri Lanka to Update on the Political State", *SunOnline*, August 29, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/31949>.

<sup>18</sup> "Japanese Foreign Minister Invited to the Maldives", *SunOnline*, August 29, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/31945>.

The National Congress of the opposition MDP has decided to discontinue talks with the Government. The decision was made with the unanimous vote of all the members present at an emergency session of the congress held at the MDP halls on August 25.<sup>19</sup>

The third radar system provided by the Indian government, installed in Kadhdhoo, has been handed over to the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF). The High Commission of India in the Maldives said in a press release issued on August 23 that the system was handed over to MNDF Central Area Commander, Colonel Hamid Shafeeq, by engineers of Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) at a ceremony at the MNDF Central Area Headquarters on August 17, 2015. According to the Indian High Commission, the system will provide all-weather 24-hour coverage of the sea area adjoining Laamu Atoll, which would allow MNDF to track ships and fishing boats, providing added security in the Maldives Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The installation of the radar system in Kadhdhoo saw the completion of the Phase I of the Maldives Coastal Radar Project. Following a request by the Maldivian government in 2006, the Indian government installed radars in Gan and Uligamu in 2007 and 2012 respectively. Fitment of seven additional radars and Automatic Identification System (AIS) stations are planned under Phase II of the project.<sup>20</sup>

The government and the United Nations in the Maldives have signed an agreement for \$53 million development project for a five-year. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) will cover four strategic priority areas: Youth and Children, Gender, Governance, Environment and Climate Change. The agreement was signed by Minister of Foreign Affairs Dunya Maumoon and UN Resident Coordinator to the Maldives Shoko Noda, at a ceremony at Foreign Ministry on August 23. The project will commence in 2016.<sup>21</sup>

## B. East Asia

### China

(August 24-30, 2015)

- **Li Keqiang chairs a special meeting of State Council; No PLA troops sent to border with the DPRK; Xi Jinping asserts national unity; China and Russia to conduct joint naval drill; 22,6000 officials disciplined in 2015.**

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang chaired a special meeting of the State Council in Zhongnanhai on August 28. The meeting was organized to discuss recent developments in the financial area and global economic situations. After the meeting Li said that, "recent fluctuations on the

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<sup>19</sup> "MDP's National Congress Decides To Discontinue Talks with the Government", *SunOnline*, August 25, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/31840>.

<sup>20</sup> "India Hands over Kadhdhoo Radar System to MNDF", *SunOnline*, August 24, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/31826>.

<sup>21</sup> "Agreement Signed for \$53 Million Development Project", *SunOnline*, August 24, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/31823>.

international market have an impact on China, yet the Chinese economy is still operating within an appropriate range and China continues to lead the world in terms of growth".<sup>22</sup>

In the backdrop of the recent tensions on the Korean Peninsula, the Chinese Ministry of National Defence has dismissed all reports suggesting that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) was reinforcing the border with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Chinese Ministry spokesperson, Tang Yujun said that, "the reports .... are not in accordance with facts and are purely hype".<sup>23</sup>

Chinese President Xi Jinping concluded a two day meeting related to the Tibet autonomous region. During the meeting Xi said that, "key efforts in the work for Tibet should be spent on ensuring national unity and consolidating ethnic unity, realizing long-term and comprehensive social stability as an obligatory task". He also asserted that the Chinese government will continue to work towards improving the living standards of the people.<sup>24</sup>

It has been reported that fleets from Russia and China are all set to take part in a nine day "Joint Sea-2015 (II)" naval drill. The exercises start on August 28, in the Sea of Japan and off the coast of Vladivostok.<sup>25</sup>

On August 22, China's top anti-graft body announced that in 2015 around 22,600 officials had been disciplined for breaking austerity rules. In 2014 the number of officials who were under action was 71,000.<sup>26</sup>

## Japan

(August 24-30, 2015)

- **Japanese and South Korean Education minister meeting held after 15 years; Hiroshima hosted the 25th United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues; Japanese Defence Ministry has sought 2.2 percent increase in spending and Foreign Ministry requested a 10.4 per cent increase for fiscal 2016.**

On August 30, Japanese and South Korean Education minister Hakubun Shimomura and Hwang Woo-yea held meeting for the first time in 15 years and agreed to institute a commendation scheme for persons and groups that support educational interactions among the two nations. Both parties decided to support regular ministerial talks and improve the outline of the Campus Asia programme to encourage university exchanges between Japan,

<sup>22</sup> "China's Economy Operating Within Appropriate Range: Premier", *China Daily*, August 30, 2015 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-08/30/content\\_21741558.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-08/30/content_21741558.htm), accessed on August 31, 2015

<sup>23</sup> "Ministry: No Troops Sent To Border with DPRK", By Zhang Yunbi, *China Daily*, August 28, 2015 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-08/28/content\\_21729051.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-08/28/content_21729051.htm), accessed on August 28, 2015

<sup>24</sup> "National and Ethnic Unity Vital for Region, Xi says", By Yang Wanli, *China Daily*, August 26, 2015 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/tibet50years/2015-08/26/content\\_21706350.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/tibet50years/2015-08/26/content_21706350.htm), accessed on August 28, 2015

<sup>25</sup> "Chinese, Russian Navies Depart For Joint Drill", *China Daily*, August 24, 2015 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-08/24/content\\_21686461.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-08/24/content_21686461.htm), accessed on August 28, 2015

<sup>26</sup> "China Disciplines 22,600 Officials In 2015 Frugality Campaign", *China Daily*, August 22, 2015 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-08/22/content\\_21673445.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-08/22/content_21673445.htm), accessed on August 28, 2015

South Korea and China. South Korean media reported that Minister Hwang reiterated the importance of accepting the facts of history fairly during the meeting.<sup>27</sup>

From August 26-28, Hiroshima hosted the 25th United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues. Japan articulated its resolve related to nuclear disarmament as it commemorates the 70 year of atomic bombings. During the meeting several issues were discussed including the humanitarian costs of nuclear weapons, the importance of Nuclear-Weapons-Free-Zones and Nuclear Disarmament/ Non-Proliferation in Asia, in addition to the Civil Society and Education on Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation.<sup>28</sup> Besides, under the sponsorships of the CTBT Organization (CTBTO) Secretariat, Hiroshima also hosted a meeting of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) Group of Eminent Persons (GEM) from August 24-25 where representatives discussed on approaches for upholding the entry into force of the CTBT and the Hiroshima Declaration was issued.<sup>29</sup>

Japanese Defence Ministry in its annual budget has sought 2.2 per cent increase in spending to ¥5.09 trillion. In case it is accepted, it will represent the largest defence budget in 14 years. Japan intends to purchase AAV-7 amphibious assault vehicles, F-35 stealth warplanes, Osprey tilt-rotor transport aircraft, Global Hawk drones to protect its territory. The defence executives assigned ¥11 billion to enlarge a base on Miyakojima and ¥8.7 billion for base construction on Amami-Oshima.<sup>30</sup> For fiscal 2016, Japanese Foreign Ministry sought a 10.4 per cent increase in its budget. This is essentially to open eight new diplomatic missions overseas including embassies in Mauritius, Macedonia, Samoa and Albania and consulates in Cebu, Recife, Bangalore, and Siem Reap.<sup>31</sup>

## The Korea Peninsula

(August 24-30, 2015)

- **South Korea-China-Japan trilateral summit is likely before the end of 2015; South Korea reportedly observed a shift in Chinese attitude in the recent inter-Korean military crisis; South Korean Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se is scheduled to meet US Secretary of State John Kerry in Alaska; South Korean Finance Minister, Choi Kyung-hwan stressed the recent impasse with North underscored the need to reinforce the combat readiness of South Korean troops.**

South Korean media reported that the chief of the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat, Yang Houlan said a South Korea-China-Japan trilateral summit is likely before the end of 2015 since

<sup>27</sup> “Japan, South Korea Education Ministers Hold First Meeting In 15 Years”, *Kyodo*, August 31, 2015 at <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/08/31/national/politics-diplomacy/japan-south-korea-education-ministers-hold-first-meeting-15-years/#.Ve1SWFK6a1t>

<sup>28</sup> The 25th United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, August 28, 2015 at [http://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press3e\\_000044.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press3e_000044.html)

<sup>29</sup> Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) Group of Eminent Persons (GEM) Meeting in Hiroshima, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, August 25, 2015 at [http://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press3e\\_000042.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press3e_000042.html)

<sup>30</sup> “Defence Budget Hike Sought To Fortify Island Chain Facing China”, *Reuters*, September 1, 2015 at <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/09/01/national/politics-diplomacy/defense-budget-hike-sought-fortify-island-chain-facing-china/#.Ve1bN1K6a1t>

<sup>31</sup> “Foreign Ministry Seeks Funding For Eight New Missions”, *Kyodo*, August 31, 2015 at <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/08/31/national/politics-diplomacy/foreign-ministry-seeks-funding-for-eight-new-missions/#.Ve1iZIK6a1t>

relations are gradually returning to its normal track. The last trilateral summit was hosted in 2012. Foreign ministers of all three nations agreed in March to extend support to a trilateral summit as soon as possible.<sup>32</sup>

South Korea's special representative peace and security affairs, Hwang Joon-kook reportedly stated that China-North Korea relations have altered evidently since the later refuse to denuclearize and resort to frequent provocations. He further added that China “would not blindly patronize Pyongyang any more” and the bilateral relations are “changing in quality because of the nuclear issue”. South Korea reportedly observed a shift in Chinese attitude in the recent inter-Korean military crisis where Beijing exerted pressure on Pyongyang.<sup>33</sup>

