

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. South Asia

Afghanistan

(January 23-29)

- **A representative of insurgent group Hizb-i-Islami says he held separate talks with the top US officials**

According to reports, Dr Ghairat Baheer, a representative and son-in-law of longtime Afghan warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, told that he had met separately with David Petraeus, former commander of NATO forces in Afghanistan who is now CIA director, and had face-to-face discussions earlier this month with US Ambassador Ryan Crocker and US Marine Gen. John Allen, currently the top commander in the country. Baheer, who was released in 2008 after six years in US detention at Bagram Air Field in Afghanistan, described his talks with US officials as nascent and exploratory. "Hizb-i-Islami is a reality that no one can ignore," Baheer said during an interview last week at his spacious home in a posh suburb of Islamabad. "For a while, the United States and the Kabul government tried not to give so much importance to Hizb-i-Islami, but now they have come to the conclusion that they cannot make it without Hizb-i-Islami."¹

(January 30- February 05)

- **US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta indicates at end of US combat operations in Afghanistan during 2013; Taliban refutes news of any talks with Afghan Government in Saudi Arabia**

In a significant development, US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta has said that the US will seek to wind down combat operations in Afghanistan during 2013, more than a year before a deadline for withdrawal. Speaking while travelling to a NATO summit, Panetta said the United States hopes to switch to a role training and supporting Afghan forces. It would be worth noting that there are currently some 99,000 US troops in the country, with 22,000 scheduled to return home during this year. Some 68,000 troops are due to remain in Afghanistan after the end of 2012. It is the most detailed public indication of when US troops might pull back from America's longest war. Until now, though, there had been little information how the Pentagon planned to manage the main bulk of the drawdown, committing only to a full withdrawal of troops by the end of 2014.²

¹ "US talks to Afghan insurgent group", *Dawn*, January 24, 2012 at <http://www.dawn.com/2012/01/24/us-talks-to-afghan-insurgent-group.html>

² "Afghanistan: Leon Panetta signals end to US combat role", *BBC*, February 2, 2012 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-16843361>

Meanwhile, according to reports, the Taliban militia leading a 10-year insurgency in Afghanistan denied that they would soon hold talks with Afghan President Hamid Karzai's government in Saudi Arabia. "There is no truth in these published reports saying that the delegation of the Islamic Emirate would meet with representatives of the Karzai government in Saudi Arabia in the near future," the Taliban said on their website. Earlier, Afghan officials, requesting anonymity, had suggested that the two sides would hold talks in Saudi Arabia separate from planned negotiations in Qatar between the Taliban and the United States.³

Pakistan

(January 23-29)

- **Report: Kayani's intervention halted NATO strikes according to military; Pakistan Army rejects US investigation report on NATO attack ; Pakistan desires to strengthen ties with Myanmar; Pakistan Military academy hit by rockets**

According to a 24-page document released by ISPR, the military's public affairs wing, a direct intervention by Chief of the Army Staff Gen Ashfaq Parvez Kayani and warning of an enhanced response had finally brought to a halt NATO's air strikes on Volcano and Boudak posts in Mohmand agency on November 26, 2011. Gen Kayani talked to ODRP (Office of the Defence Representative Pakistan) chief L.G. Keen at the US Embassy and warned that if the fire did not stop immediately he would order an enhanced level of response, beyond the one which was already being given by the Pakistani military until that time in the shape of small arms and mortar fire. The intervention finally brought the fire to a halt. The document gives Pakistan's perspective on a US investigation report on the incident which brought the already-strained relations between Pakistan and the United States to a new low.⁴

Meanwhile, according to reports, Pakistan's military rejected US findings on a November 26 NATO cross-border air attack that killed 24 Pakistani soldiers and plunged relations to a low point. "Pakistan does not agree with several portions and findings of the investigation report, as these are factually not correct," the military said in a statement. The US report released on Dec. 22 found both American and Pakistani forces were to blame for the border incident, inflaming already strained ties. "Affixing partial responsibility of the incident on Pakistan is therefore unjustified and unacceptable," said the statement. The Pakistan army had earlier in December 2011 rejected key findings from the US investigation into air strikes and had said the report was unlikely to repair the severely damaged relationship between the two countries.⁵

