

# THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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# I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

## A. South Asia

### Afghanistan

(September 7-13, 2015)

- **Russia mulling military support to Afghanistan, including helicopters; Kazai: MoU between Afghan Intelligence and ISI will not be implemented; Durand Line permanent Afghan-Pakistan border; President Ghani: current peace mechanism requires reform.**

Russia is mulling to send military assistance to Afghanistan to help the country's security forces combat with Taliban, Daesh and other militant groups. Interfax news agency which is based in Moscow quotes Russian President's special envoy to Afghanistan as saying that the military assistance could include helicopters. Zamir Kabulov was quoted by Interfax as saying that the matter is being discussed at national level but Russian officials will soon talk about it with Afghan side. "We expect that the result will be positive," Kabulov was quoted as saying. According to *Reuter's news agency*, Moscow fears instability in Afghanistan could rise following the pull-out of NATO troops and spill over into the ex-Soviet Central Asia, threatening Russia's own southern borders.<sup>1</sup>

The former Afghan President Hamid Karzai has said a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Afghan Intelligence – National Directorate of Security (NDS) and Pakistan's military intelligence – Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) will not be implemented. Speaking to journalists during a visit to India, Karzai said the MoU was rejected by the Afghan people, insisting that the agreement was against interests of the country. The signing of MoU sparked uproar among the Afghan people and officials with Karzai being one of the main critics of the deal. The MoU was apparently concluded with an aim to share intelligence and bolster cooperation in their fight against insurgent groups. However, the Afghan officials have long been criticizing Pakistan's role in fight against terrorism and harbouring the militant groups fighting against the Afghan government security forces.<sup>2</sup>

The United States recognises the Durand Line as an international border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, the State Department said on September 11. Two days back, former president Hamid Karzai had refused to recognise Durand Line as a permanent border between the two countries. He insisted the border had to be redefined. Karzai's remarks are in line with the position taken by successive Afghan governments over the decades. The 1,400-mile border was established in 1893 following an agreement between Sir Mortimer Durand, a

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<sup>1</sup> "Russia Mulling Military Support To Afghanistan, Including Helicopters", *Khaama Press*, September 8, 2015, at <http://www.khaama.com/russia-mulling-military-support-to-afghanistan-3883>

<sup>2</sup> "Karzai: MoU between Afghan Intelligence and ISI will not be Implemented", *Khaama Press*, September 8, 2015, at <http://www.khaama.com/karzai-mou-between-afghan-intelligence-and-isi-will-not-be-implemented-9618>

representative of British India, and King Abdur Rahman Khan. Addressing a news conference in Washington, State Department spokesman John Kirby said: "We don't have any new policies with respect to the borders of Afghanistan." Asked if the US recognised the Durand Line as the final border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, Kirby replied: "It's the recognised border, and we recognise the borders of Afghanistan."<sup>3</sup>

President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani has said that the current peace mechanism in the country requires reform. While talking to local elders from Kandahar, Zabul, Urozgan, Helmand, Nimroz and Farah provinces in Presidential Palace, President Ghani said that the environment in Afghanistan has changed. He said most countries have confirmed our stance for peace as rightful, adding that Mullah Omar's death has brought changes in the situation. President Ghani further said that a national consensus is required in order to bring potential reforms in the current mechanism of peace process. At the end of the meeting, President Ghani requested these elders to send their recommendations for peace to presidential palace on papers.<sup>4</sup>

## Pakistan

(September 7-13, 2015)

- **A Taliban leader says Pakistan's ISI demanded to work for them but he put down the demand; Cold or hot start, army ready for anything; Seminaries' funds to be put under the scanner; No talks with India sans Kashmir; NCA vows to maintain minimum N-deterrence; Rangers, BSF discuss new strategies for tranquil border; MDGs missed amid a litany of acronyms.**

Mullah Mansour Dadullah who is opposing the selection of Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour as the Taliban Supreme Leader has said that 'Emirate' ranks are being distributed in Pakistan. He says that Pakistan's spy agency Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI) had demanded him to work for them but he put down the demand. According to Mullah Dadullah, Pakistan had offered him a greater part in Taliban in return for working against the national interests. Mullah Dadullah has expressed these remarks in a 17 minutes video published on social media. Dadullah is seen wearing a black turban sitting among other Taliban. Some gunmen are also seen standing behind him carrying Taliban flag. The video shows some pictures and speeches of other Taliban leaders after which Mullah Mansour Dadullah begins giving his statement. He said after separating ways with former Taliban Supreme Leader Mullah Mohammad Omar, some mean people emerged who conned people on the name of Amir-ul-Momenin, adding that then some dishonest people were appointed. He said these people

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<sup>3</sup> "Durand Line Permanent Afghan-Pakistan Border", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, September 12, 2015, at [http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=13057](http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=13057)

<sup>4</sup> "President Ghani: Current Peace Mechanism Requires Reform", *Khaama Press*, September 13, 2015, at <http://www.khaama.com/president-ghani-peace-mechanism-requires-reform-3896>

illegally kept secret the death report of Mullah Omar. “Now we don’t endorse the leadership of Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour,” he said.<sup>5</sup>

In a pointed response to his Indian counterpart’s threat of a short war, Army Chief Gen Raheel Sharif said on September 6 that his forces were fully ready to thwart any external aggression. “If the enemy ever resorts to any misadventure, regardless of its size and scale – short or long – it will have to pay an unbearable cost,” Gen Sharif said at a grand ceremony held at the General Headquarters (GHQ) to commemorate 50 years of the 1965 war with India. In his speech, the army chief touched upon all issues of concern to the military – terrorism, Karachi, the peace process in Afghanistan that it has been facilitating, and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. But the primary focus remained on the threat from India, something which he mentioned on two separate occasions during his 11-minute speech. Gen Sharif’s curt comments came against the backdrop of Indian Army Chief General Dalbir Singh Suhag’s remarks earlier this week, where he said his troops were ready for the “swift, short nature of future wars”. Indian Army’s 2 ‘Kharga’ Strike Corps had, in April, also carried out large scale war games codenamed ‘Brahmashira’ to rehearse “swift multiple offensives”.<sup>6</sup>

Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan has said that religious seminaries will be allowed to open bank accounts in an effort to guard against illicit funding and ensure transparency of transactions. Speaking at a press conference after a meeting with religious scholars from the Tanzeem Ittehad-ul-Madaris (TIM) — an umbrella body of five organisations representing the seminaries of the major schools of thought — the minister said that a meeting between TIM representatives and State Bank officials would be arranged to iron out the modalities. He also said the government would evolve a mechanism to streamline foreign funding to seminaries. Currently, religious seminaries are barred from opening bank accounts, which means that their funds are deposited into individuals’ accounts. The meeting was spread over two rounds, with the second one chaired by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and attended by Chief of the Army Staff Gen Raheel Sha-rif and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Director General Lt-Gen Rizwan Akhtar.<sup>7</sup>

Adviser to the PM on National Security and Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz on September 8 said that Pakistan would hold talks with India only if the Kashmir issue was on the agenda. He said that any talks with India while excluding the Kashmir issue could not be result-oriented. He said India wanted to hold the dialogue process with Pakistan on its own terms. He said if India would try to commit any misadventure against Pakistan, it would be responded to in a befitting manner. Talking to the media in Islamabad after attending a ceremony, he said the entire world had supported Pakistan’s stance that the two countries needed to hold a dialogue

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<sup>5</sup> “Mullah Mansour Dadullah: Pakistan Urged Me To Begin Target Killings In Afghanistan But I Rejected”, *Khaama Press*, September 7, 2015, at <http://www.khaama.com/mullah-mansour-dadullah-pakistan-asked-me-to-begin-target-killings-in-afghanistan-but-i-rejected-3878>

<sup>6</sup> “Cold or Hot Start, Army Ready For Anything: COAS”, *Dawn*, September 7, 2015, at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1205403/cold-or-hot-start-army-ready-for-anything-coas>

<sup>7</sup> “Seminaries’ Funds To Be Put Under The Scanner”, *Dawn*, September 8, 2015, at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1205557/seminaries-funds-to-be-put-under-the-scanner>

on all the outstanding issues, including Kashmir. Sartaj Aziz rejected the Indian allegations on the presence of Dawood Ibrahim in Pakistan and made it clear a befitting reply would be given to any Indian misadventure on that count. The adviser said that a meeting between DG Rangers and Commander of Indian BSF would be held in New Delhi on September 9. He said the meeting was aimed at reducing tension on the Line of Control (LoC) and the Working Boundary. Sartaj Aziz categorically stated that the issue of the implementation of the 2003 ceasefire agreement would be raised in the meeting.<sup>8</sup>

The National Command Authority (NCA) on September 9 reiterated the national resolve to maintain 'full spectrum deterrence capability' in line with the dictates of 'credible minimum deterrence'. This will be done to deter all forms of aggression while adhering to the policy of avoiding an arms race. The growing conventional asymmetry necessitated this development. The significant meeting of the NCA was chaired by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who heads the authority, in Rawalpindi. It was also attended by Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC) General Rashad Mahmood, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Raheel Sharif, Chief of General Staff (CGS) GHQ Lieutenant General Zubair Mahmood Hayat, Director General Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Lieutenant General Rizwan Akhtar Malik, DG Strategic Planning Division (SPD) Lieutenant General Mazhar Jameel, Commander Army Strategic Forces Command (ASFC) Lieutenant General Obaidullah Khan, DGMO Major General Aamer Riaz, DG Military Intelligence Major General Nadeem Zaki Manj, Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar, Adviser to Prime Minister for National Security and Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz, Special Assistant to the PM on Foreign Affairs Tariq Fatemi and other senior officials.<sup>9</sup>

Heads of the border guards of India and Pakistan began a three-day meeting in New Delhi on September 10, which looks primed to work out new strategies to effectively restore tranquillity to the working boundary in Jammu and Kashmir, sources said. They said there was hope to work out a plan to rein in hostile propaganda both sides conduct through the media, which weakens their ability to steer out from any bad patch during their border vigil. Local reports suggested the atmospherics were warm and cordial. In what can be seen as an encouraging development in talks between the two neighbours, the BSF-Pakistan Rangers meeting has been extended for a day to "discuss and finalise" these new protocols and strategies, *The Indian Express* reported.<sup>10</sup>

AS Pakistan prepares for the UN summit later this month, domestic focus is said to be on the next set of collective development targets – the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – regardless of precious little achievement in terms of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that were adopted at the turn of the century and for which this is the cut-off year. In

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<sup>8</sup> "No Talks With India Sans Kashmir, Says Sartaj", *The News*, September 9, 2015, at <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-39530-No-talks-with-India-sans-Kashmir-says-Sartaj>

<sup>9</sup> "NCA Vows To Maintain Minimum N-Deterrence", *The News*, September 10, 2015 at <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-39548-NCA-vows-to-maintain-minimum-N-deterrence>

<sup>10</sup> "Rangers, BSF Discuss New Strategies For Tranquil Border", *Dawn*, September 10, 2015, at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1206208/rangers-bsf-discuss-new-strategies-for-tranquil-border>

its 70th session that commences on September 15, the UN General Assembly will celebrate the world's progress, albeit uneven, on the MDGs and will launch the SDGs to guide development efforts globally till 2030. Talking to Dawn, Sartaj Aziz, Adviser to the Prime Minister on National Security and Foreign Affairs, was confident of more meaningful participation on the part of Pakistan in the UN General Assembly meetings this year. "We are already interacting with the provinces and have created a group in the Planning Commission to evolve proper systems and prepare annual plans in light of the SDGs," he said over the telephone from Islamabad. "The task is facilitated as we are equipped with Vision 2025, which will now be readjusted to envelop the new set of global development goals and be extended to 2030."<sup>11</sup>

## Bangladesh

(September 7-13, 2015)

- **India-Bangladesh agree on need for exchange of stranded fishermen; Bangladesh-US security dialogue held in Washington; Bangladesh ensured all-out co-operation to the Thai law enforcement agencies; Commonwealth Secretary-General visits Dhaka.**

Bangladesh and India agreed on expeditious repatriation of their fishermen who stray unwittingly into each other's territorial waters. The decision was made when visiting Bangladesh Chief of Army Staff Gen Abu Belal Muhammad Shafiul Huq met Indian Home Minister Rajnath Singh on September 9. During the meeting, they discussed various issues, including fishermen of the two countries drifting into each other's territorial waters. Indian Minister of State for Home Kiren Rijiju, Secretary (Border Management) Anoop Kumar Srivastava, senior officers of the home ministry and Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi were also present at the meeting.<sup>12</sup>

Senior government and military officials of Bangladesh and the United States held a dialogue on security issues on September 11 in Washington to enhance collaboration in countering extremism and terrorism, security assistance, UN peacekeeping operations, humanitarian assistance and disaster response. This was the fourth Dialogue on Security Issues between the two countries. Bangladesh and the United States have stressed the importance of a deeper and stronger partnership to seek effective solutions to their security concerns during the meeting. At the meeting, Bangladesh reiterated its commitment to fighting terrorism and extremism. The US side lauded Bangladesh's contribution to promoting global peace under the aegis of the UN peacekeeping operations. Foreign Secretary (Bilateral) Mizanur Rahman led the Bangladesh delegation, which is comprised of senior officials from the ministries of foreign, home, defence, disaster management, Armed Forces Division and Bangladesh Embassy in

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<sup>11</sup> "MDGs Missed Amid A Litany Of Acronyms", *Dawn*, September 13, 2015, at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1206669/mdgs-missed-amid-a-litany-of-acronyms>

<sup>12</sup> "Indo-Bangla Army Chiefs Agree on Need for Exchange of Stranded Fishermen", *The Daily Star*, September 10, 2015 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/city/indo-bangla-army-chiefs-agree-need-exchange-stranded-fishermen-140830>.