South Korean Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se is scheduled to meet US Secretary of State John Kerry in Alaska on the side-lines of the Conference on Global Leadership in the Arctic later in September. Both leaders are likely to discuss ways to strengthen the US-South Korea partnership, security situations in the Korean Peninsula after the inter-Korean deal, upcoming visit of South Korean President Park Geun-hye's visit to the US in October, and some pending alliance issues.<sup>34</sup>

Reports suggested that South Korean Finance Minister, Choi Kyung-hwan stressed the recent impasse with North Korea underscored the need to reinforce the combat readiness of South Korean troops. Seoul is likely to increase its 2016 military budget. The objective is to improve readiness against threats emanating from North Korean. Minister Choi suggested that even though South Korea will assign additional funds to strengthen the military capabilities, it will continue to make efforts to improve ties with Pyongyang.<sup>35</sup>

North Korea will not send its military delegation to China's military parade scheduled on September 3 commemorating the end of World War II. However, Pyongyang will be represented by Choe Ryong-hae in the military parade.<sup>36</sup>

## C. Russia

### Russia: Domestic

(August 24-30, 2015)

- **Russia's GDP dropped by 4.6 per cent in July; Rosneft calls for structural reforms in Gazprom; First refinery connected to Russia's ESPO pipeline becomes operational; Medvedev approves establishment of Kamchatka advanced development territory;**

<sup>32</sup> “S. Korea, China, Japan Working To Hold Summit As Soon As Possible: Official”, *Yonhap News Agency*, August 27, 2015 at <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20150827001167>

<sup>33</sup> “N. Korea-China Ties Changing 'In Quality': S. Korean Envoy”, *Yonhap News Agency*, August 28, 2015 at <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20150828000718>

<sup>34</sup> “FM Yun, Kerry to Hold Talks on N. Korea, Alliance”, *Yonhap News Agency*, August 26, 2015 at <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20150826000889>

<sup>35</sup> “S. Korea to Hike Military Budget To Boost Readiness,” *Yonhap News Agency*, August 27, 2015 <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20150827000216>

<sup>36</sup> “China Respects N. Korean Military's Non-Attendance At Parade”, *Yonhap News Agency*, August 28, 2015 at <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20150828000295>

**Share of Russian medical drugs on domestic market up to 28 per cent; Russian legislation allows for blocking any website; Russian food prices increase by 11 per cent; Number of migrants in Russia down by 20 per cent; Russia's fifth generation fighter aircraft starts missile tests.**

According to the assessment of the Russian Ministry of Economic Development, Russia's GDP fell by 4.6 per cent year-on-year in July while the growth dropped by 3.6 per cent year-on-year since the beginning of 2015.<sup>37</sup>

Rosneft's press secretary Mikhail Leontyev has called for Gazprom's reform in order to ensure equal access to the gas transport system. He termed Gazprom's policy of 'offering purchasing gas at domestic prices to independent producers and then reselling it for export' as unfair. It had been reported earlier that Rosneft is seeking access to the Sakhalin and Power of Siberia gas transport systems.<sup>38</sup>

Khabarovsk refinery has become the first refinery to be connected to the East Siberia - Pacific Ocean (ESPO) main oil pipeline. A representative Russian pipeline operator Transneft Robert Galiev has said that 'the branch pipeline construction means implementation of the ESPO goal of not merely exporting oil to the Asia-Pacific Region but also connecting refineries in the Far East to the main oil pipeline'. The connection of refineries will it make possible to boost their capacities and reduce oil supply costs. ESPO is the 4,740 km long oil pipeline from Taishet in the Irkutsk Region to Kozmino oil loading port in the Amur Region. The pipeline operated by Transneft connects West and East Siberian oilfields with the Asian and US markets.<sup>39</sup>

Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev has, on August 28, signed a decree on the establishment of an advanced development territory Kamchatka in Russia's Far-East. The construction of engineering and transport infrastructure of the advanced development territory will be funded from the budget of the Kamchatka Territory. This decision is 'likely to facilitate the creation of conditions for strengthening the economic positions of Russia in the competitive markets of the Asia-Pacific region and the promotion of socio-economic development of the Kamchatka Territory through the creation of new jobs, new industrial and tourist sites, the production of export-oriented and import-substituting production, attraction of investments'.<sup>40</sup>

Industry and Trade Minister Denis Manturov has said, on August 29, that the share of Russian manufacturers of medical drugs on the domestic market has shot up to 28 per cent in 2015. According to his expectations, Russian medical drugs are likely to take up half of the domestic market under a government programme for the pharmaceutical and medical industry extending till 2020. At present, around two-thirds of crucial drugs are being produced in Russia.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>37</sup> "Russia's GDP Dropped 4.6% in July — Ministry", *Itar-Tass*, August 28, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/817139>

<sup>38</sup> "Russia's Oil Giant Wants Russian Gas Giant Reformed", *Itar-Tass*, August 25, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/816419>

<sup>39</sup> "First Refinery Connected to Russia's East Siberia - Pacific Ocean Oil Pipeline", *Itar-Tass*, August 28, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/817121>

<sup>40</sup> "PM Medvedev Approves Establishment Of Kamchatka Advanced Development Territory", *Itar-Tass*, August 28, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/817319>

<sup>41</sup> "Share of Russian Medical Drugs On Domestic Market Up To 28%", *Itar-Tass*, August 29, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/817352>

The chief of Russia's communications watchdog Roskomnadzor Vadim Ampelonsky has said, on August 29, that the organization has sufficient legal leverage to block any website or social network but the issue of blocking Facebook, Twitter or Google this year is not on the agenda. Earlier, Roskomnadzor had warned Wikipedia that it might be blocked for publishing an article about drugs.<sup>42</sup>

Russia's statistics service Rosstat has said, on August 26, that food prices have risen by 10.6 per cent in the first seven months of the year when compared to the same period last year. This includes fruits that have seen the highest increase of 25.4 percent, followed by fish and seafood at 17.8 per cent growth. Prices of breads and cereals prices have gone up by 11.6 per cent while that of meat and vegetables have risen by 7 and 5.9 percent respectively.<sup>43</sup>

The president of the Federation of Migrants in Russia (FMS), Mohammed Madjumder has said, on August 26 that the number of migrants in Russia has gone down by 20-25 per cent in 2015. He attributed this to the depreciation of rouble and tightening of migration legislation. According to statistics released by the FMS 10,986,721 foreign citizens currently live in Russia.<sup>44</sup>

Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Aerospace Forces Colonel General Viktor Bondarev has said, on August 26, that Russia's fifth-generation PAK FA (T-50) fighter jet has started test flights with missile launch exercises in which it has demonstrated excellent results. He added that Russia's military plan to purchase the first serially-produced fifth-generation PAK FA fighter jets in 2016.<sup>45</sup>

## Russia: International

(August 24-30, 2015)

- **Putin, Merkel and Hollande discuss developments in Ukraine; Russia will not restructure Ukraine's US\$ 3 billion debt; Russia and US discuss Syrian settlement issue and fight against terrorism; Russia says it has been receiving signals from the US to resume cooperation; Russia to consider establishment of NATO training centre in Georgia a 'provocation'; Pakistan expresses interest in joining Eurasian Economic Union free trade area; Finland detains Russian suspected of U.S. malware crimes; Foreign Minister Lavrov says Russia interested in normalization of relations between Belarus and the West; Lavrov criticizes Poroshenko for statement that said 'Russians are not brothers to Ukrainians'.**

The leaders of Russia, Germany and France – Vladimir Putin, Angela Merkel and Francois Hollande, during a telephone conversation held on August 29, discussed the developments in

<sup>42</sup> "Russian Legislation Allows For Blocking Any Website", *Itar-Tass*, August 29, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/russia/817358>

<sup>43</sup> "Russian Food Prices Up 11 Percent", *The Moscow Times*, August 26, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/business/article/russian-food-prices-up-11-percent/528734.html>

<sup>44</sup> "Number of Migrants in Russia Down 20-25 Percent – Migration Association", *The Moscow Times*, August 26, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/number-of-migrants-in-russia-down-20-25-percent-migration-association/528727.html>

<sup>45</sup> "Russia's Fifth Generation Fighter Starts Missile Tests — Commander", *Itar-Tass*, August 26, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/russia/816531>

Ukraine and progress in the implementation of the Minsk agreements. They emphasized on the need to establish a direct dialogue between Kiev and representatives of Donetsk and Lugansk and of lifting the financial and economic blockade of Donbass. Hollande and Merkel added that, if the local elections in the country were not held in accordance with the Ukrainian legislation that would pose a threat to the Minsk process. They also supported the demand for a full ceasefire in the conflict zone in eastern Ukraine by September 1.<sup>46</sup>

Finance Minister Anton Siluanov has said that Russia will continue to demand a full repayment of the US\$ 3 billion loan from Ukraine that is due in December 2015. He added that Russia will not accept the restructuring or any changes in the rules of provision of funds from the National Wealth Fund. Earlier, Ukraine had agreed with foreign creditors on debt restructuring which involves a 20 per cent write-off of the Ukrainian debt.<sup>47</sup>

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov and US Special Envoy for Syria Michael Ratney discussed, on August 28 in Moscow, the prospects settling the Syrian crisis and fight against terrorism in the region.<sup>48</sup>