In another development, according to reports, President Asif Ali Zardari has called for enhancing trade between Pakistan and Myanmar and a 'preferential tariff arrangement' leading to a

³ "Taliban deny plan for Saudi talks with Afghan government", *Dawn*, February 2, 2012 at <http://www.dawn.com/2012/02/01/taliban-deny-plan-for-saudi-talks-with-afghan-govt.html>

⁴ "Kayani's warning brought NATO strikes to halt military", *Dawn*, January 24, 2012 at <http://www.dawn.com/2012/01/24/kayanis-warning-brought-nato-strikes-to-halt-military.html>

⁵ "Army rejects US report on NATO attack", *Dawn*, January 23, 2012 at <http://www.dawn.com/2012/01/23/army-rejects-us-report-on-nato-attack.html>

comprehensive free trade agreement. Talking to Myanmar President U. Thein Sein after his arrival in Naypyidaw on January 24, he called for setting up a joint ministerial commission to promote economic and trade cooperation between the two countries and collaboration in the oil and gas sector. The president offered to send the minister for petroleum and natural resources to Myanmar for exploring prospects of meaningful cooperation. Pakistan and Myanmar have modest trade relations and the volume of trade was \$24 million in 2009-10.⁶

In other developments, according to reports, the Pakistani Military Academy in Abbottabad has been hit by nine rockets, fired by unknown assailants. The academy is situated near the compound where Osama was killed. Officials have said that no one was injured.⁷

(January 30- February 05)

- **US President Obama officially acknowledges drone strikes in Pakistan; NATO report finds Pakistan support to Taliban; PM Gilani to be indicted by SC**

According to reports, US President Barack Obama confirmed that the US drone aircraft have struck Taliban and Al Qaeda targets within Pakistan – operations that until now had not been officially acknowledged. When asked about the use of drones by his administration in a chat with web users on Google+ and YouTube, Obama said “a lot of these strikes have been in the FATA” – Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas. “For the most part, they’ve been very precise precision strikes against Al Qaeda and their affiliates, and we’re very careful in terms of how it’s been applied,” Obama said. Explaining that many strikes were carried out “on Al-Qaeda operatives in places where the capacities of that military in that country may not be able to get them,” Obama confirmed that Pakistan’s lawless tribal zone was a target.⁸

On domestic front, according to reports, the Supreme Court of Pakistan summoned Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani to appear on February 13 to be indicted with contempt over his refusal to pursue corruption cases against the president. The announcement significantly escalated pressure on the embattled prime minister, threatening to plunge his weak government deeper into crisis and force early elections within months. Justice Nasir-ul-Mulk told the court that there were grounds to proceed against Gilani over the government’s refusal to follow a court order and ask Swiss authorities to re-open corruption cases against President Asif Ali Zardari. The government argued that Zardari had immunity from prosecution while head of state. Switzerland shelved the cases in 2008, when Zardari took office.⁹

In other developments, according to reports, a secret NATO report noted that the Pakistani security services are secretly helping Afghanistan’s Taliban, who assume their victory is inevitable

⁶ “Move to strengthen ties with Myanmar”, *Dawn*, January 25, 2012 at <http://www.dawn.com/2012/01/25/zardari-to-give-benazir-award-to-suu-kyi-move-to-strengthen-ties-with-myanmar.html>

⁷ “Rockets hit Pakistan military Academy in Abbottabad”, *Dawn*, January 27, 2012 at <http://www.dawn.com/2012/01/27/rockets-hit-pakistan-military-academy-in-abbottabad.html>