Washington. The US side was headed by Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (PM) Todd C Chapman.<sup>13</sup>

Bangladesh will uphold its zero-tolerance policy against any terrorism suspects at home and abroad under its stringent counter-terrorism laws, including the suspected mastermind of the Erawan Shrine bomb attacks who transited through Bangladesh in August, Bangladesh Ambassador to Thailand Saida Muna Tasneem told the Royal Thai Police. During a meeting with Spokesperson and Assistant Police Commissioner of the Royal Thai Police, Pol Lt Gen Dr Prawut Thavornsiri, in Bangkok on September 12, the envoy assured the Thai law enforcement agencies of all-out cooperation from Bangladesh on the possible tracing down of activities of the Bangkok bomb blast suspect who as per Bangladesh police sources left Bangladesh on August 30 following a two week transit stay. Against the backdrop, Bangladesh has put its foreign missions on a high alert regarding issuance of tourist visas, especially to the third country nationals. The government has also reportedly, ordered strict profiling of visa seekers and an even stricter visa policy amid the growing incidents of terrorism.<sup>14</sup>

Commonwealth Secretary-General Kamallesh Sharma made a three-day visit to Dhaka on September 11. During the visit Kamallesh Sharma met BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.<sup>15</sup>

## Sri Lanka

(September 7-13, 2015)

- **Three new ministers appointed to Sri Lanka cabinet; Sri Lanka's Constitutional Council holds its first meeting; No evidence of ISIS operations in Sri Lanka: Defence Ministry; Mangala Samaraweera holds talks with UN rights chief.**

Sri Lanka's President Maithripala Sirisena has appointed three new cabinet ministers on September 9. United National Party (UNP) Chairman, MP Malik Samarawickrema was appointed as the Cabinet Minister of Development Strategy and International Trade. United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) MP Vijith Wijayamuni de Soysa was appointed as the Minister of Irrigation and Water Resource Management and while MP Faizer Mustapha took oath as the Minister of Local Government and Provincial Councils.<sup>16</sup>

The first meeting of Sri Lanka's Constitutional Council was held on September 10 under the patronage of the Speaker Karu Jayasuriya at the official Residence of the Speaker. Under the

<sup>13</sup> "Bangladesh, US Hold Security Dialogue in Washington Today", *The Daily Star*, September 11, 2015 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/bangladesh-us-4th-security-talks-today-washington-141241>. "Deep Ties Key To Resolving Security Issues", *The Daily Star*, September 13, 2015 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/deep-ties-key-resolving-security-issues-142159>.

<sup>14</sup> "Dhaka to Stay Tough on Terrorism", *The Daily Star*, September 13, 2015 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/city/dhaka-stay-tough-terrorism-142204>.

<sup>15</sup> "Khaleda Seeks Commonwealth Boss's Help", *The Daily Star*, September 13, 2015 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/khaleda-seeks-commonwealth-boss-help-142408>.

<sup>16</sup> "Three New Ministers Appointed To Sri Lanka Cabinet", *ColomboPage*, September 9, 2015 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_15B/Sep09\\_1441782256CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Sep09_1441782256CH.php).

19th Amendment to the Constitution, Constitutional Council is the responsible body to appoint members to the independent commissions such as bribery commission and election commission. The office of the Constitutional Council said the Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe and Opposition Leader R. Sampanthan attended today's meeting. In addition, members of the Constitutional Council Ministers Dr. Wijeyadasa Rajapaksa, Patali Champika Ranawaka and W.D.J. Seneviratne were present.<sup>17</sup>

The Defence Ministry says there is no evidence to back claims that the ISIS terrorist group was operating in Sri Lanka. Defence Secretary Karunasena Hettiarachchi said that while there were reports of a Sri Lankan man joining ISIS, there is no concrete evidence to suggest the group was operating in Sri Lanka.<sup>18</sup>

Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera and Justice Minister Wijedasa Rajapaksa along with senior government officials met UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Prince Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein at the Palais Wilson in Geneva on September 13.<sup>19</sup>

## Maldives

(September 7-13, 2015)

- **Chinese Vice Minister of Commerce calls on the President; Team of Nasheed's international lawyer visits Maldives; High Court rejects the appeal of President Nasheed's prison sentence.**

Vice Minister of Commerce of China, Gao Yan has paid a courtesy call on President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom. The meeting was held at the President's Office on September 8. At the meeting Vice Minister of Commerce of China, Gao Yan expressed her delight that the Maldivian people gave as much importance to the "China-Maldives friendship bridge", as the Maldivian Government. She assured the President of China's continuous support and assistance to the Maldives, for the successful completion of the bridge. She also expressed hopes for future mega projects where both the countries could collaborate. Noting that the "China-Maldives friendship bridge" would be the first of its kind in the history of the Maldives, the Chinese Vice Minister of Commerce discussed the latest updates on the bridge project with President Yameen. She also briefed the President on the challenges being faced at different stages. The Chinese Vice Minister expressed her gratitude to the President and Government of Maldives for the continuous support being provided for the bridge project. Speaking at the meeting, President Yameen said that the "China-Maldives friendship bridge" to be built between Male' City and Hulhumale, was greatly anticipated by all Maldivians. He stated that this project would pave the way for the Government to achieve many of its

<sup>17</sup> "Sri Lanka's Constitutional Council Holds Its First Meeting", *ColomboPage*, September 10, 2015 at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_15B/Sep10\\_1441894311CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Sep10_1441894311CH.php).

<sup>18</sup> "No Evidence of ISIS Operations in Sri Lanka", *Colombo Gazette*, September 13, 2015 at <http://colombogazette.com/2015/09/13/no-evidence-of-isis-operations-in-sri-lanka/>.

<sup>19</sup> "Sri Lanka Delegation Holds Talks with UN Rights Chief", *Colombo Gazette*, September 13, 2015 at <http://colombogazette.com/2015/09/13/sri-lanka-delegation-holds-talks-with-un-rights-chief/>.

economic and social development goals. Vice Minister of Commerce of China Gao Yan, also signed a document to launch Free Trade Agreement negotiations between Maldives and China at a ceremony at Kurumba Maldives during her visit in the country.<sup>20</sup>

Former President, Mohamed Nasheed's international team of lawyers Amaal Clooney arrived in Maldives on September 7. She met with former President Nasheed at Maafushi Prison on September 8. She met with Attorney General (AG) Mohamed Anil, who represented the Government of Maldives on September 9. Amaal Clooney and Jared Genser, met with Nasheed in prison again on September 10. The team also met with foreign diplomats and media at Colombo. Speaking at a press conference at Kurumba Maldives, Genser said that President Nasheed has been neglected from numerous international rights and rights granted by the Maldivian Constitution. Amaal Clooney, said that his trial proceeded after neglecting a lot of his rights. She noted that President Nasheed was not given adequate time to respond. Due to these reason, Clooney said, that a lot of international community believes President Nasheed's trial was "a travesty of justice." The former President's lawyers said that they are almost certain that the case at U.N. working group of arbitrary detention would rule in President Nasheed's favour.<sup>21</sup>

High Court has rejected the appeal of the former President Mohamed Nasheed's 13-year prison sentence by the Criminal Court submitted by the Prosecutor General. The case report for appeal publicized by the High Court's website tonight says that while the state has appealed President Nasheed's case, the case is not based on the conditions within Article 43 of the Law of Courts. And the case cannot be accepted since it did not come from President Nasheed, it cannot be accepted as an appeal. The High Court's decision says that if the case wasn't appealed in the duration of ten days given to file for appeal due to a legitimate reason, it is not illegal to appeal the case after the duration expires. President Nasheed's legal team refused to file for appeal earlier claiming that the duration of ten days given to file for an appeal has been expired.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> "Chinese Vice Minister of Commerce Calls on the President", *The Presidency, Republic of Maldives*, September 8, 2015 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=15922>. "Maldives, China Launch Free Trade Agreement Negotiations", *SunOnline*, September 8, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/32371>.

<sup>21</sup> "President Nasheed's International Team of Lawyers Has Arrived in Maldives", *SunOnline*, September 7, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/32327>. "Amaal Clooney has Met with President Nasheed", *SunOnline*, September 8, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/32385>. "Amaal Clooney meets with AG Anil", *SunOnline*, September 9, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/32411>. "Amaal Clooney, Jared Genser Meet with Nasheed Again", *SunOnline*, September 10, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/32457>. "Jared Genser: Highest Priority is to Free Nasheed from Prison", *SunOnline*, September 10, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/32489>.

<sup>22</sup> "High Court Rejects the Appeal of President Nasheed's Prison Sentence", *SunOnline*, September 10, 2015 at <http://www.sun.mv/english/32487>.

## B. East Asia

### China

(September 7-13, 2015)

- **Chinese government issues guidelines to help SOE reforms; Xi calls for good behaviour by CPC cadres; China wants the United States to stop cyber-attack accusations; China and Russia discuss joint helicopter project; China and Jordan discuss bilateral relationship; China celebrates 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Tibet autonomy; Senior Chinese official calls for strict adherence to law with respect to religious affairs in Tibet.**

On September 13, the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and the State Council issued guidelines to strengthen reforms of the State-owned enterprises (SOEs). As per the guidelines, “the government will improve the competence of SOEs and turn them into fully independent market entities”. The Chinese government also aims to achieve major reforms by 2020.<sup>23</sup>

On September 11 while attending a study session by the members of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) cadres, Xi Jinping asserted the importance of setting a good example in improving work styles and serving people. During the session Xi said that, “We should always keep the ‘three strict and three earnest’ in mind, adhere to the truth and resolutely correct misconduct that goes against the cause of the CPC and the people”.<sup>24</sup>

On September 11, China urged the United States to stop all “groundless accusations” of cyber-attacks against China. Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hong Lei said that, “The Chinese government firmly opposes and cracks down on all types of hackers”. Hong further added that, “Cyber security should be an area of cooperation rather than a source of frictions. Some US personnel should stop their groundless accusations against China”.<sup>25</sup>

It has been reported that China and Russia are very close to finalizing an agreement to jointly develop a heavy-lift helicopter by next year. This was reported by a senior Chinese helicopter designer, Wu Ximing.<sup>26</sup>

Chinese President Xi Jinping met with the King of Jordan, King Abdullah II Bin- Al-Hussein. Both sides discussed the Belt and Road initiative. They also signed a joint statement on the establishment of a strategic partnership between the two countries. During the meeting Xi

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<sup>23</sup> “China Issues Guideline To Deepen SOE Reforms”, *China Daily*, September 13, 2015 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-09/13/content\\_21848986.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-09/13/content_21848986.htm), accessed on September 14, 2015

<sup>24</sup> “Xi Urges CPC Cadres To Set Examples” *China Daily*, September 13, 2015 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-09/13/content\\_21848240.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-09/13/content_21848240.htm), accessed on September 14, 2015

<sup>25</sup> “China Urges US To Stop ‘Groundless Accusations’ About Cyber Attacks”, *China Daily*, September 11, 2015 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-09/11/content\\_21845852.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-09/11/content_21845852.htm), accessed on September 14, 2015

<sup>26</sup> “China, Russia to Co-Develop Heavy-Lift Helicopter in 2016”, By Zhao Lei, *China Daily*, September 10, 2015 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-09/10/content\\_21836363.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-09/10/content_21836363.htm), accessed on September 14, 2015

said that, “The decision to set up the strategic partnership is an important milestone for our relationship”.<sup>27</sup>

Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) Yu Zhengsheng arrived in Lhasa on September 6 to attend the 50th anniversary of the region’s founding.<sup>28</sup> During his speech Yu asserted strict adherence to the law in managing religious affairs in Tibet. He said, “Law based governance is fundamental to the long-term stability of Tibet”.<sup>29</sup>

## Japan

(September 7-13, 2015)

- **September 11 marked the third anniversary of the nationalization of Senkaku Islands; Japan-China-South Korea trilateral agriculture ministers meeting hosted in Tokyo; Japan-Uganda summit meeting focused on developing quality infrastructure in Africa; Japanese government resumed relocation work of US Marine Corps Air Station Futenma.**

September 11 marked the third anniversary of the nationalization of Senkaku Islands. Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida reiterated that Senkaku Islands are an inherent part of Japanese territory and are under the valid control of Japan, and that no territorial issue or issue of sovereignty exists. Furthermore, Kishida said that Chinese intrusions into territorial waters needs firm response.<sup>30</sup>

On September 12, Japan-China-South Korea agriculture ministers met in Tokyo after three years and decided to increase cooperation in stable food supply and support R&D of vaccines for animal diseases.<sup>31</sup>

Japan-Uganda summit meeting was held on September 10 where Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Ugandan President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni reportedly discussed quality infrastructure and exchanged notes regarding yen loans for the Kampala Flyover Construction and Road Upgrading Project was signed. The leaders also discussed several issues including human resources development, education, contribution of Japanese NGOs in Uganda and the Tokyo International Conference on African Development.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>27</sup> “China, Jordan Announce Strategic Partnership”, *China Daily*, September 9, 2015 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-09/09/content\\_21835445.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-09/09/content_21835445.htm), accessed on September 14, 2015

<sup>28</sup> “Central Gov’t Officials In Tibet For 50th Anniversary Of Autonomy”, *China Daily*, September 7, 2015 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-09/07/content\\_21805385.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-09/07/content_21805385.htm), accessed on September 14, 2015

<sup>29</sup> “Senior Official Stresses Legality In Tibet’s Religious Affairs”, *China Daily*, September 8, 2015 at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-09/08/content\\_21817603.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-09/08/content_21817603.htm), accessed on September 14, 2015

<sup>30</sup> Press Conference by Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida, *MOFA Japan*, September 11, 2015 at [http://www.mofa.go.jp/press/kaiken/kaiken4e\\_000194.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/press/kaiken/kaiken4e_000194.html)