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has said, on August 24, that Russia has received signals from the United States about restoration of cooperation channels and Moscow on its part does not intend to refuse dialogue. He added that Russia is ready to work with the United States and European Union, but it will not give up its interests and identity.<sup>49</sup>

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova has said, on August 27, that Russia looks at the opening of a NATO training centre in Georgia as a 'provocation'. She added that 'a further strengthening of ties between the Western military alliance and Tbilisi would destabilize the security situation in the region'.<sup>50</sup>

Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, during his visit to Almaty, has expressed interest in signing a free trade agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU).<sup>51</sup>

Finland has, on August 27, detained a Russian citizen Maxim Senakh, at the request of U.S. federal authorities on computer fraud charges. The US 45 days from the start of Senakh's detention to submit an official extradition request. Meanwhile, Russia's Foreign Ministry's special representative for human rights Konstantin Dolgov has termed the detention illegal

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<sup>46</sup> "Putin, Merkel, Hollande Discuss Further Functioning Of Normandy Format", *Itar-Tass*, August 29, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/world/817383>

<sup>47</sup> "Russia Won't Agree To Restructure Ukraine's \$3bln Debt — Minister", *Itar-Tass*, August 27, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/817048>

<sup>48</sup> "Russian, US Diplomats Discuss Settlement In Syria And Fight Against Terrorism", *Itar-Tass*, August 28, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/russia/817288>

<sup>49</sup> "Russia Receiving US Signals On Resuming Cooperation — Lavrov", *Itar-Tass*, August 24, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/russia/816036>

<sup>50</sup> "Russia Would Consider NATO Training Centre in Georgia a Provocation", *The Moscow Times*, August 27, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russia-would-consider-nato-training-center-in-georgia-a-provocation/528846.html>

<sup>51</sup> "Pakistan Keen to Join EEU Free Trade Area - Prime Minister", *Sputnik News*, August 26, 2015 at <http://sputniknews.com/asia/20150826/1026204927.html>

and 'another demonstration of the illegal practice of detaining Russian citizens abroad launched by U.S. authorities'.<sup>52</sup>

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has said that the normalization of relations between Belarus and the West meets Russia's interests. He stated that 'nowadays, many say that Russia, having encountered the attitude of the West, turns to the east, to Asia and the Pacific. Belarus is told that it is turning to the West. This is the mentality of those who do not understand the logic other than 'friend-or-foe. You are either with us or against us. This is precisely what lies at the heart of the majority of problems in the European region'.<sup>53</sup>

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has criticized Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko's statement that Russians are not brothers to Ukrainians. He expressed concern over the 'actions of Ukraine's leadership who want to change the genetic code of Ukrainians'. He also criticized Kiev's decision to ban 38 books by Russian authors, historians and journalists for being anti-Ukrainian.<sup>54</sup>

(August 24-30, 2015)

- **Russia says China is its priority partner for Arctic cooperation; Novatek to sell 10 per cent of Yamal LNG to Chinese fund; Gazprom and CNPC discuss opportunity of extra gas supplies to China from Russia's Far East; Trade turnover between Russia and China expected to recover in 2-3 years; Russia to supply 7 Mi-171 helicopters to Bangladesh; Airbus and Russian Space Systems sign satellite production contract; CSTO military exercises take place in Tajikistan; Chechen President seeks to step up cooperation with UAE; Putin meets King Abdullah of Jordan; Putin meets the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi; Putin meets Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi; Russia and Europe agree on developing ExoMars project; Russia criticizes Latvian ban on news agency.**

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has said that China is a priority partner for Russia for cooperation in the Arctic region. While referring to China's observer status in the Arctic Council, Mr. Lavrov said that 'China seems to have favourable prospects, because it has appropriate resources, technologies and scientific potential'.<sup>55</sup>

Russia's second-biggest gas producer Novatek is close to selling a 9.9 per cent stake worth an estimated US\$ 1.4 billion in its Yamal liquefied natural gas (LNG) project to China's Silk Road infrastructure fund. The stake sale could help Novatek to line up project financing from Chinese banks after sanctions over Russia's actions in Ukraine shut access for Russian companies to Western capital markets. China's CNPC paid about US\$ 1 billion for a 20 per cent stake in Yamal LNG in 2013 and France's Total spent US\$ 425 million for a 20 per cent stake in 2011. Novatek aims to retain more than 50 per cent of the project, which is due to start

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<sup>52</sup> "Finland Detains Russian Suspected of U.S. Malware Crimes", *The Moscow Times*, August 27, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/finland-detains-russian-suspected-of-us-malware-crimes/528848.html>

<sup>53</sup> "Russia Interested In Normalization Of Relations Between Belarus and West", *Itar-Tass*, August 24, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/russia/816083>

<sup>54</sup> "Lavrov Criticizes Poroshenko For Statement That Russians Are Not Brothers to Ukrainians", *Itar-Tass*, August 24, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/world/816080>

<sup>55</sup> "China is Russia's Priority Partner In Arctic Cooperation — Lavrov", *Itar-Tass*, August 24, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/russia/816048>

shipping LNG in 2017 and expected to hit peak production of 16.5 million tonnes a year in 2021.<sup>56</sup>

Russia's Gazprom and China's CNPC have discussed the possibility of supplying extra gas to China from Russia's Far East. Gazprom and CNPC are to hold a series of bilateral consultations to identify specific conditions of implementing the project of natural gas supplies via a pipeline from Russian Far East and assess its economic feasibility. The parties refer to new extra volumes in addition to supplies over the 'eastern' and 'western' routes.<sup>57</sup>

Deputy Prime Minister Arkady Dvorkovich expects the trade turnover between Russia and China to recover in the next 2-3 years. Earlier, Russia's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to China Andrey Denisov had stated that trade turnover between the two countries will not cross the US\$ 100 billion mark this year. In the first half of 2015, trade turnover fell by 30 per cent and stood at slightly more than US\$ 31 billion. Mr. Denisov added that the physical volume of goods traded between them has not changed and attributed the decrease in monetary value to the fall of global commodity prices.<sup>58</sup>

Russia will supply six Mil Mi-171Sh military and transport helicopters and one Mi-171E rotocraft to Bangladesh under a contract signed in April 2015. This was stated by First Deputy CEO of Rosoboronexport Ivan Goncharenko on August 24. Russia will provide Bangladesh a US\$ 1 billion loan for the purchase of Russian helicopters.<sup>59</sup>

Airbus has, on August 26 during the MAKS air show, signed an agreement with Russian Space Systems (RKS) to launch a production line for satellite hardware. The components will be used in navigation and earth observation satellites. The first product line to be launched under the agreement will be power units for Russia's new Glonass-K navigation satellites.<sup>60</sup>

More than 1,000 representative of law enforcement agencies of CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organization) countries are taking part in military drills at Tajikistan's Fakhrobad base. The exercises are designed to develop skills to combat drug trafficking in the region.<sup>61</sup>

The head of the Republic of Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov, during a meeting with Crown Prince of UAE Mohammed Al Nahyan held on August 26, discussed expansion of bilateral cooperation. Kadyrov stated that the 'Sheikh confirmed his intention to continue the work on the strengthening and expansion of friendly ties between the Emirates and the Chechen Republic. He said experts under his instructions are studying issues related to the creation of

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<sup>56</sup> "Russia's Novatek to sell 10 pct of Yamal LNG to Chinese Fund –Paper", *Reuters*, August 24, 2015 at <http://in.reuters.com/article/2015/08/24/russia-novatek-idINL5N10Z2XY20150824>

<sup>57</sup> "Gazprom and CNPC Discuss Opportunity Of Extra Gas Supplies to China from Russia's Far East", *Itar-Tass*, August 26, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/816622>

<sup>58</sup> "Trade Turnover Between Russia And China Expected To Recover In 2-3 Years", *Itar-Tass*, August 24, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/817015>

<sup>59</sup> "Russia to Supply 7 Mi-171 Helicopters to Bangladesh", *Itar-Tass*, August 24, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/russia/816006>

<sup>60</sup> "Airbus and Russian Space Systems Sign Satellite Production Contract", *Itar-Tass*, August 24, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/business/article/airbus-and-russian-space-systems-sign-satellite-production-contract/528738.html>

<sup>61</sup> "CSTO Drills On Countering Drug Trafficking From Afghanistan To Start in Tajikistan", *Itar-Tass*, August 24, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/world/816830>

the mechanism of support and development of small enterprises in Chechnya'. A working delegation of UAE experts is expected to arrive in Chechnya in the near future.<sup>62</sup>

President Vladimir Putin has met with the King of Jordan Abdullah II in Russia on August 25. The key issues discussed involved developments in Middle East including Syria and the Israel-Palestine issue. King Abdullah stated that Moscow has a vital role to play in finding a solution to the Syrian conflict. The summit also focused on current issues of bilateral cooperation, including prospects for the implementation of joint projects in high-tech sectors. This includes nuclear energy and military technology. In March 2015, the two countries had signed an intergovernmental agreement for laying the legal foundation for the construction of a nuclear power plant in Jordan. Russia's Rosatom corporation is expected to build two 1,000-megawatt nuclear power units in the country's north by 2022.<sup>63</sup>

President Vladimir Putin has met with the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Al Nahyan in Russia on August 25. During the meeting, Mr. Putin expressed concern over developments in the Middle East including Iraq and Libya. The Crown Prince on his part stated that Moscow 'plays a very important role in the Middle East'. On the bilateral front, Putin underlined the expanding investment cooperation between the two countries, adding that Russia 'has great confidence in investment funds' from the UAE.<sup>64</sup>