⁸ “Obama confirms US drone strikes in Pakistan”, *Dawn*, January 31, 2012 at <http://www.dawn.com/2012/01/31/obama-confirms-us-drone-strikes-in-pakistan.html>

⁹ “SC to indict PM for contempt on Feb 13”, *Dawn*, February 2, 2012 at <http://www.dawn.com/2012/02/02/sc-resumes-contempt-hearing-against-pm.html>

once Western troops leave. The leaked “State of the Taliban” report seen by the BBC and The Times newspaper was compiled from information gleaned from insurgent detainees and was given to NATO commanders in Afghanistan last month, the media reports said.¹⁰

B. East Asia

South East Asia

- **Terrorists killed in US-led operations in Philippines; Cambodia- China to promote strategic partnership; US waives some sanctions imposed on Myanmar; Myanmar government approves Aung San Suu Kyi’s participation in elections; Indonesian economy reaches fifteen-year peak**

According to reports, a joint US-Philippine anti-terror operation in Sulu Island of the Philippines killed a dozen armed men including two Jemmah Islamiya bombers and a senior Abu Sayyaf leader. The operations happened on February 2 in the terrorist infested Sulu Island, and are considered a major success in Philippine government’s anti-terror operations. Noted terrorists, Zulkifli bin Hir, also known as Marwan, and Indian Abdullah Ali, alias Muawiyah, were killed in the operations.¹¹

In another development, in a meeting between the top Chinese political advisor Jia Qingling, and Cambodian Prime minister and foreign minister Hor Nam Hong on February 6, 2012, the two sides pledged to enhance bilateral strategic partnership. Hor Nam Hong was invited by foreign minister Yang Jiechi to visit China for two days starting February 5.¹²

According to reports, the United States waived some sanctions imposed on Myanmar on 6 February 2012. The decision will help Myanmar government to work with the World Bank and other global financial institutions to revitalise its economy.¹³

Reports noted that on 6 February 2012, the election commission of Myanmar officially approved the opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi’s candidature, stating that she would be allowed to contest for the elections, which are scheduled for April 1, 2012 to fill 48 seats in the parliament.¹⁴

¹⁰ “Pakistan helping Taliban: secret NATO report”, *Dawn*, February 2, 2012 at <http://www.dawn.com/2012/02/01/pakistan-helping-taliban-secret-nato-report.html>

¹¹ JI, Sayyaf terrorists killed in Us-led military ops in the Philippines, *The Mindanao Examiner*, 2 February 2012, http://www.mindanaoexaminer.com/news.php?news_id=20120202041727

¹² ‘China, Cambodia Vow to Further Promote Strategic Partnership’ *Xinhua*, 6 February 2012, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2012-02/06/c_131394408.htm

¹³ Myanmar: Government Panel approves opposition leader’s run for parliament, *New York Times*, 6 February 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/07/world/asia/myanmar-panel-approves-aung-san-suu-kyis-run-for-parliament.html?_r=1

¹⁴ Suu Kyi campaigns for Burma polls as US eases sanctions, *BBC*, 7 February 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-16921340>

In other developments, according to the reports, the Indonesian economy grew by 6.5 percent in 2011, its biggest expansion since 1997-98. The size of the Indonesian economy was Rp 7,427.1 trillion at the end of 2011. The major reason behind strengthening of the economy is an increase in household consumption.¹⁵

China

- **China to promote friendly co-op with Sudan; China to give \$95m to African Union; EU leaders: China willing to aid bailout; China says sanctions on Iran not constructive; Israel, China celebrates 20 years of diplomatic relations; Xi's visit to promote public diplomacy; China opposes politicians contacting Dalai Lama; China reiterates sovereignty over Diaoyu; China, UAE issue joint statement on partnership**

According to reports, Beijing has announced that it will deepen its friendly cooperation with Sudan in order to maintain the national stability.¹⁶ Beijing also announced that China will work towards promising the China-AU relationship.¹⁷