<sup>31</sup> “Farm Ministers of Japan, China and S.Korea To Meet”, *NHK*, September 4, 2015 at [http://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/english/news/20150904\\_24.html](http://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/english/news/20150904_24.html)

<sup>32</sup> Japan-Uganda Summit Meeting, *MOFA Japan*, September 10, 2015 at [http://www.mofa.go.jp/afr/af2/ug/page4e\\_000313.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/afr/af2/ug/page4e_000313.html)

On September 12, Japanese government restarted work for relocating US Marine Corps Air Station Futenma after a month pause owing to the coral survey. While the central government engaged in discussion with the Okinawa prefecture during this time to facilitate understanding regarding the base relocation plan, there was no agreement between the two sides.<sup>33</sup>

## The Korean Peninsula

(September 7-13, 2015)

- **North Korean long-range missile launch likely in early October to mark the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Workers' Party; South Korean President Park Geun-hye stressed on enhancing cooperation between the US, China and Russia to promote the Eurasia Initiative; South Korea will make effort to facilitate quick setting up of anti-missile systems to deal with the North Korea's threat; Second South Korea and Australia "2+2" Foreign and Defence Ministers is scheduled in Sydney; North Korea communicated a letter to the UNSC criticizing the presence of the US military in South Korea.**

South Korean Defence Ministry on September 10 reportedly indicated that long-range missile might be launched by North Korea in early October to mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Workers' Party. Reports indicated that North Korea is concluding the construction at in Dongchang-ri. In case of a launch, the hard earned August agreement between the two Koreas will be affected.<sup>34</sup>

South Korean President Park Geun-hye stressed on enhancing cooperation between the US, China and Russia to promote the Eurasia Initiative that aims to connect Eurasian countries by linking roads and railways that go from South Korea to Europe through North Korea, Russia and China. President Park said that constructing a linkage on the massive Eurasian continent is not possible by one country and needs collective effort and proposed that Seoul will host international experts meeting in 2016 to exchange views on the network.<sup>35</sup>

South Korean Ministry of National Defence on September 9 said that it will make efforts to facilitate quick setting up of anti-missile systems to deal with the North Korea's threat. US\$703 million has been reportedly reserved for 2016 to construct the Korean Air and Missile Defence (KAMD) and Kill Chain systems by the 2020s.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> "Futenma Base Relocation Work Resumes in Okinawa", *Jiji*, September 12, 2015 at <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/09/12/national/politics-diplomacy/futenma-base-relocation-work-resumes-okinawa/#.VguEYFK6a1t>

<sup>34</sup> "(LEAD) NK May Launch Long-Range Missile Around Its Anniversary: Seoul," *Yonhap News Agency*, September 10, 2015 at <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2015/09/10/0301000000AEN20150910002351315.html>

<sup>35</sup> "Park Calls For Int'l Cooperation On Logistics Network Across Eurasia", *Yonhap News Agency*, September 10, 2015 at <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2015/09/10/0301000000AEN20150910003500315.html>

<sup>36</sup> "S. Korea Boosts Budget For Early Set-Up of Kill Chain, KAMD to Counter North's Threats," *Yonhap News Agency*, September 9, 2015 at <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2015/09/09/0301000000AEN20150909009700315.html>

The second South Korea and Australia “2+2” Foreign and Defence Ministers is scheduled in Sydney on September 11. A blueprint for security and defence cooperation dealing several issues including bilateral defence cooperation, dialogue channels and non-proliferation issues is expected to be issued after the meeting. Additionally, the two sides will also discuss security situation in Korean Peninsula, epidemics, illegal arms trafficking and natural disasters.<sup>37</sup>

North Korean Amb. Ja Song-nam has dispatched a written communication to the UNSC criticizing the presence of the US military in South Korea which it suggests has destabilized the Korean Peninsula. Furthermore, it demanded the removal of US forces marking the 70th anniversary of US military presence in South Korea. The letter further indicates that US is the main source of contention between the two Koreas.<sup>38</sup>

## C. Russia

### Russia: Domestic

(September 7-13, 2015)

- **Capital outflow from Russia expected to be approx. US\$ 85 billion in 2015; Russia's accession to OPEC not on agenda; Medvedev orders Transport Ministry to equip Iturup Island airfield within 2 months; Liberals criticise Russian election law as ‘medieval’ and suggest radical changes; Number of Russian army contract servicemen increased by 60,000 since 2014; Russia holds nationwide regional elections.**

Central Bank Chief Elvira Nabiullina has projected the capital outflow to be US\$ 85 billion and current balance to be US\$ 73 billion in 2015. Meanwhile, the Bank has downgraded its inflation projection for 2015 from 10.8 per cent to 12-13 per cent.<sup>39</sup>

Russian presidential spokesman Dmitry Peskov has said that Russia’s accession to the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is not on the agenda. He noted that Russia did maintain contacts with OPEC representatives at the expert level. Earlier, Rosneft CEO Igor Sechin had stated that OPEC had offered Russia to become a member of the organization. Mr. Sechin highlighted the fact that unlike the OPEC member-countries where oil extraction is overseen by state-owned companies, Russia’s oil industry is privately owned and it is also difficult to regulate oil production quickly due to climatic conditions. He also

<sup>37</sup> S. Korea, Australia seek to strengthen security ties, Yonhap News Agency, September 9, 2015 <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2015/09/09/0301000000AEN20150909004600315.html>

<sup>38</sup> “N. Korea Sends Letter to U.N. to Call For End of U.S. Military Presence in S. Korea”, *Yonhap News Agency*, September 14, 2015 at <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2015/09/14/0401000000AEN20150914000200315.html>

<sup>39</sup> “Capital Outflow from Russia to Stand at \$85 bln in 2015 — Central Bank Chief”, *Itar-Tass*, September 11, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/820506>

added that 'OPEC has lost its functions as a market regulator which made it pointless for Russia to join the organization'. At present, Russia is an observer of OPEC.<sup>40</sup>

Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev has set a deadline of two months for the Russian Ministry of Transport to furnish the airfield on the Iturup Island with all-weather navigational equipment. Iturup Islands are part of the Kuril Islands that is disputed between Russia and Japan.<sup>41</sup>

The leader of the Yabloko party Sergey Mitrokhin has said that Russia must abandon the current practice of political parties presenting supporters' signatures before elections to prove their popularity, saying it was both obsolete and prone to rigging. The comments came after the elections commission in the Novosibirsk Region removed the PARNAS party from the forthcoming regional polls. The commission had said that a large percentage of supporters' signatures presented appeared to be forged. Meanwhile, PARNAS representatives have insisted that all their signatures are authentic and blame the conflict on the Federal Migration Service's supposedly obsolete database. Russia will hold nationwide elections on September 13. This is when 11 Russian regions will elect legislatures while 21 heads of regions will be elected by a direct vote and four more by voting in regional parliaments.<sup>42</sup>

The number of contract servicemen in the Russian Armed Forces in 2015 has exceeded the number of draftees. This was announced by the Chief of the main personnel department of the Russian Defence Ministry Major General Ruslan Vasilyev on September 11. The number of contract servicemen in the Russian army has reached 352,000 in 2015. He added that the Russian President has called upon the Defence Ministry to increase the number of contract servicemen to 500,000.<sup>43</sup>

Russia is summarizing September 13's single voting day results that will test the mood of the country's electorate before the September 2016 polls to the lower house of parliament, the State Duma. Voters cast ballots in a total of 84 Russian regions (except for the North Caucasian Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria) at elections of various levels. Eleven regions elected their legislatures while 21 regions had direct elections of their governors. In all, a total of 10,700 elections of various levels were held across Russia. Ten regions had more than 70 local referendums.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> "Russia's Accession To OPEC not on Agenda — Kremlin", *Itar-Tass*, September 8, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/819536>

<sup>41</sup> "Medvedev Orders Transport Ministry To Equip Iturup Island Airfield In 2 Months", *Itar-Tass*, September 8, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/russia/819573>

<sup>42</sup> "Liberals Blast Russian Election Law As 'Medieval,' Suggest Radical Changes", *RT*, September 7, 2015 at <https://www.rt.com/politics/314639-liberals-blast-russian-election-law/>

<sup>43</sup> "Number of Russian Army Contract Servicemen Increased by 60,000 since 2014", *Itar-Tass*, September 11, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/defense/820394>

<sup>44</sup> "Russia Sums Up Sunday's Local Election Results", *Itar-Tass*, September 11, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/politics/820807>

## Russia: International

(September 7-13, 2015)

- **Russian Deputy Foreign Minister refers to Pakistan as its closest partner; Russia calls for a joint effort in fighting Islamic State in Syria; Germany's sees need to cooperate with Russia on Syria; Lavrov warns of 'incidents' between U.S. and Russian military in Syria; UN orders probe into Syria gas attack after Russia drops objections; OSCE says Sept. 1 cease-fire in Eastern Ukraine holding; Normandy Four agrees to speed up talks between Kiev and separatists of Eastern Ukraine; Moscow to sue Kiev in case it fails to repay US\$ 3 billion Eurobond on time; Poroshenko rules out extension of Minsk peace accords beyond 2015; Turkish Stream first line launch postponed due to political crisis in Turkey; Trade turnover between Russia and China down by 30 per cent in 2015; Russia and China developing drone carrying missile; Russia builds unified air defence for CIS collective security; Russia lowers gas prices for Armenia by US\$ 24 to US\$ 165 per 1,000 cubic meters; Russia signs deal on supply of fighting vehicle combat modules to United Arab Emirates; Russia and Algeria sign contract for 14 Su-30MKA aircraft.**

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov has said that Pakistan and Russia are in talks about the delivery of Sukhoi Su-35 fighter jets and previously agreed upon delivery of Mi-35M helicopters. He added that Russia-Pakistan ties were improving in other sectors as well including energy and referred to Pakistan as Russia's closest partner. Meanwhile, Islamabad—Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Oil and Gas Company Ltd. KPOGCL and a joint stock company JGC ROSGEO from Moscow have signed an MoU to cooperate in oil and gas exploration and production in Pakistan. According to the MoU, the parties will develop cooperation in areas designed to increase the economic potential of Pakistan through identification of new hydrocarbon fields, efficient use of the natural resources of Pakistan, ensuring environmental protection and sustainability and carrying out of geological surveys within the territory of Pakistan, using the modern technologies and methods.<sup>45</sup>

Russia has calls for a joint effort in the fight against the Islamic State terrorist group in Syria. The Foreign Ministry spokeswoman stated that Russia's 'proposal is to gather all the efforts together — all the international players, all Syria's neighbours, all members of the opposition coalition, all of those who are involved'. Moscow has since raised this issue with Washington. She also added that Russia will continue to provide assistance including military supplies to the Syrian government and raised doubts whether a concrete Western plan to stabilise Syria existed if President Assad was deposed.<sup>46</sup>

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has said that Western European countries need to work with Russia and the United States to solve the crisis in Syria. Earlier, German Foreign Minister Steinmeier and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov had a lengthy exchange about Syria,

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<sup>45</sup> "Ryabkov Refers to Pakistan as Russia's Closest Partner", *Daily Times*, September 10, 2015 at <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/10-Sep-2015/ryabkov-refers-to-pakistan-as-russia-s-closest-partner>

<sup>46</sup> "Russia calls for Joint Efforts In Fighting Islamic State in Syria", *Itar-Tass*, September 8, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/russia/819463>

with both sides agreeing to support the UN Syrian envoy, Staffan de Mistura's plan to create a Syrian contact group. De Mistura has invited warring parties to take part in UN-led working groups to address matters including political and constitutional issues, and military and security issues. Meanwhile, Russia has called for cooperation with the United States to avoid "unintended incidents," as it stages naval exercises off the coast of Syria, where U.S. officials believe Moscow is building up forces to protect President Bashar al-Assad.<sup>47</sup>

Russia has called on the US to restart direct military-to-military cooperation to avert "unintended incidents" near Syria, at a time when U.S. officials say Moscow is building up forces to protect President Bashar Assad's government. The United States is leading a campaign of air strikes against Islamic State fighters in Syrian air space and a greater Russian presence would raise the prospect of the two countries encountering each other on the battlefield. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has said that Russia is sending equipment to help Assad fight the Islamic State. He added that Russian servicemen in Syria are needed to service Russian equipment sold to Damascus and teach Syrian soldiers how to use it. Russia is also conducting naval exercises in the eastern Mediterranean, and the drills as long-planned and staged in accordance with international law.<sup>48</sup>

The United Nations Security Council has, on September 11, given a green light to an international investigation aimed at assigning blame for chemical weapon attacks in Syria. The official start of the joint inquiry by the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) was delayed due to objections by Russia, which had wanted to expand the investigation to include alleged attacks by Islamic State in neighbouring Iraq. Western powers have held Syria's government responsible for chemical attacks, including chlorine attacks. On the other hand, the Syrian government and Russia have accused rebel forces of using poison gas.<sup>49</sup>

The head of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Lamberto Zannier has said, on September 13, that the renewed cease-fire in eastern Ukraine has held for more than 10 days and thereby created the possibility of political talks now moving forward to resolve the conflict.<sup>50</sup>

The Foreign Ministers of Germany, France, Russia and Ukraine have, on September 13 in Berlin, agreed to step up talks between Kiev and rebels in Ukraine's east before winter sets in.