Russian President Vladimir Putin has met with his Egyptian counterpart Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in Russia on August 26. The two leaders discussed bilateral relations, including opportunities for further developing cooperation in trade, economy and humanitarian sphere. They also exchanged views on the situation in the Middle East and North Africa, prospects for a settlement in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and fighting international terrorism. Mr. Sisi also stated that Egypt is ready to offer the best terms for Russian investors willing to work in the Suez Canal region.<sup>65</sup>

Russia's Federal Space Corporation (Roscosmos) and the European Space Agency (ESA) have, on August 26, signed an agreement on further developing the ExoMars project. Both agencies also preliminarily agreed a schedule of lunar missions. The agreement on implementing the ExoMars joint program was signed in March 2013. The mission's first orbital spacecraft under the project is expected to be launched in early 2016, after which a Mars robotic vehicle will be dispatched. It is expected to touch the Martian surface in 2018.<sup>66</sup>

Russia says Latvia has refused permission to a Russian state news agency to open a bureau in the country — a case that Moscow says is open discrimination. A Russian Foreign Ministry statement called on the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to look into the matter. According to the Ministry's statement, Latvia has refused registration to Rossiya

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<sup>62</sup> "Delegation from Abu Dhabi to Come to Chechnya Soon — Kadyrov", *Itar-Tass*, August 26, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/816534>

<sup>63</sup> "Meeting with King Abdullah II of Jordan", *President of Russia*, August 25, 2015 at <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50180>

<sup>64</sup> "Meeting with Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Mohammed Al Nahyan", *President of Russia*, August 25, 2015 at <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50179>

<sup>65</sup> "Meeting with President of Egypt Abdel Fattah el-Sisi", *President of Russia*, August 26, 2015 at <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50181>

<sup>66</sup> "Russia, Europe Agree On Developing ExoMars Project", *Itar-Tass*, August 26, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/non-political/816654>

Segodnya on the grounds that its contents were contrary to the Latvian constitution. Rossiya Segodnya is the umbrella organization for the RIA Novosti and Sputnik news operations.<sup>67</sup>

## India-Russia Relations

(August 24-30, 2015)

- **Russia softens position on dairy imports from India; Russian TV to broadcast in Hindi.**

Displaying more flexibility in its policy on dairy imports from India, Russia has said that it is ready to let in products from plants with small cattle farms or no cattle, including cooperatives such as Amul. Softening its initial position that only dairy plants with over 1,000 cattle may export hard cheese to the country, Russia has said that it is ready to reconsider the condition if India gives a comprehensive report on how its safety concerns would be addressed. Earlier, only two Indian producers of hard cheese — Parag Milk Foods and Shreiber Dynamix Diaries — had qualified for export to Russia.<sup>68</sup>

From 2016 onwards, Indian television audiences will be able to access two Paid-TV channels of the Russian company Digital TV OJSC. Indian audience will have access to the Mult Channel, which broadcasts Russian cartoons, and the science and educational IQ HD Channel, which shows documentaries suitable for family viewing. This comes under the framework of MoU signed between Prasar Bharati and DTV on August 20, 2015. DTV's plans to translate into Hindi the channel's best-selling serials and movies. The company will also broadcast and distribute Bollywood films to Russian television audiences.<sup>69</sup>

## D. West Asia

### Iran

(August 24- 30, 2015)

- **Britain reopens its embassy in Iran, calls it a 'large power'. Seoul, Beijing, and Britain see it as a welcoming change.**

Britain's embassy in Iran was shut down in 2011 after Britain sided with the West in tightening the sanctions on Iran. After the recent uplifting of sanctions on Iran, Britain on August 23, 2015 re-opened its embassy in Tehran. British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond who has visited Tehran to reopen the British embassy in Tehran called Iran a "large power with large economy" in the Middle East region.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>67</sup> "Russia Denounces Latvian Ban on News Agency", *The Moscow Times*, August 30, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russia-denounces-latvian-ban-on-news-agency/529103.html>

<sup>68</sup> "Russia Says Cheese, Softens Position On Dairy Imports from India", *The Hindu*, August 25, 2015 at <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/russia-says-cheese-softens-position-on-dairy-imports-from-india/article7579469.ece>

<sup>69</sup> "Russian TV to Broadcast in Hindi", *Russia and India Report*, August 28, 2015 at [http://in.rbth.com/economics/cooperation/2015/08/28/russian-tv-to-broadcast-in-hindi\\_393061](http://in.rbth.com/economics/cooperation/2015/08/28/russian-tv-to-broadcast-in-hindi_393061)

<sup>70</sup> "Iran is a 'Large Power' in Middle East: Philip Hammond", *Tehran Times*, August 24, 2015 at [http://www.tehrantimes.com/index\\_View.asp?code=248893](http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=248893). Accessed on 11 September 2015 and "Iran, Britain reopen

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said on August 25, 2015 that Iran will welcome dialogue and cooperation with Saudi Arabia to help restore peace and security to the Middle East region. He also mentioned that attacks on Yemen will lead to the spread of terrorism.<sup>71</sup>

South Korean Deputy Trade Minister Woo Taehee says his country sees a bright future for trade ties with Iran once sanctions are lifted against the Islamic Republic. He said that the uplifting of sanctions will have a very positive effect on Iran- South Korea relations, especially with respect to trade and investment.<sup>72</sup>

Ali Akbar Salehi, director of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), held talks with senior Chinese officials including Chairman of China Atomic Energy Authority Xu Dazhe. The officials called for implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) - the official name of the nuclear accord between Iran and major powers - and cooperation in the field of peaceful nuclear energy.<sup>73</sup>

## Iraq

(August 24- 30, 2015)

- **Russian Foreign Minister's rejection of the decision to divide Iraq.**

On August 24, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov confirmed his country's rejection to divide Iraq, stressing the need for the Iraqis to specify their own destiny. He also stressed that the region has turned into a hot bed of terrorism and violent extremism.<sup>74</sup>

The House of Representatives voted on the bill on political parties. The House of Representatives voted in the 16<sup>th</sup> session of the political parties' law.<sup>75</sup>

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embassies", *Tehran Times*, 24 August 2015 at [http://www.tehrantimes.com/index\\_View.asp?code=248894](http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=248894). Accessed on 11 September 2015

<sup>71</sup> "Official Says Iran will Welcome Dialogue with Saudi Arabia", *Tehran Times*, August 26, 2015 at [http://www.tehrantimes.com/index\\_View.asp?code=248941](http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=248941). Accessed on 11 September 2015

<sup>72</sup> "Seoul Sees Bright Future for Trade with Tehran", *Tehran Times*, August 26, 2015 at [http://www.tehrantimes.com/index\\_View.asp?code=248932](http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=248932). Accessed on September 11, 2015.

<sup>73</sup> "Tehran, Beijing Explore Ways for Building Nuclear Plants in Iran", *Tehran Times*, August 27, 2015 at [http://www.tehrantimes.com/index\\_View.asp?code=248963](http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=248963). Accessed on 11 September 2015

<sup>74</sup> "Moscow Asserts Its "Rejection" To Divide Iraq", *Iraqi News*, August 24, 2015 at <http://www.iraqinews.com/baghdad-politics/moscow-asserts-rejection-divide-iraq/>. Accessed on September 11, 2015.

<sup>75</sup> "Parliament Votes via Majority on the Bill on Political Parties", *Iraqi News*, August 27, 2015 at <http://www.iraqinews.com/features/parliament-votes-via-majority-bill-political-parties/>. Accessed on September 11, 2015.

## Syria

(August 24- 30, 2015)

- **Syria expressed its outrage at ISIL's barbaric crime; Syrian Foreign Ministry states ISIL attack on the cultural heritage as target on the Syrian National Identity; Syrian rebels and forces loyal agreed to a new ceasefire.**

Syria expressed its outrage at ISIL's barbaric crime of destroying Palmyra's ancient temple of Baal Shamin temple and killing chief archeologist Professor Khaled al-Assaad, who had looked after Palmyra's ruins for four decades, an official source at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates. The atrocities committed by the organisation against Syrian national identity and memory prove the *takfiri* nature of the organisation.<sup>76</sup>

Syria's permanent Envoy to the UN, Dr. Bashar al-Jaafari said on August 27 that the Syrian government is ready to continue cooperation with the UN to deliver humanitarian aid to all citizens affected by the crisis in any region. He added that it is impossible to deal with the painful humanitarian situation in Syria apart from "the backgrounds of foreign economic, military and political intervention in the Syrian scene" as this intervention was the reason behind the emergence, feeding and the spread of terrorism in Syria and the region. The national reconciliations in Syria have proven once again that the Syrians are capable of sitting along with each other and solve their problems if the foreign intervention in their own affairs stopped, and if governments of countries which sponsor terrorism were forced to stop their bloody policies.<sup>77</sup>

Syrian rebels and forces loyal to the country's President Bashar al-Assad have agreed to a new ceasefire to end government bombardment of the town of Zabadani and the rebel siege of two Shia villages.<sup>78</sup>

## Israel and Palestine

(August 24- 30, 2015)

- **Israeli President Rivlin recently declared it is Israel's 'right' to build West Bank settlements.**

Israeli President Reuven Rivlin says the country has the "right" to build settlements in the West Bank and it is "not a matter of political debate." His comments are likely to cause

<sup>76</sup> "Foreign Ministry: ISIL Barbaric Attacks on Syria's Cultural Heritage Target the Syrian National Identity, Memory", *The Syria Times*, August 26, 2015 at <http://syriatimes.sy/index.php/news/local/19308-foreign-ministry-isil-barbaric-attacks-on-syria-s-cultural-heritage-target-the-syrian-national-identity-memory>. Accessed on September 11, 2015

<sup>77</sup> "Al-Jaafari: Syria ready To Continue Cooperation with UN in Humanitarian File, Away From Foreign Intervention", *The Syria Times*, August 27, 2015 at <http://syriatimes.sy/index.php/news/local/19330-al-jaafari-syria-ready-to-continue-cooperation-with-un-in-humanitarian-file-away-from-foreign-intervention>. Accessed on September 11, 2015.