According to reports, China has shown interest towards contributing to the global efforts to bail out debt ridden European countries but with preconditions.¹⁸

In other development, according to reports, Beijing has asserted that sanctions against Iran are not constructive.¹⁹ Meanwhile, according to reports, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has praised relations between China and Israel on the occasion of 20th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between the two nations.²⁰

Meanwhile, according to reports, Chinese Vice-President Xi Jinping's trip to United States is expected to be an opportunity to promote public diplomacy between the two sides.²¹

On domestic front, according to reports, Beijing has announced that it is against the Dalai Lama's activities in the international domain. It also asserted that Beijing is against any form of contact

¹⁵ Indonesia economy reaches 15 year high; *Jakarta Globe*, 7 February 2012, http://article.wn.com/view/2012/02/07/Indonesia_Economy_Reaches_15Year_High/

¹⁶ "China to promote friendly co-op with Sudan" *China Daily*, January 29, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-01/29/content_14500153.htm

¹⁷ "China to give \$95m to African Union" *China Daily*, January 29, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-01/29/content_14499858.htm

¹⁸ "China willing to aid bailout: EU leaders" *China Daily*, January 28, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-01/28/content_14496569.htm

¹⁹ "China says sanctions on Iran not constructive" *China Daily*, January 26, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-01/26/content_14494012.htm

²⁰ "Israel, China celebrates 20 years of diplomatic relations" *China Daily*, January 25, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-01/25/content_14491848.htm

²¹ "Xi's visit to promote public diplomacy" *China Daily*, January 20, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-01/20/content_14479718.htm

between the Dalai Lama and officials of other countries.²² It also asserted that Beijing stance on Diaoyu Island's sovereignty is 'firm and unwavering'.²³

In other developments, reports noted that China and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) issued a joint communiqué establishing strategic partnership between the two sides.²⁴

C. Central Asia

(January 23-29, 2012)

- **Kazakhstan President Nazarbayev delivers the State-of-the-Nation address; Kazakhstan to prosecute offenders and mend ties with Zhanaozen protesters; Partners of Trans-Caspian pipeline project may reach decision in June; TAPI: Pakistan agrees in principle to charge uniform transit fee; ADB extends financial and political risk guarantee to Uzbek petrochemical project; World Bank to disburse funds to Eastern Europe and Central Asia; Russia to crackdown on illegal migrants; Environmental Performance Index: CARs among the worst for environmental protection**

According to reports, in his state-of-the-nation address on January 27th, the Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev identified social and economic modernization as its main vector of development for the next decade.²⁵ To achieve these he identified ten areas or directions that needed reform:

employment, affordable housing, development of regions and small towns, improvements to the quality of public services, improvement of human resource capacity, modernization of the judiciary and law enforcement systems, high quality growth of human capital, improve pension system, implementation of industrial and innovation projects, and finally development of agriculture.²⁶ With regard to Kazakhstan's foreign policy, President Nazarbayev said that his country will remain committed to a balanced foreign policy, interacting both with the West and Asia.²⁷

In the meanwhile, Kazakhstan's Prosecutor-General last week said those top-ranking local police officials as well as current and former heads of state-run oil companies will be charged for

²² "China opposes politicians contacting Dalai Lama" *China Daily*, January 18, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-01/18/content_14471268.htm

²³ "China reiterates sovereignty over Diaoyu" *China Daily*, January 16, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-01/16/content_14456956.htm

²⁴ "China, UAE issue joint statement on partnership" *China Daily*, January 18, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-01/18/content_14464825.htm

²⁵ "Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev's State of the Nation Address (Special edition, January 27, 2012)", *CaspioNet*, January 28, 2012 at http://caspionet.kz/eng/general/Kazakhstan_President_Nursultan_Nazarbayevs_State_of_the_Nation_Address__Special_edition__January_27__2012__1327763346.html