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<sup>47</sup> "Germany's Merkel Sees Need to Cooperate With Russia on Syria", *The Moscow Times*, September 13, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/germanys-merkel-sees-need-to-cooperate-with-russia-on-syria/530200.html>

<sup>48</sup> "Lavrov Warns of 'Incidents' Between U.S. and Russian Military in Syria", *The Moscow Times*, September 11, 2015 <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/lavrov-warns-of-incidents-between-us-and-russian-military-in-syria/529992.html>

<sup>49</sup> "UN Orders Probe Into Syria Gas Attack After Russia Drops Objections", *The Moscow Times*, September 11, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/un-orders-probe-into-syria-gas-attack-after-russia-drops-objections/529968.html>

<sup>50</sup> "OSCE Head Says Sept. 1 Cease-Fire in Eastern Ukraine Holding", *The Moscow Times*, September 13, 2015 at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/osce-head-says-sept-1-cease-fire-in-eastern-ukraine-holding/530240.html>

Topics are to include weapons pullbacks and humanitarian issues. The Foreign Ministers also expressed optimism to overcome any existing differences in the interpretation of the Minsk agreements on holding regional elections in Ukraine. The talks took place ahead of the Normandy Four leaders meeting scheduled to be held in Paris on October 2.<sup>51</sup>

Economic Development Minister Alexey Ulyukayev has said that Russia will turn to a court of law if Ukraine fails to repay its US\$ 3 billion Eurobond on time. In 2013, Russia had bought Ukraine's first Eurobond tranche worth US\$ 3 billion with a two-year maturity and a coupon rate of 5 per cent p.a. and coupon payment every six months.<sup>52</sup>

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko has said that the Minsk agreements on peaceful settlement in Donbas cannot be extended beyond 2015. Under the February 12, 2015 Minsk agreements, all the points, namely the constitutional reform in Ukraine while taking into consideration the specifics of certain areas of the Donetsk and Lugansk regions, are to be implemented by the end of 2015.<sup>53</sup>

Gazprom deputy CEO Alexander Medvedev has said that the launch date of the first line of the Turkish Stream project has been postponed due to the political crisis in Turkey. He referred to the presence of an interim government in Turkey that it makes it difficult to sign an intergovernmental agreement. The Turkish Stream project includes possible construction of 4 pipelines with a pumping capacity of 16 billion cubic meters.<sup>54</sup>

The trade turnover between Russia and China in August 2015 declined by 32.6 per cent to US\$ 6.13 billion when compared to the same period last year. The total Russia-China trade turnover in January-August 2015 has declined by 29.5 per cent to US\$ 43.81 billion when compared to the same period in 2014.<sup>55</sup>

Rostec Deputy Director Dmitry Rytenkov has said that a multiple rocket launcher being jointly developed by Russia and China will feature the world's first ever missile capable of hauling a drone. On the Russian side, the development work on the 300mm missile is being done by Splav — a Tula-based scientific production association.<sup>56</sup>

The Deputy Head of the Russia's Air Space Command Lt.-Gen. Pavel Kurachenko has said that a draft agreement with Armenia on establishing a unified air defence system in the

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<sup>51</sup> "Normandy Four Foreign Ministers Satisfied With Generally Holding Ceasefire", *Sputnik International*, September 13, 2015 at <http://sputniknews.com/politics/20150913/1026927395.html>

<sup>52</sup> "Moscow to Sue Kiev In Case It Fails To Repay \$3 Bln Eurobond On Time — Minister", *Itar-Tass*, September 7, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/819385>

<sup>53</sup> "Poroshenko Rules Out Extension Of Minsk Peace Accords for 2016", *Itar-Tass*, September 8, 2015 <http://tass.ru/en/world/820369>

<sup>54</sup> "Turkish Stream First Line Launch Postponed Due To Political Crisis in Turkey — Gazprom", *Itar-Tass*, September 13, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/820896>

<sup>55</sup> "Foreign Trade Turnover Between China And Russia In August Down by 32.6%", *Itar-Tass*, September 8, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/819460>

<sup>56</sup> "Russia, China Developing the World's First Drone-Carrying Missile", *Sputnik International*, September 8, 2015 at <http://sputniknews.com/russia/20150909/1026779700/russia-china-missile-drone.html#ixzz3IjQi3tH6>

Caucasus has already been approved and is ready for signing. Russia had signed a similar agreement with Kazakhstan in 2013. Mr. Kurachenko added that at present the integrated air defence network comprises air defence units and elements from Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan.<sup>57</sup>

The Russian Energy Ministry and the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources of Armenia have signed a protocol amending the agreement on the formation of prices for the supply of natural gas to Armenia. The document establishes the legal reduction of the base price for the supplies of Russian gas to Armenia from US\$ 189 to US\$ 165 per 1,000 cubic meters. In 2015 about 70,000 tonnes of oil products was delivered to the county duty free. Duty free supplies of natural gas to Armenia amounted to more than 1 billion cubic meters.<sup>58</sup>

The United Arab Emirates will receive several hundred Russian-made AU-220M combat modules for its domestically-produced infantry fighting vehicles. This was announced by Uralvagonzavod Director General Oleg Siyenko on September 11 during the side-lines of the Russia Arms Expo 2015. He stated that 'we have made progress, we have decided on the volume of delivery, and UAE leaders supervise the issue. They and we have a program; I would not mention the number but it is hundreds.<sup>59</sup>

Rostec Director General Sergey Chemezov has said, on September 11, that Russia and Algeria have signed a contract for 14 Sukhoi Su-30MKA multirole fighters. The planes are scheduled to be delivered in 2016-17. Algeria has already acquired forty four aircrafts of the same make.<sup>60</sup>

## India-Russia Relations

(September 7-13, 2015)

- **India and Russia to set up expert group on cyber-security and counter-terrorism.**

Home Minister Rajnath Singh has met with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Kolokoltsev in New Delhi on September 7, 2015. The official press release stated that the two countries will form an "expert group" on cyber security and counter-terrorism to jointly fight terrorism, particularly the Islamic State. The two countries will share their experiences in the field of specialized training and exchange of experts. Both sides also discussed the six existing agreements in the field of security cooperation and disaster management. The discussion covered a wide range of issues, including law enforcement activity in Russia and India, areas for joint cooperation, measures against extremism, acts of crime in the sphere of high

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<sup>57</sup> "Russia Builds Unified Air Defense for CIS Collective Security", *Sputnik International*, September 8, 2015 at <http://sputniknews.com/russia/20150909/1026768072/russia-cis-defense.html#ixzz3ljPqdyf>

<sup>58</sup> "Russia Lowers Gas Prices For Armenia By \$24 To \$165 Per 1,000 Cubic Meters", *Itar-Tass*, September 8, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/819337>

<sup>59</sup> "Russia Signs Deal On Supply Of Fighting Vehicle Combat Modules to United Arab Emirates", *Itar-Tass*, September 11, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/defense/820587>

<sup>60</sup> "Russia, Algeria Sign Contract for 14 Su-30MKA Aircraft", *Itar-Tass*, September 11, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/defense/820485>

technologies and IT, cooperation in the field of drug control and the existing agreements between India and Russia. Meanwhile, India has informed Russia of Pakistan terror groups like LeT and Jaish-e-Mohammad being actively backed by Pakistan's ISI and appealed to Russia to raise the same with Pakistan during bilateral talks between both these countries. India has also shared a wanted list of at least 20 terrorists hiding in Pakistan with Russia and pointed out that 17 terror camps are being run from Pakistani soil. India has specifically appealed to Russia to support India at the forum when India raises the role of Pakistani state agencies in fomenting trouble in India by sponsoring terror activities.<sup>61</sup>

## D. Central Asia

### Kazakhstan

(September 7-13, 2015)

- **Kazakhstan and Turkey chalk out defence cooperation plan for 2016-18; Kazakhstan to develop space sector in partnership with Russia; Kazakhstan temporarily bans import and sale of Kyrgyz and Russian food products; Kazakhstan may cut 2016 oil output if oil prices fall further; Kazakhstan and US to cooperate in the nuclear energy sphere; Kazakh National bank says de-dollarization is inevitable; Kazakhstan conducts snap military exercises; Kazakh President appoints a new Deputy Prime Minister; President Nazarbayev calls for the creation of a new fund for Turkic world development.**

The 8<sup>th</sup> session of the Kazakh-Turkish Defence Industry Cooperation Commission meeting was held in Astana on September 7. The two countries reviewed the prospects of cooperation for the joint modernization of arms, avionics technology, helicopters as well as the domestic production of arms and military equipment. They also discussed the draft road map for cooperation in the military-industrial sector for 2016-2018.<sup>62</sup>

Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev has said, on September 12, that Astana will develop cooperation with Russia in the space sector. He stated that 'any state expenses on space are paying back. The entire world is competing, and Russia is a leader. As a counterpart, an ally, a close neighbour, jointly with Russia we shall develop the space authority and the work in space'. Mr. Nazarbayev comments came against the backdrop of Aidin Aimbetov becoming the third Kazakh cosmonaut to go on a space mission.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>61</sup> "India Wants Russia's Help To Corner Pakistan, ISIS Activity", *The Economic Times*, September 7, 2015 at [http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/48859513.cms?utm\\_source=contentofinterest&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=cppst](http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/48859513.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst)

<sup>62</sup> "Kazakhstan, Turkey Create Defense Cooperation Plan for 2016-2018", *Silk Road Reporters*, September 7, 2015 at [http://www.silkroadreporters.com/2015/09/07/kazakhstan-turkey-create-defense-cooperation-plan-for-2016-2018/?utm\\_source=Subscribers&utm\\_campaign=0893ec9d0b-RSS\\_EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_f95a626cec-0893ec9d0b-204234821](http://www.silkroadreporters.com/2015/09/07/kazakhstan-turkey-create-defense-cooperation-plan-for-2016-2018/?utm_source=Subscribers&utm_campaign=0893ec9d0b-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f95a626cec-0893ec9d0b-204234821)

<sup>63</sup> "Kazakhstan to Develop Space Sector In Partnership with Russia", *Itar-Tass*, September 12, 2015 at <http://tass.ru/en/science/820647>

Kazakhstan has imposed temporary ban on import and sale of some food products from Kyrgyzstan and Russia for 'repeated infringement of sanitary-epidemiological and hygienic norms outlined in technical regulations'. The ban was imposed by the Committee on Consumers' Rights Protection of the Kazakh National Economy Ministry on September 8. The Committee took this decision following laboratory studies held from January to August 2015.<sup>64</sup>

Kazakhstan's Deputy Energy Minister Uzakbai Karabalin has said that Astana can cut oil output by a tenth in 2016 if oil prices drop to US\$ 30 per barrel. The country had produced 1.6 million barrels of oil per day in 2014. Kazakhstan remains the second biggest producer in the former Soviet Union after Russia. In general, oil production in Kazakhstan has been falling as the bulk of its fields are depleting. Output dropped 1.2 per cent last year to 80.8 million tonnes and is expected to fall again in 2015. Earlier, Kazakhstan had pushed to boost oil output to be in the range of 90 to 100 million tonnes in 2015 through the Caspian offshore Kashagan oil field, which was launched in September 2013. However, production was stopped after a few weeks when gas leaks were detected and it is not expected to be operationalised before 2017.<sup>65</sup>

Kazakhstan's National Nuclear Centre and Idaho National Laboratory of the US Department of Energy have signed a memorandum of cooperation at the 10th international conference "Nuclear and Radiation Physics" which was held in Kurchatov, Kazakhstan between on September 8, 2015. The main areas of cooperation include education and training and search for areas of synergy.<sup>66</sup>

Kazakh National Bank Chairman Kairat Kelimbetov has said that the 'de-dollarization' process is inevitable and that he does not foresee any depreciatory results in the future. He made this statement while announcing the switch to a free floating exchange rate of the *Tenge*. Mr. Kelimbetov also noted that all social programmes have been 'saved to the fullest extent' while prices of social goods are under control and the inflation rate is not expected to increase above 8 percent in the medium term.<sup>67</sup>

At the instruction of President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Kazkahstan armed forces have, on September 8, conducted snap military exercises in five regions of the country. This includes East Kazakhstan, Almaty, Zhambyl, South Kazakhstan and West Kazakhstan regions. This is the first such large-scale inspection in Kazakhstan. The exercises involve the participation of

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<sup>64</sup> "Kazakhstan Temporarily Banned Import And Sale of Kyrgyz and Russian Food Products", *Kabar*, September 8, 2015 at <http://www.kabar.kg/eng/society/full/13883>

<sup>65</sup> "Kazakhstan may Cut 2016 Oil Output If Prices Fall Further", *Reuters*, September 9, 2015 at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/09/09/kazakhstan-oil-forecast-idUSL5N11F1OH20150909>

<sup>66</sup> "Kazakhstan and US to Cooperate In Nuclear Energy Sphere", *Times of Central Asia*, September 11, 2015 at <http://www.timesca.com/news/15740-kazakhstan-and-us-to-cooperate-in-nuclear-energy-sphere>

<sup>67</sup> "National Bank Says Dedollarisation Is Inevitable", *Astana Times*, September 7, 2015 at <http://astanatimes.com/2015/09/national-bank-says-dedollarisation-is-inevitable/>

more than 10,000 troops, twenty units of Land Forces, more than 2,000 pieces of equipment and 17 military trains.<sup>68</sup>

Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbaev has, on September 11, appointed his daughter, Darigha Nazarbaeva, as the country's new Deputy Prime Minister. Nazarbaeva has been a lawmaker since 2004. In April 2014, she was elected deputy speaker of the parliament's lower chamber - the Mazhilis.<sup>69</sup>

Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev, while speaking at a special gathering devoted to the 550th anniversary of the Kazakh Khanate held in Astana on September 11, has called for the establishment of a new fund to foster the development of the Turkic world. He also suggested "the Land of the Great Steppe" as his country's official nickname. Nazarbayev had announced his idea to mark the 550<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Kazakh Khanate last year after Russian President Vladimir Putin had said, in August 2014, that "Kazakhs had never had any statehood". The start of current celebrations also coincided with the holding of the fifth summit of the Turkic Council, an organization that unites Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. According to Nazarbayev, the fund would help implement projects for cultural, educational, and economic cooperation between the Turkic-speaking nations of the world. He added that it was necessary to establish a single television channel geared towards Turkic-speaking countries and a centre for the study of Turkic history.<sup>70</sup>