<sup>78</sup> "Syrian Army and Rebels Agree to New Truce in Zabadani", *Al Jazeera*, August 27, 2015 at <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/08/syrian-army-rebels-agree-truce-zabadani-ceasefire-150827070432906.html>. Accessed on September 11, 2015

controversy, with the EU and Palestine opposed to illegal Israeli development in the area. He further said, "I have never and will never give up on this land. For me, our right to this land is not a matter of political debate. It is a basic fact of modern Zionism." Aside from being illegal, the building of settlements has also been a major obstacle to peace negotiations between Israel and Palestine. The Palestinians see the West Bank as part of any future independent state.<sup>79</sup>

## The Gulf

(August 24-30, 2015)

- **Saudi-led coalition has launched air strikes at rebel positions in Yemen; Egyptian court sentences three Al-Jazeera reporters; Amidst the chaos, Al-Qaeda has gained more ground in Yemen.**

Saudi Arabian troops have crossed into northern Yemen for the first time since the conflict with Houthi rebels began in March. A Saudi-led coalition has launched air strikes at rebel positions in Yemen but the Houthis and their allies, soldiers loyal to the former president, Ali Abdullah Saleh, insist they are still a capable fighting force.<sup>80</sup>

An Egyptian court sentenced three *Al-Jazeera* reporters to three years in prison on August 29, in a shock ruling following global demands for their acquittal. The journalists were arrested in December 2013, months after the military overthrew Islamist president Mohamed Mursi and launched a deadly crackdown on his supporters. Sisi has said he wished that the *Al-Jazeera* journalists had not been put on trial. He may pardon them if he chooses.<sup>81</sup>

Al-Qaeda has gained more ground amidst the chaos in Yemen -- this time in second city Aden -- but for now Saudi Arabia is turning a blind eye to its long-time enemy, experts say. Supported by a Saudi-led military coalition, forces loyal to Yemen's exiled government retook Aden last month from Iran-backed Houthi rebels who have seized large parts of the country including the capital Sanaa. As authorities work to reassert control over Aden, the capital of formerly independent South Yemen, Al-Qaeda has moved into the gap. The jihadist group's militants, already in control of other parts of southern Yemen, are reported to have taken up positions in several strategic parts of the city.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>79</sup> "Israeli President Says Govt Has 'Right' to Build West Bank Settlements", *The Palestine Chronicles*, August 25, 2015 at <http://www.palestinechronicle.com/israeli-president-says-govt-has-right-to-build-west-bank-settlements/>. Accessed on 11 September 2015

<sup>80</sup> "Saudi Troops Enter Northern Yemen after Houthi Clashes", *Al Jazeera*, August 27, 2015 at <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/08/saudi-troops-enter-northern-yemen-houthi-clashes-150827075804711.html>. Accessed on September 11, 2015

<sup>81</sup> "Egypt Court Hands Al Jazeera Reports Three Years in Jail", *Gulf Times*, August 29, 2015 at <http://www.gulf-times.com/region/216/details/452940/egypt-court-hands-al-jazeera-reporters-three-years-in-jail>. Accessed on September 11, 2015.

<sup>82</sup> "Saudis Turn a Blind Eye as Qaeda Gains Ground in Yemen", *Gulf Times*, August 24, 2015 at <http://www.gulf-times.com/region/216/details/452352/saudis-turn-a-blind-eye-as-qaeda-gains-ground-in-yemen>. Accessed on September 11, 2015

## India and West Asia

(August 24-30, 2015)

- **Minister of External Affairs and Overseas Indian Affairs, Smt. Sushma Swaraj has visited Egypt.**

At the invitation of H.E. Mr. Sameh Hassan Shoukry, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt, Hon'ble Minister of External Affairs and Overseas Indian Affairs, Smt. Sushma Swaraj visited Egypt from August 23-25, 2015. During her visit, she called on HE Mr Abdel Fattah Al Sisi, President of Egypt and met HE Mr Sameh Shoukry, Foreign Minister of Egypt and H.E. Dr. Nabil El-Araby, Secretary General of League of Arab States on 24 August. She also met with the representatives of the Indian Community in Egypt on 23 August.<sup>83</sup>

## E. The United State of America

### National

(August 24-30, 2015)

- **Municipal court judge revamps court in Ferguson, Missouri; President Obama announces new executive actions to invest in green and clean energy; US remembering Hurricane Katrina after a decade; Northern Command applies lessons learned from Katrina; Vice President Biden meets President Obama as speculation mounts for the 2016 presidential nomination; Polls shows Donald Trump continues to lead Republican Presidential race.**

On August 24, Municipal Court Judge Donald McCullin assigned to oversee judicial reforms in racially tense Ferguson, Missouri, has ordered that all arrest warrants issued in the city before December 31, 2014 be withdrawn. The ruling also orders the reinstatement of driver's permits to all defendants who lost their licenses for failing to pay a fine or failure to appear in court. The directive is a key part of the city's response to a scathing U.S. Justice Department critique earlier this year that followed the fatal 2014 police shooting of an unarmed black teenager in the St. Louis suburb.<sup>84</sup>

In a keynote address, U.S. President Barack Obama announced new executive actions and other efforts aimed at making it easier for homeowners and businesses to invest in green energy improvements that in the past may have been impractical or unaffordable. Among the steps announced by the president are new rules from the Federal Housing Administration that could significantly expand the use of so-called PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) loans that allow homeowners to install energy improvements and pay back their costs over

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<sup>83</sup> "Visit of External Affairs Minister to the Arab Republic of Egypt" *MEA Press Release*, August 24, 2015 at [http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/25757/Visit\\_of\\_External\\_Affairs\\_Minister\\_to\\_the\\_Arab\\_Republic\\_of\\_Egypt](http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/25757/Visit_of_External_Affairs_Minister_to_the_Arab_Republic_of_Egypt). Accessed on September 11, 2015

<sup>84</sup> "Judge Revamps Court in Ferguson, Missouri", *VOA News*, August 24, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/judge-revamps-ferguson-missouri-court/2931173.html>

time. He noted that some fossil fuel and utility interests are fighting the nation's rush to cleaner, cheaper and more efficient energy. But he said, "Sorry, we're moving forward." The president said that after decades of being told renewable energy doesn't make economic sense, "today that's no longer true."<sup>85</sup>

On August 25, 2005, satellite image has shown inbound Hurricane Katrina. The storm moved slowly, enabling heavy rains to linger longer over one area, the National Hurricane Centre warned. Forecasters said the hurricane would be bad, but no one expected as 2005 Katrina. Hurricane Katrina hit the American Gulf Coast on August 29, 2005, causing initial destruction from Texas to Florida. It wreaked such damage over such a large area that it changed the way the U.S. government responds to disasters. According to the National Hurricane Centre Katrina was directly responsible for around 1,200 deaths, making it the third most deadly hurricane in American history. It caused \$108 billion in property damage, making it the costliest hurricane to strike the U.S.<sup>86</sup> About 80 percent of New Orleans was flooded, and roughly 80 percent of the Mississippi coast was destroyed by the Category 3 hurricane.

U.S. Northern Command was not quite 3 years old when it was thrust into the rescue and recovery phases of Katrina's aftermath. More than 60,000 service members -- both active duty and National Guard -- participated in storm recovery efforts. Tim Russell, the vice director for future operations at in the command's Colorado Springs, Colorado, headquarters said that the lessons learned from the storm continue to resonate with Northcom. He said that the command has thorough plans on how to respond to a disaster in the United States. These include not only hurricanes, but also fires, earthquakes and man-made disasters.<sup>87</sup>

On August 24, Vice President Joe Biden met President Barack Obama as Washington speculation mounted that Biden could enter the contest for the 2016 Democratic Party presidential nomination. If Biden were to join the race, he would be facing another key official from Obama's White House tenure, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, currently the leading Democratic contender in the race to succeed Obama when his second term ends in early 2017. So far President Obama has made no endorsement on a possible successor and has frequently praised both Biden and Clinton.<sup>88</sup>

Polls continue to show Donald Trump leading across all of the usual groups in the Republican Party. CBS reported that "We often hear - both from analysts and voters themselves, that his popularity is brought about by voters' anger at politics-as-usual." It turns out that self-

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<sup>85</sup> "Obama Announces Clean Energy Initiatives", *VOA News*, August 24, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/obama-to-announce-clean-energy-initiative/2930277.html>

<sup>86</sup> Garamone, Jim, "Remembering Hurricane Katrina a Decade Later", *DoD News*, August 28, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/615149/remembering-hurricane-katrina-a-decade-later>; "Special Report: Hurricane Katrina – The Defense Department Looks Back", *DoD News*, August 28, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/615297/special-report-hurricane-katrina-the-defense-department-looks-back>