²⁶ *ibid*

²⁷ *ibid*

Zhanaozen-related crimes. Fired oil workers had been demonstrating against OzenMunaiGaz and KMG since May 2011 and the recent firing has brought the Kazakh government under intense scrutiny wherein human rights activists' maintained that police engaged in extralegal actions to quell the riots.²⁸ According to reports, senior officials have acknowledged errors in their handling of the strike, fired subordinates and state oil company executives, and have begun a sweeping program to offer alternative employment to the strikers wherein the Kazakh government has set about resolving the labor problems here as it has in the past, releasing a mini-gusher of new financing not only for the workers but for the local government, schools and roads.²⁹ This unrest poses challenge to the Western oil companies and the government as in the latter case there is a switch in the demands of the protesters from wages to political change. In a related event, a new strike broke out on 26th January as some 200 workers downed tools at a major oil project by the U.S.-led TengizChevroil Company in Atyrau, the western region of Kazakhstan in demand of higher pay.³⁰

In another development, according to reports, talks over the disputed Trans-Caspian pipeline project that would link Turkmen gas with pipelines to Europe may reach a yes-or-no decision in June wherein the EU Commissioner for Energy Gunther Oettinger described the current series of negotiations between the governments of Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan as "intensive" yet "constructive".³¹

In a related development, according to reports, Pakistan has agreed in principle to charge a uniform transit fee for natural gas supplied from Turkmenistan, paving the way for further progress on the TAPI pipeline, at the meeting of the Indian and Pakistani oil ministers in New Delhi last week.³²

According to reports, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) confirmed recently that it will extend a \$400 million loan and political risk guarantee to help Uzbekistan build its largest petrochemical plant—Surgil Natural Gas Chemicals Project, designed to meet the country's industrial and commercial needs for gas, scheduled to go online in early 2016.³³ Additional financing toward the project – the cost of which will come to around \$4 billion – will be provided by the Export Import Bank of Korea, Korea Trade Insurance Corporation, China Development Bank, National

²⁸ "Kazakhstan to charge police, oil firm heads in Zhanaozen investigation", *Universal Newswires*, January 25, 2012 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=11231>

²⁹ Kramer, A. E., "To Mend Ties After Clash, Kazakhstan Makes an Offer", *Zhanaozen Journal*, January 29, 2012 at <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/30/world/asia/kazakhstan-offers-jobs-in-wake-of-clash-with-oil-workers.html>

³⁰ "New strike breaks out in western Kazakhstan", *Universal Newswires*, January 27, 2012 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=11251>

³¹ "EU energy chief says Trans-Caspian talks may conclude in June", *Universal Newswires*, January 26, 2012 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=11244>

³² "Pakistan agrees to flat transit fee for Turkmenistan Gas", *The Economic Times*, January 26, 2012 at http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-01-26/news/30666681_1_transit-fee-turkmenistan-gas-india-and-pakistan

³³ "ADB to lend \$400M for Uzbek petrochemical plant", *Universal Newswires*, January 25, 2012 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=11234>

Bank of Uzbekistan, European export credit agencies, and international commercial lenders.³⁴ In the meanwhile, the World Bank announced last week, that it is setting aside \$27 billion, which will be available in next two years, for countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia that will be adversely affected by the downturn in European Union countries.³⁵

In other developments, according to reports, the Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin announced on January 26, that the Russian government will crack down on illegal migrants who do not formally register or obtain work permits. Of the 10 million migrants who head to Russia hail from Central Asia wherein significant portions of the working population are from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.³⁶ According to the Environmental Performance Index (EPI) released last week, the Central Asian Republics (CARs) are considered the worst in the world for environmental protection and are found to be lacking in their management of precious water resources.³⁷

Russia

(January 23-29, 2012)