## Kyrgyzstan

(September 7-13, 2015)

- **Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan to conduct joint air patrolling of their borders; Kyrgyz and Georgian Foreign Ministers discuss regional and international issues; Kyrgyzstan and the US discuss bilateral ties; Kyrgyzstan calls for establishment of political dialogue on water use in Central Asia; Kyrgyzstan and Russia discuss migration issues; Kyrgyzstan and Russian Prime Ministers meet in Belarus.**

The heads of border services of Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan have, on September 10 in Bishkek, agreed on the joint air patrolling of the Kyrgyz-Kazakh state border. The two sides also discussed development of cross-border cooperation and undertaking joint measures to combat 'modern threats' to the border security.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> "Military Forces Readiness Testing Begins in Five Regions of the Country", *Astana Times*, September 7, 2015 at <http://astanatimes.com/2015/09/military-forces-readiness-testing-begins-in-five-regions-of-the-country/>

<sup>69</sup> "Nazarbaev Appoints Daughter Deputy Prime Minister", *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*, September 14, 2015 at <http://www.rferl.org/content/kazakhstan-nazarbaeva-names-daughter-deputy-prime-minister/27241284.html>

<sup>70</sup> "Nazarbayev calls for Creation Of New Fund For Turkic World Development", *Times of Central Asia*, September 13, 2015 at <http://www.timesca.com/news/15747-nazarbayev-calls-for-creation-of-new-fund-for-turkic-world-development>

<sup>71</sup> "Border guards of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan to Conduct Joint Air Patrolling Of Border", *Akipress*, September 10, 2015 at <http://www.akipress.com/news:564920/>

Foreign Minister of Kyrgyzstan Erlan Abdyldayev has, on September 8, met with the Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Garibashvili, who made a transit stop at Manas-2 International Airport. The two sides expressed interest in bolstering trade and economic cooperation apart from exchanging views on regional and international issues.<sup>72</sup>

Kyrgyzstan's Foreign Minister Erlan Abdyldayev has, on September 8 in Bishkek, met with the US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Nisha Biswal. They discussed the 'current status of bilateral relations and further cooperation prospects'. The sides agreed to continue with their dialogue.<sup>73</sup>

Vice Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan Abdyrakhman Mamataliyev, has called for the establishment of a political dialogue between the Central Asian countries on the theme 'usage of water'. He added that 'Kyrgyzstan has always thought and thinks that use of water and energy resources in Central Asia should be addressed only through an open and constructive dialogue with consideration of interests of the states of the region. Kyrgyzstan is always open for discussion of a broad range of hydropower issues'.<sup>74</sup>

Kyrgyzstan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has, on September 11, participated in the tenth meeting of the Joint Kyrgyz-Russian working group to discuss problems arising in implementation of the Agreement between Kyrgyzstan and Russia "on employment and social protection of migrant workers". The two sides discussed 'issues of migration of mutual interest'.<sup>75</sup>

Kyrgyzstan Prime Minister Temir Sariyev has met with his Russian counterpart Dmitriy Medvedev under the framework of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council meeting held in Grodno, Belarus on September 8. They discussed issues of further cooperation in the framework of the accession of Kyrgyzstan to the EEU. Other issues discussed related to the implementation of the construction of Kambarata-1 and Upper Naryn hydropower plants.<sup>76</sup>

## Tajikistan

(September 7-13, 2015)

- **Kazakhstan becomes the third strategic partner of Tajikistan; Remittance flows from Russia to Tajikistan decline by 58.6 per cent in 2015; China backs Tajikistan to maintain security; Japan upgrades medical facilities in Darvoz district; Tajikistan and China sign currency swap deal.**

<sup>72</sup> "Foreign Minister Abdyldayev, Georgian PM Discuss Regional, International Issues", *Akipress*, September 9, 2015 at <http://www.akipress.com/news:564836/>

<sup>73</sup> "Foreign Policy Division Chief, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Discuss Bilateral Ties", *Akipress*, September 9, 2015 at <http://www.akipress.com/news:564841/>

<sup>74</sup> "Kyrgyzstan calls for Establishment Of Political Dialogue On Water Use in Central Asia", *Akipress*, September 9, 2015 at <http://www.akipress.com/news:564828/>

<sup>75</sup> "Kyrgyzstan and Russia Discuss Migration Issues", *Kabar*, September 11, 2015 at <http://www.kabar.kg/eng/society/full/13885>

<sup>76</sup> "Sariyev and Medvedev discuss further cooperation within framework of Kyrgyzstan's accession to EEU", *Kabar*, September 8, 2015 at <http://www.kabar.kg/eng/politics/full/13861>

Kazakh President's Nursultan Nazarbayev's official visit to Tajikistan on September 14 has resulted in the signing of a number of cooperation documents including one on strategic partnership. This makes Kazakhstan the third country after Russia and China with whom Tajikistan has signed such an agreement. Other documents signed involved those related to technical protection of information, sports, education, labour activity and protection of rights of labour migrants of the two countries.<sup>77</sup>

In the first half-year of 2015, remittance flows from Russia to Tajikistan have reportedly declined by 58.6 per cent when compared to same period last year. According to Russia's central bank, US\$ 696 million has been sent through the money transfer system to Tajikistan from Russia in the first six months of this year as compared to US\$ 972 million in the same period last year.<sup>78</sup>

China has backed Tajikistan to return to normality after eight police officers were killed in a terrorist attack in the country. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei was quoted as saying that 'as a close friendly neighbour and strategic partner, China supports the measures taken by the Tajikistan government to maintain national security and stability'. He also added that China was willing to deepen security cooperation with Tajikistan in order to maintain peace and stability of the region.<sup>79</sup>

Japan has upgraded the medical facilities of Tajikistan's Darvoz district as part of the 'Project for Rehabilitation of the Paediatrics Department and Provision of Medical Equipment at Central Hospital of Darvoz District'. This involved providing funds worth US\$ 112,268. The Central Hospital in Darvoz now has its roof and electric supply system rehabilitated, and witnessed an upgradation of medical equipment that involves cardio monitor, oxygenator, ECG, X-ray apparatus and ultrasounds scanner.<sup>80</sup>

Tajikistan's central bank has signed a currency swap agreement worth about 3.2 billion yuan (US\$ 500 million) with China's central bank. The deal lasts for three years, and can be extended upon agreement by both sides. The agreement aims to support the balance of international payments, the exchange rate of the national currency, enhancement of energy, agrarian mining sectors and development of small and medium-sized enterprises in Tajikistan.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> "Kazakhstan becomes the Third Strategic Partner of Tajikistan", *Asia Plus*, September 14, 2015 at <http://news.tj/en/news/kazakhstan-becomes-third-strategic-partner-tajikistan>

<sup>78</sup> "Remittance Flows From Russia To Tajikistan Reportedly Decline By 58.6 Percent", *Asia Plus*, September 13, 2015 at <http://news.tj/en/news/remittance-flows-russia-tajikistan-reportedly-decline-586-percent>

<sup>79</sup> "China Backs Tajikistan To Maintain Security", *Asia Plus*, September 10, 2015 at <http://news.tj/en/news/china-backs-tajikistan-maintain-security>

<sup>80</sup> "The Government of Japan Completes GGP Project in Darvoz District", *Asia Plus*, September 8, 2015 at <http://news.tj/en/news/government-japan-completes-ggp-project-darvoz-district>

<sup>81</sup> "Tajikistan, China Sign Currency Swap Deal", *Xinhua*, September 7, 2015 at [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-09/05/c\\_134590923.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-09/05/c_134590923.htm)

## Turkmenistan

(September 7-13, 2015)

- **Turkmen president outlines tasks for 2016.**

Turkmenistan President Gurbanguly Berdimukhammedov has, on September 10, outlined the country's development priorities and the objectives of social, economic and democratic reforms at a meeting of the Council of Elders of Turkmenistan. The President focused on the immediate objectives of the country's economic and social development. He also raised the issues relating to the administrative territorial structure, industrial development programme for the period until 2030, hydrocarbon export diversification, exploration of other mineral resources, establishment of the country's own electronic industry, the transport and communications sector, investment and construction activities. He added that Turkmenistan in 2016 plans to implement 428 large scale projects worth US\$ 9.7 billion and launch the construction of over 220 facilities worth US\$ 18 billion. Rural areas will also see investments worth US\$ 7.5 billion.<sup>82</sup>

## Uzbekistan

(September 7-13, 2015)

- **Uzbek and Polish Foreign Ministries hold sixth round of bilateral consultations; Uzbekistan adopts a programme for mitigation of consequences of Aral catastrophe till 2019.**

Uzbek and Polish Foreign Affairs Ministries have held the sixth round of bilateral consultations in Warsaw on September 10, 2015. Economic cooperation topped the agenda with the two sides discussing 'practical aspects of bilateral relations and their initiatives in enriching them with new joint projects in various spheres'.<sup>83</sup>

The Government of Uzbekistan has adopted a programme for mitigation of consequences of Aral catastrophe and rehabilitation and social-economic development of Aral Sea Basin region for the period 2015-2019. According to the document, the current ecologic situation in Aral Sea Basin, in connection with drying up of Aral Sea, is a global problem that affects the entire Central Asian region. The document noted Uzbekistan's search for efficient ways of overcoming consequences of Aral Sea catastrophe and implementing measures to rehabilitate ecological balance in Aral Seas in cooperation with the Central Asian states and international community.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> "Turkmen President Outlines Tasks for 2016", *Times of Central Asia*, September 10, 2015 at <http://www.timesca.com/news/15748-turkmen-president-outlines-tasks-for-2016>

<sup>83</sup> "Delegation of Uzbekistan Holds Talks in Warsaw", *UzDaily*, September 13, 2015 at <http://www.uzdaily.com/articles-id-33549.htm>

<sup>84</sup> "Programme for Mitigation Of Consequences Of Aral Catastrophe Till 2015 Approved", *UzDaily*, September 7, 2015 at <http://www.uzdaily.com/articles-id-33484.htm>

## E. West Asia

### Iran

(September 7-13, 2015)

- **Russia makes decision to deliver S-300 missile system to Iran; Iran and Kyrgyzstan issue statement on finding solution to regional conflicts without foreign interference.**

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov announced that a new contract on supplying Russian made S-300 missile systems to Iran will be signed in the nearest future. Ryabkov said, "There are no problems with Iran in this sphere. As far as I know, the contract will soon be signed. All political decisions have already been made". In September 2010, then President Dmitry Medvedev signed a decree on measures on implementing the UN Security Council's resolution 1929 that in particular banned the S-300 supplies to Iran. The contract was severed and the advance payment was sent back to the Islamic Republic.<sup>85</sup>

Iranian and Kyrgyz Presidents Hassan Rouhani and Almazbek Atambayev issued a statement and highlighted the importance of finding a "political solution" to settle conflicts in the Middle East region without foreign interference. The statement said that political, cultural and economic cooperation between Iran and Kyrgyzstan are "positive". Cooperation between the two countries within the framework of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Economic Cooperation Organization was also mentioned in the statement. The statement also highlighted the importance of strengthening cooperation in fighting terrorism and extremism.<sup>86</sup>

### Iraq and Syria

(September 7-13, 2015)

- **Iraq sees an exodus of minorities dangerously titling its demographic structure; The head of the Kurdistan region, Massoud Barzani, announced the "impossibility" of declaration of independence for the region; Syria's permanent envoy to the UN says it is unacceptable to politicize issues related to protecting civilians; Mikdad denied rumours about the presence of Russian ground forces in Syria.**

Large waves of emigration are dramatically depleting Iraq's minority populations, especially Christians, with dire consequences for the country's future diversity. Media outlets are broadcasting the departure of hundreds of thousands of Syrians and Iraqis from their countries toward Europe by boat, train or on foot. The huge change will affect the demographic situation and raise questions about the fate of minorities. There are indications that the minorities of Iraq's social structure will be endangered if their displacement persists.

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<sup>85</sup> "Russia: All Decisions Made To Deliver S- 300 Missile System to Iran", *Teheran Times*, September 10, 2015 at [http://www.tehrantimes.com/index\\_View.asp?code=249305](http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=249305). Accessed on September 18, 2015.