<sup>87</sup> Garamone, Jim, "Northern Command Applies Lessons Katrina Taught", *DoD News*, August 28, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/615143/northern-command-applies-lessons-katrina-taught>

<sup>88</sup> "Biden Meets with Obama, Weighs 2016 White House Run", *VOA News*, August 24, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/biden-meets-with-obama-weighs-white-house-run/2931112.html>

described "angry" Republicans have tended to look a lot like strong partisans and not like people entirely disconnected from the political process -- even if they are fed up with it.<sup>89</sup>

## International: Asia

(August 24-30, 2015)

- **U.S. and Turkey finalise technical details for Turkey's full inclusion in fight against the ISIL; Progress continues across the battlespace in Iraq's fight against the ISIL extremists; Coalition forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria and Iraq; Democratic Senator Reid supports Iran nuclear deal; New Pacific commander reassures regional allies American commitment to pivot military forces.**

Pentagon Press Secretary Peter Cook said on August 25 that the United States and Turkey have finalized technical details for Turkey's full inclusion in the coalition fighting the ISIL. This includes full integration into the coalition's air tasking order, which tracks, coordinates and de-conflicts all coalition air operations. Cook described Turkey's merged effort with the United States as an "important force multiplier" that he said will sustain and complement U.S. efforts to pressure ISIL on a number of fronts.<sup>90</sup>

The U.S. Central Command spokesman, Air Force Col. Patrick Ryder said on August 28 that the progress continues across the battlespace in Iraq's fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) extremists. Noting that ISIL is prioritizing resources as they continue to lose fighters and leaders at a high rate, Col. Ryder told Pentagon reporters that the ongoing fight against ISIL remains difficult and is expected to take a while to defeat it. Centcom has also confirmed the death of ISIL operative Junaid Hussain, a British citizen who was killed by a U.S. airstrike August 24 in the ISIL stronghold of Raqqah, Syria.<sup>91</sup> Meanwhile, U.S. and coalition military forces have continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria and Iraq.<sup>92</sup>

On August 23, Democratic U.S. Senator Harry Reid has expressed his support for the agreement the United States and five other nations reached with Iran to limit the country's nuclear programme in exchange for sanctions relief. In a statement, the Senate Minority Leader called the deal "the best path to stop Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon". Reid said part of his support for the deal lies in what he called the lack of any viable alternative put forth by those who oppose it.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Salvanto, Anthony, "Anger and the 2016 presidential election", *CBS News*, August 24, 2015 at <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/anger-and-the-2016-presidential-election/>

<sup>90</sup> Lyle, Amaani, "Officials Finalize Details of Turkey's Full Inclusion in ISIL Fight", *DoD News*, August 25, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/614821/officials-finalize-details-of-turkeys-full-inclusion-in-isil-fight>

<sup>91</sup> Cronk, Terri Moon, "Iraq Progresses in ISIL Fight, Key Extremist Confirmed Dead", *DoD News*, August 28, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/615305/iraq-progresses-in-isil-fight-key-extremist-confirmed-dead>

<sup>92</sup> "Coalition Airstrikes Again Hit Terrorists in Syria, Iraq", *DoD News*, August 30, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/615330/coalition-airstrikes-again-hit-terrorists-in-syria-iraq>

<sup>93</sup> "Top Senate Democrat Backs Iran Nuclear Deal", *VOA News*, August 24, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/key-us-senator-declares-support-for-iran-nuclear-deal/2929790.html>

The new commander of the U.S. Navy's Pacific Fleet, Admiral Scott H. Swift reassures regional allies that the pivot of American military forces will be sustained amid concerns regarding China's maritime expansion. Since taking his post three months ago at the Pacific Fleet, Admiral Swift has gone to the Philippines, South Korea, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and Malaysia to meet with counterparts in their navies. VOA asked him about the scepticism expressed by U.S. allies regarding the Pentagon's long-term commitment of its much-publicized Pacific pivot, Swift told that in every one of those destinations there is "great angst" – due to the worrying "scale and scope" of Beijing's reclamation projects in the South China Sea.<sup>94</sup>

## India-US Relations

(August 24-30, 2015)

- **Ahead of Prime Minister Modi's US visit, Pentagon seeks to identify "pathfinder" defence projects; Focus on innovation, digital economy and renewable energy during Modi's visit; Ambassador Verma calls for better co-operation on climate change and food security.**

During US President Barack Obama's historic trip to India in January 2015, India and the US had announced six projects as part of its ambitious Defence Trade and Technology Initiative (DTTI), which officials say have the potential to transform the nature of Indo-US defence relationship. Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's US visit, Pentagon has sought inputs from American industry to identify "pathfinder" projects that could be part of the next phase of exclusive co-development and co-production of high-tech defence items with India. Under Secretary of Defence Frank Kendall, who is the US-lead for DTTI, wrote in a recent letter to US industry last month that "These pathfinders represent the modest beginning of a relationship that we expect to grow and deepen in the months and years ahead". In the letter, he urged them to come up with proposals and ideas for ambitious and path-finding projects by the end of August.<sup>95</sup>

According to news reports, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to interact with technology and business leaders and focus on innovation, digital economy and renewable energy during his US trip next month. Ahead of Modi's visit to the US, Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Nisha Desai Biswal is visiting India and Sri Lanka. Modi is expected to travel to the US late September to attend the 70th annual session of the UN General Assembly.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Herman, Steve, "New US Pacific Fleet Commander Acknowledges 'Great Angst' Among Allies", *VOA News*, August 25, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/new-us-pacific-fleet-commander-acknowledges-great-angst-among-allies/2931287.html>

<sup>95</sup> "US Seeks Pathfinder Projects To Boost Defence Ties with India", *The Economic Times*, August 28, 2015 at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/us-seeks-pathfinder-projects-to-boost-defence-ties-with-india/articleshow/48710831.cms?prtpage=1>; "US Seeks Pathfinder Projects To Boost Defence Ties with India", *India Post*, August 28, 2015 at <http://www.indiapost.com/us-seeks-pathfinder-projects-to-boost-defense-ties-with-india/>

<sup>96</sup> "PM Narendra Modi's US Visit To Focus On Innovation, Digital Economy", *The Indian Express*, August 27, 2015 at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/pm-narendra-modis-us-visit-to-focus-on-innovation-digital-economy/>

The US Ambassador to India, Richard Verma, during an interaction with students at the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University in Coimbatore, called for better co-operation between India and the US, in battling climate change and also in addressing issues on food security. Ambassador Verma called for students at the university to work and ensure that “resistance to innovative food technology” is overcome. He highlighted the collaborative work by American biologist, Norman Borlaug and Indian scientist, M S Swaminathan, on high-yield rice and wheat, as an example of how co-operative relationships could benefit people across the world. He also said that genetically modified crops would provide materials as well as food crops which will have a very important role in feeding, clothing and sheltering people in the near future.<sup>97</sup>

## II. Defence Reviews

### National

(August 24-30, 2015)

- **Indian Army releases a book on the 1965 Indo-Pak War; Sixth joint military training exercise between the Indian Army and the Maldives National Defence Forces to be conducted in Kerala.**

The Indian Army has released a book on 1965 Indo Pak War authored by Rachna Bisht Rawat. The book, “1965: Stories from the Second Indo-Pak War” is an authoritative account of the Indo-Pak War of 1965. The book includes five key battles from the 1965 war and is extensively researched, with interviews and profiles of war veterans. The book release is part of the celebrations being organized by the Indian Army and the government to mark the occasion of fifty years of the war. Rare pictures of the battles from the Army archives add to value of the book.<sup>98</sup>

The Sixth Joint Military Training Exercise between the Indian Army and the Maldives National Defence Forces, EXERCISE EKUVRIN – VI, will be conducted in Kerala from August 31 to September 13, 2015. A total of 45 soldiers each from the Maldivian National Defence Force and the Indian Army will take part in this exercise. The bilateral annual exercise, which commenced in 2009 in Belgaum, India, is alternately held in India and Maldives with the aim of enhancing military cooperation and interoperability between the two countries and increased understanding between both armies. The concluding phase of the exercise will incorporate a tactical exercise, which will be reviewed by senior military officials from the two sides to assess the standards achieved by both the contingents.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> “Indo-US Co-operation Needed to Fight Climate Change, Food Security: Verma”, *The New Indian Express*, August 25, 2015 at [http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/tamil\\_nadu/Indo-US-Co-operation-Needed-to-Fight-Climate-Change-Food-Security-Verma/2015/08/25/article2992026.ece](http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/tamil_nadu/Indo-US-Co-operation-Needed-to-Fight-Climate-Change-Food-Security-Verma/2015/08/25/article2992026.ece)

<sup>98</sup> “Army Releases Book on 1965 Indo Pak War,” *PIB*, August 28, 2015, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=126441>

<sup>99</sup> “Exercise Ekuverin – 2015,” *PIB*, August 28, 2015, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=126440>

## International

(August 24-30, 2015)

- **Algeria receives the first of 14 Mil Mi-26T2 heavy-lift helicopters from Russia; Russia signs a contract with Bangladesh for seven Mil Mi-171 'Hip' helicopters.**