- **Russia to build three new factories to develop Anti Ballistic Missile Defence systems; Russia to set up a strategic planning agency; Russia and Japan trade exceeds US\$ 30 billion in 2011; Russia and Japan will exchange opinion on prospects for concluding a peace treaty; Russian, Azerbaijani, Armenian presidents to meet in Sochi; Russian peacekeepers to be withdrawn from Sudan; Russia is ready to restore diplomatic relationship with Georgia; Russia will not allow the establishment of a no fly zone in Syria; US has turned down Russia's proposal to jointly investigate the Phobos Mars mission failure; Putin accused the US of attempting to dominate the world**

According to reports, Russia will build three new factories to produce ABM systems for troops of air-space defence.³⁸

In another development, according to reports, the Russian government intends to set up a strategic planning agency for assessing threats to national and technological security of Russia. The agency will develop strategies of the main military, economic, scientific and technical directions of Russia's development for a period of at least 30 years. Recommendations for technological and industrial development of the home defence industrial complex will also be developed.³⁹

³⁴ ibid

³⁵ "World Bank makes \$27B available to Eastern Europe, Central Asia", *Universal Newswires*, January 25, 2012 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=11240>

³⁶ "Putin pushes for restrictions on illegal migrants", *Universal Newswires*, January 26, 2012 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=11250>

³⁷ "Central Asia ranks among worst in new environmental study", *Universal Newswires*, January 27, 2012 at <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=11259>

³⁸ "Russia to build three new factories to make ABM systems", ITAR-TASS, January 28, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/328651.html>

³⁹ "Russian government to set up strategic planning agency", ITAR-TASS, January 28, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/328633.html>

Reports noted that Trade turnover between Russia and Japan in 2011 has exceeded US\$ 30 billion dollars. The two sides have agreed to focus more on high technological areas and ease the visa regime with a view to promote cultural and humanitarian ties.⁴⁰

According to reports, Russia and Japan have agreed to examine their bilateral relationship including energy cooperation wherein the two sides will discuss construction of a new complex of liquefied gas near Vladivostok. In the backdrop of Russia's Foreign Minister's visit to Tokyo, the two sides will also exchange opinion on prospects for concluding a peace treaty, although it is difficult to expect a breakthrough in this sphere over persisting differences in opinions on the problem of the South Kuriles. The ministers will also discuss the situation around the Korean Peninsula and Iran.⁴¹

Reports noted that Russian, Azerbaijani and Armenian leaders will meet in Sochi for the tenth three-party summit on Nagorno-Karabakh settlement. Successful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict by peaceful means is one of Russia's priority interests in the region.⁴²

According to reports, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has ordered to withdraw Russian peacekeepers from Sudan since the United Nations mission has ended its activity in the country.⁴³

President Dmitry Medvedev has said that Russia is ready to restore diplomatic relations with Georgia, but only in case of a regime change in that country.⁴⁴

Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov has said that Russia will do its best not to let a no-flight zone be established in Syria.⁴⁵

The United States has officially refused to take part in an investigation into the causes of the failure of the Phobos Grunt mission to one of the moons of Mars. There have been allegations about the role of American radars in the failure of the mission.⁴⁶

In other developmets, according to reports, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin has accused the United States of attempts to dominate the world and challenging internal political procedures in other countries as a tool for achieving that goal.⁴⁷

⁴⁰ "Russia-Japan trade in 2011 exceeds \$30 bln", ITAR-TASS, January 28, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/328623.html>

⁴¹ "Russia and Japan will exchange opinion on prospects for concluding a peace treaty", ITAR-TASS, January 28, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/328514.html>

⁴² "Russian, Azerbaijani, Armenian presidents to meet in Sochi", ITAR-TASS, January 23, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/322222.html>

⁴³ "Medvedev signs decree to withdraw Russian peacekeepers from Sudan", ITAR-TASS, January 24, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/323389.html>

⁴⁴ "Russia ready to restore diplomatic relations with Georgia- Medvedev", ITAR-TASS, January 25 <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/325009.html>, 2012,

⁴⁵ "Russia to do its best not to let establish no-flight zone in Syria", ITAR-TASS, January 26, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/327388.html>