<sup>86</sup> "Iran, Kyrgyzstan Issue Statement on Regional Conflicts", September 8, 2015 at [http://www.tehrantimes.com/index\\_View.asp?code=249245](http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=249245). Accessed September 18, 2015

Further, the absence of serious and intensive international cooperation to solve the Syrian and Iraqi crises, emigration is expected to increase further.<sup>87</sup>

The head of the Kurdistan region Massoud Barzani attributed the reason to the political and security considerations, while expressed the Kurdistan's interest in resolving this issue with the central government in a peaceful manner. Barzani said in a television interview with the channel "Russia 24" followed up by *IraqiNews.com*, "the Kurdish nation has the right to take a decisive step in getting its independence, but the current circumstances will not allow it to get this independence," stressing "Kurdistan's interest in resolving this issue peacefully with Baghdad."<sup>88</sup>

He expressed that the Syrian delegation expresses regret because some dominating states have seen, in what has been approved by member states at the UN world Summit before 10 years on "Responsibility for Protection", nothing but a new tool and innovated justification to interfere in the affairs of sovereign countries. Al-Jaafari went on to say that the basic responsibility for protection from grave crimes is a mission of the state concerned, adding that the aim of "responsibility" was to boost the national sovereignty, not tearing it down.<sup>89</sup>

In a statement to "Russia Today" Channel, al-Mikdad denied rumours about the presence of Russian ground forces in Syria, stressing that "these rumours aim to prolong the terrorism-caused crisis in the country in the service of the US and Israeli interests in the region. They also aim to cover the failure of the so-called US-led anti-terror coalition in achieving its set goals. "The Russian presence in Syria is confined to consultants within the framework of the Russian-Syrian military agreements," al-Mikdad said.<sup>90</sup>

## Israel and Palestine

(September 7- 13, 2015)

- **Israeli military analyst, Harel, says the growth in Russian military aid supporting the regime of Syrian President Assad will change the rules of the game for Israel; Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Reuven Rivlin have not spoken for nearly two months.**

Israeli military analyst, Amos Harel, said in an article published in Israel's *Haaretz* newspaper that Israel for many years did not really support the overthrow of the Assad regime but opted

<sup>87</sup> "Iraq Sees Exodus of Minorities", *Al Monitor*, September 17, 2015 at <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/09/iraq-minorities-refugees-christians-displacement-war-unhcr.html>. Accessed on September 28, 2015

<sup>88</sup> "Declaration of Kurdistan Independence Is Currently Impossible, Says Barzani", *Iraqi News*, September 13, 2015 at <http://www.iraqinews.com/baghdad-politics/declaration-kurdistan-independence-currently-impossible-says-barzani/>. Accessed on 18 September 2015

<sup>89</sup> "Al-Ja'afari: It is Unacceptable To Politicize Issues Of "Protecting Civilians"", *Syria Times*, September 9, 2015 at <http://syriatimes.sy/index.php/news/local/19532-al-ja-afari-it-is-unacceptable-to-politicize-issues-of-protecting-civilians/>. Accessed on September 30, 2015

<sup>90</sup> "Mikdad Denies Rumours of the Presence of Russian Ground Forces in Syria", *Syria Times*, September 10, 2015 at <http://syriatimes.sy/index.php/news/local/19555-mikdad-denies-rumors-about-presence-of-russian-ground-forces-in-syria>. Accessed on September 30, 2015

to maintain the status quo and keep the Syrian regime weak and under control. He added that Israel has not been particularly worried about the Syrian front, where every few months it attacks convoys transporting weapons and ammunition from Syria to Hezbollah in Lebanon. However, he added that if Russia was indeed to deploy combat warplanes and planning to establish a new military base in Syria, Israel will have to face a very different kind of obstacle, particularly if Russia plans to send an anti-aircraft missiles system to join the fighter jets that could intercept any Israeli intervention.<sup>91</sup>

Relations between the two have been particularly strained since Rivlin openly criticized Netanyahu for his combative stance toward US President Barack Obama. He indicated the disagreements over Netanyahu's foreign policy were the cause of disconnect. In July, Rivlin chastised Netanyahu's policy toward Washington. "Israel has three things it must ensure – its relationship with the United States, its relationship with the United States, and its relationship with the United States," he said.<sup>92</sup>

## The Gulf

(September 7-13, 2015)

- **Saudi led coalition air strikes in Yemen kill 20; King Salman and Obama stress the need the restore government in Yemen; Qatar hopeful about the Iranian nuclear deal.**

Jets belonging to a Saudi-led coalition killed at least 20 people at a wake in northern Yemen, local tribesmen said, as warplanes pounded Houthis and other forces behind a missile strike that had killed dozens of Gulf Arab soldiers. The air strikes targeted troops loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, an ally of the Houthis, across the country and hit a Houthi base in what had been the Al Imam University, a religious school in northern Sanaa, locals said. Meanwhile, US President Barack Obama said that the US shares Saudi Arabia's concerns about Yemen and the need to restore an inclusive and functioning government there. He said the two sides "share concerns" about the need to restore a functioning government in Yemen and relieve an urgent humanitarian crisis. Obama also said that the two countries "share concerns about the crisis in Syria and will have the opportunity to discuss how we can arrive at a political transition process within Syria that can... end the horrific conflict there."<sup>93</sup>

Qatar has expressed the hope that the comprehensive joint plan of action on Iran's nuclear programme would contribute to maintaining regional and international peace and creating a

<sup>91</sup> "Israeli Analyst: Russia's Support for Assad Will Change the Game for Israel", *Palestine Chronicles*, September 8, 2015 at <http://www.palestinechronicle.com/israeli-analyst-russias-military-support-for-assad-will-change-things-for-israel/>. Accessed on September 18, 2015

<sup>92</sup> "President Says He Is No Longer Speaking to Netanyahu", *The Times of Israel*, September 9, 2015 at <http://www.timesofisrael.com/president-says-he-is-no-longer-speaking-to-prime-minister/>. Accessed on 30 September 2015

<sup>93</sup> "Saudi Led Coalition Jets Kill 20 In Yemen: Residents", *Khaleej Times*, September 7, 2015 at <http://www.khaleejtimes.com/region/mena/saudi-led-coalition-jets-kill-20-in-yemen-residents>. Accessed on September 30, 2015; and, "King Salman, Obama Stress Need To Restore Govt in Yemen", *Khaleej Times*, September 5, 2015 at <http://www.khaleejtimes.com/region/saudi-arabia/king-salman-obama-stress-need-to-restore-govt-in-yemen>. Accessed on September 30, 2015

positive regional atmosphere, based on the principles of justice and international law, particularly the sovereign equality, mutual respect, non-interference in the internal affairs and joint action to achieve sustainable development for the peoples of the region.<sup>94</sup>

## India and West Asia

(September 7-13, 2015)

- **India to buy Israeli-made armed Heron drones in \$400 Million deal; Indian warships to pay goodwill visit to Qatar; Saudi Ministry seeks report on rape charges against Saudi Diplomat in India**

The Indian government last week approved the purchase of 10 Israeli-made armed Heron drones for the sum of \$400 million. The sale is the latest move in an ongoing thaw in relations between Israel and India. A senior delegation from the Indian Foreign Ministry visited Jerusalem in July 2015, just days after New Delhi dramatically changed its traditional voting pattern at the United Nations in Israel's favour. Modi, who is expected in Israel later this year in what would be a historic first visit of an Indian prime minister, has accelerated the rapprochement with Jerusalem. While strong defence and business ties existed before he came to power in April 2014, he made the relationship much more visible.<sup>95</sup>

Two warships of Indian Navy's Western Fleet - INS Delhi and INS Trishul - will make a goodwill visit to Qatar from September 14 to 17, the Indian embassy in Doha has said. During the visit, the warships will have professional interactions for enhancing co-operation and sharing the nuances of naval operations, including disaster management and combating maritime threats of terrorism and piracy. Apart from professional interactions, sports and social engagements are also planned, which are aimed at enhancing friendship and co-operation between the navies.<sup>96</sup>

The external affairs ministry has sought a detailed report on the alleged incident involving a diplomat at the Saudi Arabia embassy in New Delhi who has been booked for rape. The Saudi embassy has dismissed the charges against the diplomat as "completely false" and "contrary to facts in our possession", and said they would wait for the Indian government to clarify the matter as per diplomatic norms.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> "Qatar Hopeful On Iran Nuclear Deal", *Gulf Times*, September 10, 2015 at <http://www.gulf-times.com/qatar/178/details/454514/qatar-hopeful-on-iran-nuclear-deal>

<sup>95</sup> "India to Buy Armed Israeli Drones in \$400M Deal", *The Times of Israel*, September 11, 2015 at <http://www.timesofisrael.com/india-to-buy-armed-israeli-drones-in-400m-deal/>. Accessed on September 30, 2015.

<sup>96</sup> "Indian Warships To Pay Goodwill Visit to Qatar", *Gulf Times*, September 8, 2015 at <http://www.gulf-times.com/qatar/178/details/454282/indian-warships-to-pay-goodwill-visit-to-qatar>. Accessed on September 30, 2015

<sup>97</sup> "Ministry Seeks Report on Rape Charges against the Saudi Diplomat", *Khaleej Times*, September 9, 2015 at <http://www.khaleejtimes.com/international/india/ministry-seeks-report-on-rape-charges-against-saudi-diplomat>. Accessed on September 30, 2015

## F. The United State of America

### National

(September 7-13, 2015)

- **DoD tech forum looks for new tech innovators and strong bonds between private and govt. leaders; Rogers describes the role of deterrence and the problems of defending against cyber enemies; Obama discusses a variety of national security issues; On the 14th anniversary of 9/11, US remembers and honours those who perished; Clinton's deleted emails could be recovered; Vice President Biden not sure of campaigning for 2016 presidential election; US pursuing a third offset strategy to bolster a weakened conventional deterrence.**

Opening the Defence Advanced Research Project Agency's "Wait, What?" Forum, US Defence Secretary Ash Carter said in St. Louis on September 9 that the Defence Department is committed to maintaining the strong bonds between innovators and the department "because going forward, we need the best people, the best technology, and the best innovation to remain the world's finest fighting force". The forum features thousands of technologists -- both public and private -- working on cutting edge projects. Carter reiterated that he wants better communication between DoD and leaders from private firms, academia, think tanks and other sectors from which innovation flows.<sup>98</sup>

During a discussion at the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars on September 8, the commander of U.S. Cyber Command, Michael S. Rogers described the role of deterrence in the cyber world, the problems of defending against cyber enemies, and "operationalizing" cyber capabilities in the Department of Defence (DoD). Rogers stressed that these cyber challenges face all Americans.<sup>99</sup> Releasing the Cybercom vision statement, entitled, "*Beyond the Build: Delivering Outcomes Through Cyberspace*" on September 8, Rogers stressed the need for the command to integrate its capabilities into all aspects of the national security effort. It supports the DoD Cyber Strategy that Defence Secretary Ash Carter unveiled in April.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Garamone, Jim, "DoD Committed to Maintaining Strong Bonds with Industry", *DoD News*, September 11, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/616641/dod-committed-to-maintaining-strong-bonds-with-industry>; and, Chimes, Art, "US Defence Agency's Tech Forum Seeks Innovators", *VOA News*, September 10, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/defense-agency-tech-forum-invites-innovators-seeking-solutions/2955765.html>

<sup>99</sup> Garamone, Jim, "Rogers Outlines Cyber Challenges Facing DoD, U.S.", *DoD News*, September 9, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/616569/rogers-outlines-cyber-challenges-facing-dod-us>; and, Bernard, Doug "Cyber Hacking Likely to Grow in Frequency, Sophistication", *VOA News*, September 10, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/cyber-hacking-likely-grow-frequency-sophistication/2955856.html>

<sup>100</sup> Garamone, Jim, "U.S. Cyber Command Chief Details Plans to Meet Cyberspace Threats", *DoD News*, September 8, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/616512/us-cyber-command-chief-details-plans-to-meet-cyberspace-threats>

During his unprecedented live multimedia Worldwide Troop Talk at the Defence Media Activity's television studio, Fort Meade, on September 11, President Barack Obama addressed a variety of national security issues. President Obama's broad discussion ranged from Russia's effect on the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in the Middle East to the future of U.S. cyber efforts. Obama said that "Despite our conflicts with Russia in areas like Ukraine, this is an area potentially of converging interests". He added, "The bad news is that Russia continues to believe that Assad, who is their traditional partner, is somebody ... worthy of continuing support." On the emerging Cyber security threat, he said, "Cyber security is opening a whole new era in which we have to watch out for our adversaries".<sup>101</sup>

On the 14th anniversary of 9/11, President Barack Obama reflected on the 9/11 event and expressed gratitude for military members who've served after the nation's darkest day. The first sitting president in history to conduct such a Worldwide Troop Talk live from Defence Media Activity studios at Fort Meade, Md. Obama said that the 9/11 event forever changed his perspective and inspired him and many others to remember how precious the nation is and to defend it any cost. The president described the military as a "linchpin" in the nation's ability to project its values, diplomatic efforts and relations, and thanked service members who he said have kept the United States safe and free since 9/11.<sup>102</sup> Defence Secretary Ash Carter also told the workforce in a 9/11 remembrance ceremony on September 11 that the Pentagon community is bound by a solemn mission to defend and carry forward the values of the nation and sometimes make sacrifices. Carter told the Defence Department ceremony was more than an opportunity to honour those who perished.<sup>103</sup> Meanwhile, U.S. federal agents have arrested Joshua Ryne Goldberg, 20 years old, for allegedly being part of a plot to set off a bomb during September 11, 2015 memorial service in Kansas City, Missouri.<sup>104</sup>

*The Washington Post* reported on September 12 that the company which managed Hillary Clinton's private email server said it has "no knowledge of the server being wiped," indicating that tens of thousands of emails Clinton said were deleted could be recovered. The controversy over Clinton's use of an unsecured private server to conduct government business while America's Secretary of State has affected her nomination to run in the

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<sup>101</sup> Lyle, Amaani, "Obama Discusses National Security During Worldwide Troop Talk", *DoD News*, September 11, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/616987/obama-discusses-national-security-during-worldwide-troop-talk>

<sup>102</sup> Lyle, Amaani, "President Reflects on 9/11 At Worldwide Troop Talk", *DoD News*, September 11, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/616986/president-reflects-on-911-at-worldwide-troop-talk>; and, "US Marks 14th Anniversary of 9/11 Attacks", *VOA News*, September 11, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/friday-marks-14th-anniversary-of-september-11-attacks-on-us/2957560.html>

<sup>103</sup> Cronk, Terri Moon, "Secretary Tells Pentagon Workforce 'We Will Never Forget'", *DoD News*, September 11, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/616974/secretary-tells-pentagon-workforce-we-will-never-forget>

<sup>104</sup> "Florida Man Arrested in Alleged 9/11 Anniversary Bomb Plot", *VOA News*, September 11, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/florida-man-arrested-alleged-september-eleventh-bomb-plot/2956537.html>

November 2016 election.<sup>105</sup> In an emotional interview to CBS's *The Late Show* with Stephen Colbert, U.S. Vice President Joe Biden said he is not sure whether he is ready to launch a presidential campaign after the recent death of his son.<sup>106</sup>