Reports say that Algeria has begun receiving the first of 14 Mil Mi-26T2 'Halo' heavy-lift helicopters that it has ordered in two batches. The Mi-26T2 is the latest variant of the heavy-lift 'Halo' helicopter, of which Algeria is to receive 14 by the end of 2017. Algeria is set to receive a further two before the end of the year, and two more in early 2016. Deliveries of the second batch of eight helicopters will follow through to the end of 2017. In addition to the sale of the helicopters, Rostvertol, a Russian helicopter manufacturer company, will also provide training and support to the Algerian armed forces. The Mi-26T2 is a modernised variant of the 20-tonne-payload Mi-26T heavy-lift helicopter, equipped with new avionics that afford it an all-weather day and night capability while reducing the crew numbers from five to just two or three, depending on the mission. The Mi-26T2 can be used to transport large sized cargo either internally or underslung, or to transport personnel.<sup>100</sup>

Meanwhile, according to reports, Russia has signed a contract with Bangladesh for seven Mil Mi-171 'Hip' helicopters. A contract between Russia's defence export agency Rosoboronexport and the Bangladeshi government was signed in April 2015 for the initial delivery of five Mi-171Sh helicopters. However, the number has been increased now to six Mi-171Sh combat transport helicopters and one Mi-171E transport helicopter. Moreover, Russia would be supplying the Bangladeshi government with a loan of USD1 billion for the purchase of the helicopters.<sup>101</sup>

## III. Internal Security Reviews

### Jammu & Kashmir

(August 24-30, 2015)

- **Security forces gun down 3 militants in Kupwara; Another Pakistani militant captured alive in North Kashmir; Pak shelling leaves 3 civilians dead, 17 injured in Jammu.**

Three militants were killed and an Army officer was wounded in an encounter in North Kashmir's Kupwara district on August 23. A defence spokesperson said that based on specific intelligence reports about presence of militants in Krumhura village, the security forces

<sup>100</sup> "Algeria Receives First of 14 'Halo' Heavy-Lift Helos," *IHS Jane's*, August 25 2015, at <http://www.janes.com/article/53830/algeria-receives-first-of-14-halo-heavy-lift-helos>

<sup>101</sup> "Bangladeshi Order for Mi-171 Helicopters Increases," *IHS Jane's*, August 25 2015, at <http://www.janes.com/article/53845/bangladeshi-order-for-mi-171-helicopters-increases>

launched a search operation. “The operation was launched immediately and an effective cordon was established. As the noose tightened, the militants hiding in the area opened fire,” he said. This led to a fierce gun battle that lasted for a few hours. “The bodies of three militants were later recovered from the site and handed over to the police,” he said. The defence spokesperson said the security forces recovered three AK-47 rifles and ammunition from the encounter site.<sup>102</sup>

Another Pakistani militant was captured and four more were shot dead in a fierce gun battle deep in the Rafiabad jungles of Baramulla as the Army and the Jammu and Kashmir Police wound up a four-day joint operation on August 27. The captured militant, who initially identified himself as Sajjad Ahmed, 22, is said to be from Muzaffargarh in southwest Punjab of Pakistan. Security agencies said the five made up a Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) module from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Sajjad was forced to come out of hiding from a natural cave as the Army lobbed “chilli grenades”. A huge cache of arms and ammunition was also seized during the operation. The weapons include four AK-47 assault rifles and two under-barrel grenade launchers. Sajjad’s arrest, it is learnt, could give fresh ammunition to India to corner Pakistan at international forums regarding its role in launching terrorists into India.<sup>103</sup>

Three civilians were killed and 17 injured in Jammu’s RS Pura sector as Pakistan pounded border areas with mortar shells on August 28— the 50th anniversary of the 1965 Indo-Pak war. The latest ceasefire violation has taken the number of people killed by Pakistani firing to nine in August alone. A Border Security Force (BSF) official said India retaliated in equal measure. Pakistan, meanwhile, summoned Indian high commissioner TCA Raghavan to lodge a protest over alleged ceasefire violations by India, saying eight civilians had died and more than 46 were injured in the “unprovoked firing” from the Indian side.<sup>104</sup>

## Northeast India

(August 24-30, 2015)

- **Manipur govt, JCILPS activists ink agreement; Seven NSCN-K rebels killed in encounter; Security forces gunned down 2 NDFB (S) ultras in Assam.**

An agreement has been signed between the Government of Manipur and Joint Committee on Inner Line Permit System (JCILPS) which was spearheading a movement demanding implementation of inner line permit system in Manipur, Chief Minister Okram Ibobi Singh said on August 26. The Chief Minister said the agreement with JCILPS came about after four

<sup>102</sup> Akhzer, Adil, “Three Militants Killed, Jawan Injured in J&K Encounter”, *The Indian Express*, August 24, 2015 at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/jk-three-militants-killed-jawan-injured-in-handwara-encounter/>

<sup>103</sup> Singh, Vijaita and Pandey, Devesh K., “Another Pakistani Militant Held in Kashmir”, *The Hindu*, August 28, 2015 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/another-pakistani-militant-held-in-kashmir/article7587451.ece>

<sup>104</sup> Upadhyay, Tarun and Ahmad, Imtiaz “3 Killed in Jammu firing, Pakistan Says 8 Of Theirs Dead”, *Hindustan Times*, August 29, 2015 at <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/j-k-1-killed-8-injured-in-firing-by-pak-forces-in-rs-pura-sector/article1-1385014.aspx>

rounds of talks. The government will introduce Bills related to protection of the people of Manipur soon in the state Assembly, as demanded by the JCILPS.<sup>105</sup>

Seven NSCN-K cadres and an unidentified person were killed in a fierce gun battle with security forces in between International Trade Centre under Noklak sub-division in Tuensang district of Nagaland and Hemphu village forest in Myanmar on August 28. A Defence release said the security forces neutralised seven NSCN-K cadres, including one woman cadre, while three over ground workers were injured in an exchange of fire along Pangsha town in Tuensang district. A large quantity of arms and ammunition were recovered from the killed cadres. One soldier of the security forces was also injured in the firing from NSCN-K cadres. The Defence release said the killed militants were from the NSCN-K camp located at Ponyu village under Myanmar and belonged to the group headed by self-styled Lt Gen Niki Sumi of the outfit.<sup>106</sup>

A joint team of the Army and police on August 29 killed two NDFB(S) 'platoon commanders' in an encounter in a jungle near Oxyguri under the Amguri police station of Chirang district of Assam. The slain cadres have been identified as Gundai alias Gungsang alias Gumsrang Narzary (28) and Junthai alias Jaysath Basumatary (21). Gundai was a close aide of G Bidai, the most wanted leader of the outfit. He was accused of killing Adivasis in December 2014 and a school girl, Priya Basumatary on August 20 last year, claimed LR Bisnoi, IGP (BTAD).<sup>107</sup>

## Left-wing Extremism

(August 24-30, 2015)

- **Naxalism will not exist after couple of years: MoS Home; Three BSF jawans, 1 civilian killed in Maoist ambush in Orissa; Bastar set to get 75 'fortified' police stations.**

The Centre has adopted a multi-pronged strategy to tackle Naxalism, which may not exist after a couple of years, Union Minister of State for Home Haribhai Choudhary said on August 24. "In the last three years, there is an overall 30 per cent decline (in Naxal-related incidents). From 108 districts (affected by Maoist insurgency), it is limited to 10-15 districts. I would like to assure you that in the next one or two years, there will be no Naxalism in the country," he told reporters in Hyderabad. Choudhary, however, hastened to add that no time-frame can be given to get rid of Naxalism, but it would be fully controlled once the process begins. Efforts

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<sup>105</sup> "Manipur Govt, ILP Activists Ink Agreement", *The Assam Tribune*, August 27, 2015 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=aug2715/oth050>

<sup>106</sup> Gogoi, Bhadra, "7 NSCN-K Men Killed In Encounter", *The Assam Tribune*, August 29, 2015 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=aug2915/oth051>

<sup>107</sup> "2 Ultras Killed in Chirang", *The Assam Tribune*, August 30, 2015 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=aug3015/at055>

for development, raising public awareness and strong steps on the security front are being taken on a large scale to deal with the menace, the Minister said.<sup>108</sup>

At least three BSF jawans and a villager were killed and six para-military personnel, including an assistant commandant, were injured in a Maoist ambush in Malkangiri district on August 26. Sources said the incident occurred at Palangarai ferry point on Gurupriya river in Sarkubandha Reserve Forest under Chitrakonda police station area, about 100 km from the Andhra border. A BSF team belonging to the 104 battalion stationed at Janbai had gone to the ferry point to conduct a routine operation. "According to operation plan, the security personnel reached Palangarai ferry point on boats. From there, they were supposed to move to some other place. The Maoists triggered a blast at the ferry point and started firing on the security men," DIG (south-western range) S Shyni said. "The jawans retaliated and the exchange of fire continued for some time. While three BSF men hit by bullets, a civilian standing at the ferry point died in the cross firing. There is no report of any injury or casualty on the Maoists' side," she added.<sup>109</sup> Meanwhile, the CPI (Maoists) East Division Committee on August 29 has claimed the responsibility for the attack. In a release sent to the media, the EDC said the BSF jawans had been allegedly harassing and torturing the people, who had urged the banned outfit's military wing, PLGA, to kill them. The Maoists also gave a call to the public to intensify agitation against Essar and bauxite mining.<sup>110</sup>