⁴⁶ "US turns down Russia's proposal to look into Phobos failure together", ITAR-TASS, January 26, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/326865.html>

⁴⁷ "Putin accuses US of attempts to dominate world", ITAR-TASS, January 26, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/326396.html>

(January 30-February 05, 2012)

- **Russia and China veto the draft resolution at UNSC on Syria; Russia to renew routine world patrols of its nuclear strategic submarines; Thousands of protestors gather in Moscow to demand an end to Putin's rule; American Police to buy Russian made Izhmash shotguns; Russian navy to receive Mistral warship by 2015; Russia-NATO prepare new Afghanistan transit deal; Prime Minister Putin criticizes the US Missile shield ahead of the Munich security talks; Russia and the US complete their first ever joint inspection of the Antarctic; Russia to modernize 30 TU-22M3 strategic bombers by 2020; Prime Minister Putin pledges to reduce government stake in big corporations by 2016; Russia to provide US\$ 41 million to Nicaragua for the development of a medical centre**

In a major development, according to reports, Russia and China have blocked a draft resolution on Syria submitted to the UN Security Council by Western and Arab countries.⁴⁸

In another development, according to reports, Russia will resume routine extended patrols of its strategic nuclear submarines in international waters around the world in June 2012. The annual number of extended patrols performed by Russian strategic nuclear submarines and nuclear-powered attack submarines has dropped from more than 230 in 1984 to less than 10 today.⁴⁹

Thousands of Russians had assembled in Moscow to demand an end to Vladimir Putin's rule. The march - which drew 120,000 people, according to organisers - was the third mass demonstration since Putin's party won a parliamentary election on December 4.⁵⁰

According to reports, Izhmash, the manufacturer of the legendary Kalashnikov AK-47, will supply Saiga-12 semi-automatic smoothbore shotguns to a number of police forces in the U.S with the first batch having been already delivered.⁵¹

Reports noted that the first Mistral class amphibious assault ship will be put in service with the Russian Navy in 36 months. Russia and France had signed a \$1.2-billion contract on two French-built Mistral class ships, including the transfer of sensitive technology in June 2011.⁵²

Ahead of the Munich security talks, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin has criticized the US missile defence shield plan on the ground that it was aimed at undermining Russia's defence capabilities.⁵³

⁴⁸ "Russia, China block draft resolution on Syria at UN", ITAR-TASS, February 4, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/334559.html>

⁴⁹ "Russian strategic subs to resume routine world patrols", RIA Novosti, February 4, 2012, http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20120204/171127327.html

⁵⁰ "Tens of thousands of protestors flood Moscow despite -20C temperatures to demand an end to Putin's rule", Mail Online, February 5, 2012, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2096473/Anti-Putin-protests-Tens-thousands-flood-Moscow-demand-end-Vladimirs-rule.html>

⁵¹ "US police to but Izhmash shotguns", RIA Novosti, January 31, 2012, http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20120131/171045859.html

⁵² "Russian navy to receive Mistral warship in 3 years" RIA Novosti, February 1, 2012, http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20120201/171073369.html

⁵³ "Putin slams US missile shield ahead of Munich talks", RIA Novosti, February 3, 2012, <http://en.rian.ru/world/20120203/171103829.html>

Russia and the United States have finished the first joint inspection in Antarctica. The inspection report will be presented at the upcoming consultative meeting on the Antarctic Treaty to be held in Hobart, Australia, in June 2012.⁵⁴

The head of Russia's main arms exporting agency Rosoboronexport has said that the firm has been hit by upto 4 billion US\$ on account of sanctions in Libya.⁵⁵

Russia will modernize about 30 Tu-22M3 strategic bombers from Russia's Long Range Aviation fleet. Tu-22M3 is a supersonic, swing-wing, long-range strategic bomber that Russia uses mainly to patrol the skies over its southern borders, Central Asia and the Black Sea region.⁵⁶