Speaking at the Royal United Services Institute, the U.K.'s professional forum for national and international defence and security, on September 10, U.S. Deputy Defence Secretary Bob Work said the United States is pursuing a third offset strategy to bolster a weakened conventional deterrence to deal with the changing global security environment. In prepared remarks, Work said that the first and second offset strategies supported DoD well for 25 years, but the "margin of technological superiority," particularly for guided munitions, is eroding. Citing worldwide threats, including the ISIL and Russia's recent coercion and aggression, he noted the United States and its allies face historically different challenges than before.<sup>107</sup>

## International: Asia

(September 7-13, 2015)

- **Senate Democrats have blocked a vote of disapproval on the Iranian nuclear deal; House voted to reject the Iranian nuclear deal; Dempsey says future of the ISIL "increasingly dim"; Pentagon will continue to support moderate Syrian forces in the fight against the ISIL; U.S. and coalition military forces continue to attack ISIL terrorists; Obama says the only way to solve the refugee crisis is to address its source; As protests mount, US announces to take in at least 10,000 Syrian refugees; Pew poll shows Americans view China as an economic and military threat.**

On September 10, U.S. Senate Democrats have blocked a vote of disapproval on the nuclear accord with Iran, delivering President Barack Obama a victory on his top foreign policy initiative. Forty-two supporters of the accord voted to sustain a procedural manoeuvre known as a filibuster. Opponents of the deal fell two votes shy of the 60 required to end the filibuster and proceed to a final vote on a resolution of disapproval. Obama, in a statement following the vote, called it "a victory for diplomacy, for American national security, and for the safety and security of the world." But a disappointed Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky said, "Democratic senators just voted to block the American people

<sup>105</sup> Helderman, Rosalind S. Hamburger, Tom and Leonig,, Carol D., "Tech company: No indication that Clinton's e-mail server was 'wiped'", *The Washington Post*, September 12, 2015 at [http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/tech-company-no-indication-that-clintons-e-mail-server-was-wiped/2015/09/12/10c8ce52-58c6-11e5-abe9-27d53f250b11\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/tech-company-no-indication-that-clintons-e-mail-server-was-wiped/2015/09/12/10c8ce52-58c6-11e5-abe9-27d53f250b11_story.html); and, "Report: Private Clinton Emails May Be Recoverable", *Reuters*, September 12, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/reu-private-clinton-emails-may-be-recoverable/2961751.html>

<sup>106</sup> "Vice President Biden Unsure About 2016 Run", *VOA News*, September 11, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/us-vice-president-biden-unsure-about-running-for-president/2958630.html>

<sup>107</sup> Cronk, Terri Moon, "Work Calls for Third Offset Strategy to Bolster Future of Warfighting", *DoD News*, September 10, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/616806/work-calls-for-third-offset-strategy-to-bolster-future-of-warfighting>

from even having a real vote on one of the most consequential foreign policy issues of our time.”<sup>108</sup>

However, the US House of Representative voted on September 11 to reject the international deal with Iran to curb its nuclear weapons, after a morning of emotional debate. The House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Michael McCaul said in the weekly Republican address that the international nuclear deal with Iran "will not stop a nuclear Iran, but will instead endanger America and our allies for years to come". The House held three votes on the Iran deal on September 10 and September 11. One vote was a resolution to approve the Iran nuclear deal, which, as expected, failed by a vote of 162-269.<sup>109</sup>

According to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin E. Dempsey, the future of the ISIL is "increasingly dim" as more nations join the anti-ISIL effort. Dempsey said that although the fight against ISIL is, for now, "tactically stalemated," with no "dramatic gains on either side," Iraq will move at the "speed of its governance, not at the speed of its military capability".<sup>110</sup> Earlier, on September 8, Pentagon Press Secretary Peter Cook said that the DoD will continue to support moderate Syrian forces in the fight against the ISIL. Cook said at a news conference that DoD officials believe local forces are the deciding factor in the fight against ISIL, "and that has not changed."<sup>111</sup>

U.S. Central Command spokesman Air Force Col. Patrick Ryder told reporters on September 11 that the coalition-backed ground forces in Iraq and Syria continue to make progress in the fight against the ISIL.<sup>112</sup> On September 13, Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve officials reported that U.S. and coalition military forces have continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria and Iraq.<sup>113</sup>

President Barack Obama on September 11 said that the current tide of refugees overrunning Europe is not just a European problem, "it is a world problem". The president said the only way to solve the refugee crisis was to go to its source. Obama said, "There's the old story about if you see a bunch of bodies floating down a river, part of your job is to pull those folks out and save who you can, but you've also got to go upstream and see what exactly is

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<sup>108</sup> Bowman, Michael, "Effort to Reject Iran Deal Fails in US Senate", *VOA News*, September 10, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/effort-reject-iran-nuclear-deal-fails-united-states-senate/2955911.html>

<sup>109</sup> Saine, Cindy, "US House Votes to Reject Iran Nuclear Deal", *VOA News*, September 11, 2015 at <http://blogs.voanews.com/techtonics/2015/10/02/mobile-learning-plugs-chinas-education-gap/?from=listner>

<sup>110</sup> Ferdinando, Lisa, "Dempsey: Future of ISIL Increasingly Dim", *DoD News*, September 9, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/616656/dempsey-future-of-isil-increasingly-dim>

<sup>111</sup> Garamone, Jim, "Syrian Train-and-Equip Effort Will Continue, Pentagon Spokesman Says", *DoD News*, September 8, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/616510/syrian-train-and-equip-effort-will-continue-pentagon-spokesman-says>

<sup>112</sup> Cronk, Terri Moon, "Centcom Spokesman: Progress Continues In Coalition Efforts Against ISIL", *DoD News*, September 11, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/616982/centcom-spokesman-progress-continues-in-coalition-efforts-against-isil>

<sup>113</sup> "Airstrikes Continue Against ISIL Targets in Syria, Iraq", *DoD News*, September 13, 2015 at <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/617014/airstrikes-continue-against-isil-targets-in-syria-iraq>

happening". The source of the refugee river, he said, is the collapse of governance in Syria and the growth of Islamic State.<sup>114</sup>

On September 10, the White House officials announced the U.S. would make preparations to take in at least 10,000 Syrian refugees in the upcoming fiscal year. Since the start of Syria's civil war more than four years ago, the U.S. has taken in just over 1,400 Syrian refugees — a barely detectable fraction of the four million who have fled the country. The U.S. decision comes as the world is bombarded with shocking images of Syrians and migrants from other war-torn countries desperately trying to reach Europe.<sup>115</sup>

On September 12, hundreds of activists and protesters gathered in New York's Union Square, demanding the U.S. government to lead by example, and accept a greater share of responsibility to address the Syrian refugee crisis. The protesters called for a humane response to the crisis which has affected millions with no place to go.<sup>116</sup>

Ahead of the Chinese President Xi Jinping's first state visit to the United States later this month, a *Pew Research Centre's* poll of 1,003 Americans, conducted between April 13 and May 3 indicates that, despite China's slowing economy, a majority of those surveyed view China as an economic threat. The poll finds a majority of Americans troubled by the size of U.S. debt held by China and the perception that China benefits from U.S. job losses. Not far behind are concerns over China's involvement in cyberattacks and its growing military power.<sup>117</sup>

## India-US Relations

(September 7-13, 2015)

- **Ambassador Singh holds meetings to promote economic and strategic relationship; India emphasises the freedom of navigation and flight in the SCS; With the US support APEC would consider India's membership.**

Indian Ambassador to USA Arun Kumar Singh held a series of meetings with top businessmen and professionals aimed at further enriching Indo-US relations. In his meeting with Governor Bruce Rauner and his economic team, Ambassador Singh mentioned that bilateral trade between the two countries has exceeded US\$ 120 billion. India's investments in US have also reached US\$15 billion which has led to creation of 90,000 jobs in US. Ambassador Singh also briefed Chicago mayor, Rahm Emanuel on the new business opportunities initiated in India for the companies. He also addressed a business round table,

<sup>114</sup> McKitterick, Molly, "Obama: Refugee Tide Is World's Problem", *VOA News*, September 11, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/refugee-tide-is-world-problem-obama-says/2960608.html>

<sup>115</sup> Gallo, William, "US Urged to Do More on Mideast Refugee Crisis", *VOA News*, September 11, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/us-urged-to-do-more-in-middle-east-refugee-crisis/2958644.html>

<sup>116</sup> Taylor, Ramon, "Activists Demand Greater US Role in Syrian Refugee Crisis", *VOA News*, September 12, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/activists-demand-greater-united-states-role-syrian-refugee-crisis/2961749.html>

<sup>117</sup> Beattie, Victor, "What Concerns Americans Most About China", *VOA News*, September 10, 2015 at <http://www.voanews.com/content/poll-economic-issues-top-americans-concerns-about-china/2955067.html>

hosted by World Business Chicago, and also CEOs of US Companies at the business round table, organized by the Illinois Chamber of Commerce. These interactions are likely to create further investment opportunities in India and the USA.<sup>118</sup>

Amid signals that China might restrict the freedom of navigation and flight in the South China Sea (SCS), India has emphasised on the freedom of overflight in the region where India has strong commercial and strategic interests. Senior officials said China's move to first claim territory, then build artificial islands and now possibly impose Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) in the region not only goes against India's strategic and commercial interests but also against international norms for freedom of navigation and flight. China had earlier established ADIZ over East China Sea following escalation of tension with Japan and now might impose restrictions over SCS following differences with the United States over artificial islands in the disputed region. An ADIZ extends a country's airspace, allowing it more time to respond to foreign aircraft.<sup>119</sup>

Over two decades after India's failed attempt to get into the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), its request for membership will be considered in this year's APEC summit in Manila. The US president Barack Obama promised to support India's membership in the APEC during his historic visit to India January 2015. Kevin Rudd, former Australian PM and head of a CII-Asia Society Task Force, said that "APEC misses much by not having India on board". It is important for India to be on board because it aimed to help Indian economy achieve economic competitiveness by bringing the Indian system up to speed on financial and investment regulations that are being adopted by countries and companies worldwide in the new economic era.<sup>120</sup>

## II. Defence Reviews

### National

(September 7-13, 2015)

- **Inaugural bilateral maritime exercise AUSINDEX-15 between India and Australia underway; Defence minister exhorts Border Roads Organisation to incorporate latest technologies for construction of roads, bridges and tunnels.**

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<sup>118</sup> "Indian Ambassador to US Holds High-Profile Meetings During Chicago Visit", *The Times of India*, September 7, 2015 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/nri/citizen-journalists/citizen-journalists-reports/ashfaq-hussain-syed/Indian-ambassador-to-US-holds-high-profile-meetingsduring-Chicago-visit/articleshow/48854368.cms>

<sup>119</sup> Chaudhury, Dipanjan Roy, "India To Resist Curbs On Navigation & Flight in South China Sea", *The Economic Times* September 12, 2015 at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/india-to-resist-curbs-on-navigation-flight-in-south-china-sea/articleshow/48930379.cms?prtpage=1>

<sup>120</sup> Bagchi, Indrani, "Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation to Consider India's Membership Request", *The Times of India*, September 7, 2015 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/Asia-Pacific-Economic-Cooperation-to-consider-Indias-membership-request/pmarticleshow/48857467.cms?prtpage=1>

The inaugural bilateral maritime exercise between India and Australia, AUSINDEX-15 is being conducted off the east coast of India from September 11 to September 19, 2015. The week-long bilateral maritime exercise will see the participation of Royal Australian Navy (RAN) ships HMAS Sirius, HMAS Arunta, and HMAS Sheean. The Indian Navy would be represented by INS Shivalik, INS Ranvijay, and INS Shakti. In addition, one Royal Australian Air Force P3C Orion surveillance aircraft and Indian Navy's P8I Maritime Patrol Aircraft will operate from Chennai during the exercise. The exercise is aimed at strengthening professional interaction, both in harbour and at sea and would be a start for attaining interoperability between the two navies. The exercise will start with a Harbour Phase encompassing briefings and practical demonstrations along with professional interactions. This would progress to a Sea Phase which would include Fleet manoeuvres, gun firings as well as coordinated anti-submarine exercises. The AUSINDEX would be a biennial event intended to further the ability to undertake regional joint and/or combined operations such as Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief.<sup>121</sup>

The Defence Minister has emphasized the need to incorporate the latest technologies in solving the challenges and enhancing the pace of construction of roads, bridges and tunnels in the inaccessible and far-flung border areas, which is a major problem faced by Border Roads Organisation (BRO). The minister stressed the need for the application of nanotechnology which will be of great use in soil stabilisation, being a pre-requisite for construction of roads and tunnels in the extreme cold climate of high altitude areas. The defence minister appreciated the efforts of BRO in introducing latest technologies for improving the efficacy and pace of construction in the various projects undertaken by the organisation.<sup>122</sup>

## International

(September 7-13, 2015)

- **Israel Aerospace Industries develops a revolutionary self-protection system for aircraft; Pakistani UAV demonstrates offensive capability in the battlefield.**

Reports say that Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) has developed a revolutionary self-protection system for aircraft. The system will for the first time provide pilots with accurate and actionable warnings of land- and sea-based threats. The company's newly developed ELL-8265 radar warning and locator (RWL) system for manned and unmanned fixed- and rotary-winged aircraft fixes many of the accuracy issues that have plagued older-generation radar warning receivers (RWRs). The RWL presents a revolution in this area, as its eight antennas provide the pilot with comprehensive situational awareness by means of an instant and accurate warning with location, and threat type that is displayed on the cockpit. The ELL-8265 RWL is described as providing both radar threat warning and an electronic support

<sup>121</sup> "Joint Press Release AUSINDEX-15," *PIB*, September 11, 2015, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=126826>