To strengthen the security apparatus in left-wing extremism-affected tribal areas, Chhattisgarh is set to complete process of setting up 75 'fortified' police stations in tribal Bastar region by December this year. State police housing corporation managing director DM Awasthy said works on 25 fortified police stations have been completed while 15 police stations are nearing completion. He was speaking at a high-level meeting, chaired by the state home minister Ramswak Paikra. To strengthen communication network in Maoist areas, telecom ministry has approved 497 mobile towers for Naxalite-affected areas. According to state chief secretary Vivek Dhand, 415 mobile towers have already been erected, while installation of remaining 32 towers is in progress, and it would be completed by November this year.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> "Naxalism will not Exist After Couple Of Years: MoS Home", *Business Standard*, August 24, 2015 at [http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/naxalism-will-not-exist-after-couple-of-years-mos-home-115082401392\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/naxalism-will-not-exist-after-couple-of-years-mos-home-115082401392_1.html)

<sup>109</sup> Pattnaik, Satyanarayan, "3 BSF Jawans, 1 Civilian Killed in Malkangiri Maoist Ambush", *The Times of India*, August 27, 2015 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/bhubaneswar/3-BSF-jawans-1-civilian-killed-in-Malkangiri-Maoist-ambush/articleshow/48691469.cms>

<sup>110</sup> "Reds Claim Success at Palagarevu", *The Times of India*, August 30, 2015 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/visakhapatnam/Reds-claim-success-at-Palagarevu/articleshow/48727727.cms>

<sup>111</sup> "Maoist Hotbed Bastar To Get 75 'Fortified' Police Stations", *The Times of India*, August 30, 2015 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/raipur/Maoist-hotbed-Bastar-to-get-75-fortified-police-stations/articleshow/48728457.cms?>

## IV. United Nations Reviews

### India and the UN

(August 24-30, 2015)

- **ITLOS asks Italy and India to submit reports on firing incident; India steps forward to implement the Sendai Framework; UNSGs youth envoy visits India; India partner with UN agencies to end use of DDT; Debate and research on climate change as INDCs get framed; Pakistan continues to draw UN attention towards India; New UNGA President visits India; Lok Sabha speaker at the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament.**

The International Tribunal on the Law of the Seas (ITLOS) has asked both India and Italy to halt the trial of the case of the two marines accused of firing on Indian fishermen which resulted in their death. The Tribunal has called for an initial report on the incident by September 24, 2015.<sup>112</sup> This provisional measure taken while the decision on who has the right of jurisdiction in this case is to be decided was passed with approval of 15 of the 21 members of the tribunal, while 6 members dissented.<sup>113</sup>

India has decided to take steps for the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 was adopted during the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Sendai, Japan on March 14-18, 2015. As part of this, India will extend all required help to its neighbouring countries. The First Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Reduction (AMCDRR) will be held in November 2016, and a preparatory meeting for it will be held in November his year.<sup>114</sup>

The UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Ahmad Alhendawi, visited India from August 25-28, 2015.<sup>115</sup> Mandated to increase the engagement of the UN system with youth, the envoy's focus is on participation, advocacy, partnerships and harmonization. He met with several youth organisations and concerned Ministries' officials.<sup>116</sup>

<sup>112</sup> "Marines Case: UN Tribunal Asks India, Italy To Suspend Court Proceedings", *Indian Today*, August 24, 2015, at <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/marines-case-un-tribunal-asks-india-italy-to-suspend-court-proceedings/1/460662.html>

<sup>113</sup> "Italian Marines Case: Suspend All Trials Against Marines, Says UN Tribunal to India", *The Indian Express*, August 25, 2015, at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/un-tribunal-asks-india-italy-to-suspend-trial-of-italian-marines/#sthash.FogZxqas.dpuf>

<sup>114</sup> "India to Implement Sendai Framework, Disaster Risk Reduction Assistance To Neighbours Enhanced", *Business Standard*, August 24, 2015, at [http://www.business-standard.com/article/government-press-release/india-to-implement-sendai-framework-disaster-risk-reduction-assistance-to-neighbours-115082401184\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/government-press-release/india-to-implement-sendai-framework-disaster-risk-reduction-assistance-to-neighbours-115082401184_1.html)

<sup>115</sup> "UN Chief's Envoy for Youth to Visit India This Week", August 25, 2015, at [http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/un-chief-s-envoy-for-youth-to-visit-india-this-week-115082500120\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/un-chief-s-envoy-for-youth-to-visit-india-this-week-115082500120_1.html)

<sup>116</sup> "UN Chief Ban Ki-Moon's Envoy For Youth To Visit India This Week", *The Indian Express*, August 25, 2015, at <http://indianexpress.com/article/world/americas/un-chief-ban-ki-moons-envoy-for-youth-to-visit-india-this-week/>

In partnership with United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), United Nations Environment Programme and the Global Environment Facility, India has pledged to end the use of DDT for control of malaria by 2020. India is the only country in the world that continues to use DDT. The UN agencies prefer a shift to bio-pesticides that have a lasting effect and lesser adverse impact on the environment. The production and use of DDT was banned by the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POP) of 2002, to which India is a signatory.<sup>117</sup>

The position of the Environment Ministry that developed countries must bear the costs of helping the transition of developing countries to green technology was opposed by India's Chief Economic Advisor, Arvind Subramanian. He argued that India should instead align with the coal-rich countries rather than developing countries and stop seeking finances from the developed world. The Ministry however clarified that it did not subscribe to this view.<sup>118</sup> According, India will hold a meeting of Like Minded Developing Countries (LMDCs) in September 2015.<sup>119</sup> In the meanwhile, the Niti Aayog and FICCI jointly made public an online portal of the India Energy Security Scenarios (IESS) 2047 Version 2.0 that will help assess India's energy needs and provide inputs in the formulation of the country's INDCs.<sup>120</sup>

The issue of cancellation of NSA-level talks between India and Pakistan was discussed with the UN Deputy Secretary Jan Eliasson by Pakistan's Permanent Representative Maleeha Lodhi. After the meeting the Secretary General issued a statement regretting the cancellation of the talks.<sup>121</sup> Pakistan also facilitated the visit of UNMOGIP officials to the Sialkot border where it alleged ceasefire violations by Indian border security forces on August 28, 2015.<sup>122</sup> India has successfully eliminated maternal and neonatal tetanus and was lauded by the UNICEF Representative Louis Arsenault for achieving this milestone. India joins the group of 36 other countries who have done so.<sup>123</sup>

The President elect of the UN General Assembly, Mogens Lykketoft, arrived on a two-day visit to India on August 30, 2015. He relayed to the Indian leadership the priorities of the 70th

<sup>117</sup> "India-United Nations Pact To End DDT Use By 2020", *Deccan Herald*, August 26, 2015, at <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/497314/india-united-nations-pact-end.html>

<sup>118</sup> "Climate Change: Environment Ministry, Subramanian At Odds", August 26, 2015, at <http://www.livemint.com/Politics/RF5ttQqsk3ZyUozk0TtuUI/Climate-change-Environment-ministry-Subramanian-at-odds.html>

<sup>119</sup> "Climate Talks: India to Hold Meeting of LMDCs", *The New Indian Express*, August 27, 2015, at <http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/Climate-Talks-India-to-Hold-Meeting-of-LMDCs/2015/08/27/article2995271.ece>

<sup>120</sup> "NITI Aayog's Arvind Panagariya Launches Online Portal To Assess, Predict India's Energy Need", *DNA News*, August 29, 2015, at <http://www.dnaindia.com/money/report-niti-aayog-s-arvind-panagariya-launches-online-portal-to-assess-predict-india-s-energy-need-2119721>

<sup>121</sup> "Pakistan Contacts United Nations Over Cancellation of NSA-Level Talks", *Indian Express*, August 27, 2015, at <http://indianexpress.com/article/world/neighbours/pakistan-contacts-united-nations-over-cancellation-of-nsa-level-talks/>

<sup>122</sup> "UN Team Visits Sialkot To Observe Border Damages by Indian forces", August 29, 2015, at <http://en.dailypakistan.com.pk/headline/un-team-visits-sialkot-to-observe-border-damages-by-indian-forces/>

<sup>123</sup> "Maternal Tetanus Elimination in India Will Save Lives: UN", *NDTV News*, August 28, 2015, at <http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/maternal-tetanus-elimination-in-india-will-save-lives-un-1211897>.

General Assembly in terms of achieving the Self Development Goals, reform of the Security Council, review of peacekeeping operations, climate change and review of the Tunis agenda of World Summit on Information Society. Assuring him of India's support, Minister for External Affairs, in turn, discussed the issue of the reform of the Security Council and the adoption of a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.<sup>124</sup>

Participating in the Tenth Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament at the United Nations Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Sumitra Mahajan, made a case for increased involvement of women with parliamentary processes. She also highlighted the institutionalisation of gender budgeting in India with the formation of 'Gender Budgeting Cells (GBCs)' in 57 ministries and departments.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> “Visit of President-elect of the 70th Session of United Nations General Assembly to India”, *MEA Press Release*, August 30, 2015, at [http://mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/25771/Visit\\_of\\_Presidentelect\\_of\\_the\\_70th\\_Session\\_of\\_United\\_Nations\\_General\\_Assembly\\_to\\_India](http://mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/25771/Visit_of_Presidentelect_of_the_70th_Session_of_United_Nations_General_Assembly_to_India)

Also see “India Pitches for UN Reforms, Terror Fight”, August 31, 2015, at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/india-pitches-for-un-reforms-terror-fight/>

<sup>125</sup> “India Advocates More Female Participation in Parliamentary Committees”, *NDTV News*, August 31, 2015, at <http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/india-advocates-more-female-participation-in-parliamentary-committees-1212878>