<sup>122</sup> "BRO Must Incorporate Latest Technologies for Construction of Roads, Bridges and Tunnels – Parrikar," *PIB*, September 11, 2015, at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=126820>

capability and as being designed to intercept, measure, identify, and locate 'all' types of radars in 'dense and complex' environments. While older RWRs presented the pilot with only approximate threat location, meaning that his or her aircraft could actually be within the kill envelope of the ground- or sea-based missile system, depending on the error probability of the data, the new RWL is typically accurate down to a few hundred meters in normal combat scenarios.<sup>123</sup>

Meanwhile, according to reports, the Pakistan Army has recently successfully used an indigenously built armed unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) to target a Taliban location for the first time. As per reports, a terrorist compound was hit and three militants were killed in the Shawal valley of North Waziristan close to the Afghan border. The air strike was carried out by the indigenous Burraq UAV. Significantly, the strike was the first time that a Pakistani UAV had demonstrated an offensive capability in the battlefield, departing from the country's known use of UAVs for reconnaissance purposes.<sup>124</sup>

### III. Internal Security Reviews

#### Jammu & Kashmir

(September 7-13, 2015)

- **Army confirms life sentence for soldiers involved in Machil killing; Two J&K cops join Hizbul Mujahideen; Three separatists join Geelani's Hurriyat Conference; Kupwara: 2 soldiers, 2 militants killed in encounter; India and Pakistan agree to resolve cross-border issues; One BSF officer killed as Pakistan violates ceasefire again in Rajouri district; Top LeT militant killed in Pulwama encounter.**

The Army's court martial has awarded life sentences to six of its soldiers involved in the alleged 2010 Machil fake encounter, 22 months years after pronouncing them guilty. Colonel Dinesh Pathania, Captain Opendra, Havaldar Devender Kumar, Lance Naik Lakhmi, Lance Naik Arun Kumar and Rifleman Abas Hussain have been awarded life imprisonment, a Northern Command spokesman said in a statement. The Army move has come two years after it invoked the Army Act to seek transfer of the Machil fake encounter case from criminal court to court martial on grounds that the accused Army personnel were on active duty and discretion lies with the Army for initiating proceedings before any court. The accused were facing grave allegations in the charge sheet filed before civilian court, which include charges

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<sup>123</sup> "IAI Develops 'Revolutionary' Protection System For Aircraft," *IHS Jane's*, September 08, 2015, at <http://www.janes.com/article/54164/iai-develops-revolutionary-protection-system-for-aircraft>

<sup>124</sup> "Pakistan Claims First Airstrike with Indigenous UAV," *IHS Jane's*, September 08, 2015, at <http://www.janes.com/article/54068/pakistan-claims-first-airstrike-with-indigenous-uav>

under Sections 302 (murder), 364 (abduction), 120-B (criminal conspiracy) and 34 (common intent) of the Ranbir Penal Code (RPC).<sup>125</sup>

Amid increasing radicalization in the Kashmir Valley, Bashir Ahmad and Mohammad Reyaz deserted the Jammu & Kashmir police and joined the militant Hizbul Mujahideen. In a statement on September 9, Hizb spokesman Salim Hashmi said Bashir and Reyaz, who fled from Doda, have joined their militant cadre.<sup>126</sup>

The Hurriyat faction headed by Syed Ali Shah Geelani received a shot in the arm on September 9 when three top separatists, previously with the Mirwaiz Umar Farooq faction, joined his group. Shabir Ahmad Shah of the Democratic Freedom Party (DFP), Nayeem Ahmad Khan of the National Front and Aga Hassan Budgami of Anjuman-e-Sharie Shian addressed a joint press conference at Mr. Geelani's residence. The leaders left the Mirwaiz's faction last year. Geelani's Hurriyat has roped in 11 new constituents in recent months, taking the total number to 21.<sup>127</sup>

At least two soldiers and two militants were killed in an encounter at Handwara in Kupwara district of north Kashmir, the Army said on September 11. The encounter broke out in Laribal village of Zachaldara in Handwara on September 10 night after security forces launched an operation, an Army officer said. In the ensuing gun battle, two unidentified militants and two soldiers were killed so far, he said.<sup>128</sup>

India and Pakistan on September 12 agreed to jointly resolve sensitive issues like ceasefire violations and cross-border infiltration through exchange of information, including via e-mail and over the telephone. At the conclusion of bilateral DG-level border talks, the two sides also inked some new confidence building measures (CBMs) and signed a joint record of discussions which emphasised the need to ensure security and well-being of their border populations. The two sides, sources said, also agreed to stop ceasefire violations along the International Border (IB) "through enhanced communication via multiple modes at all possible levels."<sup>129</sup>

Barely 24 hours after the conclusion of bilateral DG- level talks, Pakistani troops fired mortar bombs along the LoC in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir killing a BSF officer. Troops

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<sup>125</sup> Ashiq, Peerzada, "Court Martial Sentence In Machil Fake Encounter Confirmed", *The Hindu*, September 7, 2015 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/court-martial-sentence-in-machil-fake-encounter-confirmed/article7625081.ece>

<sup>126</sup> Pandit, M Saleem, "Two J&K cops join Hizbul Mujahideen", *The Times of India*, September 10, 2015 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Two-JK-cops-join-Hizbul-Mujahideen/articleshow/48893153.cms>

<sup>127</sup> Ashiq, Peerzada, "3 Mirwaiz Faction Leaders Join Geelani", *The Hindu*, September 10, 2015 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/3-mirwaiz-faction-leaders-join-geelani/article7634766.ece>

<sup>128</sup> "2 Soldiers, 2 Militants Killed in J&K Encounter", *The Hindu*, September 11, 2015 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/soldiers-militants-killed-in-encounter-in-kupwara-district-of-jk/article7640471.ece>

<sup>129</sup> "India, Pak. Agree To Resolve Cross-Border Issues", *The Hindu*, September 12, 2015 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-pak-agree-to-resolve-crossborder-issues/article7645873.ece>

guarding the border on this side also retaliated back. There have been 15 ceasefire violations in September this year. Eleven people, including two jawans, were killed and over 30 injured in August in ceasefire violations by Pakistan. There have been over 250 violations of the border ceasefire agreement by Pakistan in the year so far, of which 57 were in August.<sup>130</sup>

A top Lashkar-e-Taiba militant, carrying a reward of Rs. 10 lakh on his head, was killed in an encounter with the police and the Army in Pulwama district on September 12. The slain militant Irshad, a resident of Kakapora of Pulwama was wanted for killing of eight Armymen in Hyderpora in June 2013 besides several other attacks on the Army and the police, official sources said. Listed as 'A+' category (most wanted) militant by the police, Irshad was killed in an encounter that broke out at Begum Bagh village in the Kakapora area when the police went there following a specific information about presence of some militants there, they said. The gun battle erupted when the hiding militants opened fire at the police party.<sup>131</sup>

## Northeast India

(September 7-13, 2015)

- **Manipur: Three PLA rebels killed in encounter; NIA announces cash reward for info on rebel Naga leaders; Bandh cripples life in Assam, hundreds arrested; Five Kuki ultras held in Churachandpur district of Manipur.**

A combined team of Assam Rifles and 6 Dogra gunned down three suspected cadres of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), the armed wing of banned Revolutionary People's Front (RPF) in an encounter near the Indo-Myanmar border on September 5, sources said. The patrols were fired upon by undergrounds hiding between B Bongjang and T Motjang, said Assam Rifles (South) in a press release on September 6. Assam Rifles troops retaliated instantly and were engaged in a firefight for close to 60 minutes. In the ensuing encounter, two ultras were killed on the spot. Taking advantage of the proximity of the international border, the remaining ultras fled into Myanmar, the release claimed. There are reports of two more ultras being injured during the incident. During the course of search operation, one AK 47 rifle along with magazine, two 9mm pistols, two mobile phones, Myanmar currency (16,23,450 Kyats), etc., were recovered," it added. Meanwhile, the RPF has admitted that another ultra has succumbed to injuries.<sup>132</sup>

The National Investigation Agency on September 10 announced a cash reward of Rs 7 lakh for information leading to the arrest of S.S. Khaplang, chief of the NSCN (K), the group allegedly responsible for killing 18 soldiers in Manipur. Three months after the brutal attack in Manipur's Chandel district, the NIA, which is probing the case, also announced a cash reward

<sup>130</sup> "BSF Officer Killed In Pakistan Shelling Along LoC in Rajouri", *The Economic Times*, September 13, 2015 at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/bsf-officer-killed-in-pakistan-shelling-along-loc-in-rajouri/articleshow/48948702.cms?cfmid=11001094>

<sup>131</sup> "Top LeT Militant Killed In Encounter", *The Hindu*, September 13, 2015 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/top-let-militant-killed-in-encounter/article7646573.ece>

<sup>132</sup> "3 Manipur Insurgents Killed In Encounter", *The Assam Tribune*, September 7, 2015 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=sep0715/oth056>

of Rs 10 lakh for information leading to the arrest of Niki Sumi, self-styled chief of the armed wing of NSCN-K. While Khaplang is a resident of Myanmar, Sumi hails from Nagaland.<sup>133</sup>

The 12-hour bandh called by the Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuva Chatra Parishad (AJYCP) on September 12 crippled life in Assam. Reports of stray incidents of violence from districts across the state led to hundreds of bandh supporters being arrested. The AJYCP had called the bandh in protest against the central government's decision to grant citizenship to Bangladeshi and Pakistani non-Muslim migrants, who had entered India till December last year due to religious persecution. At least 11 other organisations of the state including the Asom Gana Parishad and student organisations of Motock, Moran, Dimasa, Karbi, Goriya-Moriya, Sonowal-Kachari, Madahi and Bishnupuria Manipuri communities supported the bandh called by the AJYCP.<sup>134</sup>

Five militants belonging to outlawed Kuki National Liberation Front (KNLF) were arrested with arms and ammunition by the Army from Churachandpur district in Manipur, a Defence release said on September 12. The five activists were held on September 8 from S Songgel village, the release said. Army recovered two 9 mm carbine machine guns with magazines, one 9 mm pistol with magazine and eight 9 mm live rounds of ammunition from their possession, the release added.<sup>135</sup>

## Left-wing Extremism

(September 7-13, 2015)

- **Security forces recover 400 kg IEDs from Lakhisarai forest; Maoist leader surrenders in Karimnagar; Orissa: 58 more Maoists surrender in Malkangiri.**

Para-military forces and the district police engaged in an anti-Maoist operation in Lakhisarai and other neighbouring districts of Bihar recovered over 400 kg of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) planted by the Reds from the dense forest areas of Lakhisarai. Lakhisarai SP Ashok Kumar said, on a tip-off, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Special Task Force (STF) and Lakhisarai police launched a joint operation against the Naxalites in remote villages like Hanuman Asthan, Pili Bazar, Kanimoh, Sitlakhosari, Nepura etc under Kajra PS area in the district on September 7. On September 8, they stumbled upon 56 IEDs planted near Mamu-Bhagina Mor deep in the jungles of Lakhisarai district. The IEDs were planted allegedly by the Maoists in a bid to blow up vehicles of security forces engaged in the combing operation

<sup>133</sup> "NIA Sets A Rs 7 Lakh Bounty on SS Khaplang", *The Asian Age*, September 11, 2015 at <http://www.asianage.com/india/nia-sets-rs-7-lakh-bounty-khaplang-758>

<sup>134</sup> "12-Hour Bandh Cripples Life In Assam, Hundreds Arrested", *The Assam Tribune*, September 12, 2015 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=sep1215/at042>

<sup>135</sup> "Five Kuki Ultras Held", *The Assam Tribune*, September 13, 2015 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=sep1315/oth052>

against them in the jungles of Lakhisarai. The SP said each bomb weighed 8-10 kg and only one such bomb was enough to blow up a police jeep.<sup>136</sup>

Disillusioned with party ideology and ill-health, Maoist deputy commander of Eturu Nagaram and Mahadevpur committee Katrevula Lingaiah (24) surrendered before Superintendent of Police D Joel Davis in Karimnagar on September 10. The surrendered Maoist hailed from Rapellikota village of Mahadevpur mandal, said SP Joel Davis. He joined the Maoists group in 2011 and worked as dalam member and later elevated as deputy commander of Karimnagar, Khammam and Warangal (KKW) Eturu Nagaram and Mahadevpur area committee.<sup>137</sup>

In continuing spate of surrenders, fifty-eight more Maoist elements surrendered in Malkangiri district of Odisha on September 12. They surrendered before Makangiri Superintendent of Police (SP) Mitrabhanu Mohapatra. They included 12 Maoist militants and two village committee members of Naxalite organisation. All of them were from Eralguda village under Kalimela police station. A total of 377 Maoist cadres, militias and supporters from different remote villages of Maoist-infested police station areas like Podia and Kalimela have surrendered before the police since August 31. According to the police sources, if this trend continues, then it will drastically reduce the strength of Maoist organisation in this district bordering Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. The number of Odia Maoist cadres in Malkangiri district is also low. The Maoist leaders from Andhra and Chhattisgarh continue their activity in Malkangiri district with support of localities. This support base of Maoists has started to dwindle with recent continuing trend of surrenders.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Nadim, Farrukh, "400kg IEDs Recovered From Lakhisarai Forest", *The Times of India*, September 9, 2015 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/patna/400kg-IEDs-recovered-from-Lakhisarai-forest/articleshow/48890925.cms>

<sup>137</sup> "Disillusioned with Ideology", *The Hindu*, September 11, 2015 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/telangana/disillusioned-with-ideology/article7639816.ece>

<sup>138</sup> "58 More Maoists Surrender", *The Hindu*, September 13, 2015 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/58-more-maoists-surrender/article7646705.ece>