According to reports, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin has pledged to bring down the government stake in big companies in the next four years, although the government would not sell them at throw away prices.⁵⁷

In other developments, according to reports, Russia will provide 41 million US dollars to Nicaragua for building a medical centre with the most advanced facilities within 3 years in Managua.⁵⁸

D. West Asia

Iran

(January 23-29)

- **UN nuclear Inspector visits Tehran to clear up "outstanding substantive issues" on Tehran's atomic programme; Israeli military: A drone that can fly as far as Iran has crashed in central Israel**

According to reports, the UN's chief nuclear inspector arrived in Iran on a mission to clear up "outstanding substantive issues" on Tehran's atomic programme, and called for dialogue with the Islamic state. Before departing from Vienna airport, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief inspector Herman Nackaerts told reporters that talks were long overdue. He stated, "we are trying to resolve all the outstanding issues with Iran." He also added that "in particular

⁵⁴ "Russia-US first joint inspection in Antarctica", ITAR-TASS, January 30, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/329821.html>

⁵⁵ "Libya sanctions cost Russian weapons exporter 4 billion dollars", ITAR-TASS, February 2, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/332579.html>

⁵⁶ "Russia to modernize 30TU-22 M3 bombers by 2020", RIA Novosti, January 31, 2012, http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20120131/171049406.html

⁵⁷ "Putin pledges to reduce government stake in big corporations by 2016", ITAR-TASS, January 30, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/329375.html>

⁵⁸ "RF to provide \$41 mln to Nicaragua for medical centre in Managua", ITAR-TASS, February 4, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/334138.html>

we hope that Iran will engage with us on the possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear programme." The team also includes IAEA number two Rafael Grossi, an Argentine, and the watchdog's senior legal official Peri Lynne Johnson, a US citizen, according to diplomats. Expectations are low, with the delegation not expected to be given access to any sites mentioned in a damning IAEA report in November that raised suspicions Iran had done work developing nuclear weapons. Meanwhile, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi stated, "we have always had a broad and close cooperation with the agency and we have always maintained transparency as one of our principles working with the agency."⁵⁹

In another development, according to reports, the Israeli military has said that a drone that can fly as far as Iran has crashed in central Israel on a routine experimental flight. According to the military there were no injuries in crash, and it was investigating the incident. The Heron TP drone is also known locally as the Eitan. It has a wingspan of 86 feet (26 meters), making it the size of a Boeing 737 passenger jet. It is the largest unmanned aircraft in Israel's military arsenal. The drone figures to be featured prominently in any potential Israeli operation against Iran and its expanding nuclear program. Heron TP could provide surveillance, jam enemy communications and connect ground control and manned air force planes.⁶⁰

Iraq

(January 23-29)

- **Seventeen people killed and many injured in bombs attacks; Government spokesperson; Iraq will take legal action to ensure justice for the families of 24 unarmed Iraqi civilians killed in a US raid in Haditha seven years ago**

According to reports, insurgents stepped up attacks around Iraq, killing 17 people around the country, including 10 in a bombing attack on a house of two policemen and their families in central Iraq. At least 190 people have been killed in a wave of attacks by since the beginning of the year, raising concerns that the surge in violence and an escalating political crisis might deteriorate into a civil war, just weeks after the US military withdrawal. Most of the dead in the wave of attacks have been Shia pilgrims and members of the Iraqi security forces. Since the US completed its pullout last month, militant groups mainly al-Qaida in Iraq have stepped up attacks on the country's majority Shias and government institutions.⁶¹

In another development, according to reports, Iraq will take legal action to ensure justice for the families of 24 unarmed Iraqi civilians killed in a US raid in Haditha seven years ago, a government

⁵⁹ "UN chief nuclear inspector arrives in Iran," *Khaleej Times*, January 29, 2012, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/displayarticle.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2012/January/middleeast_January770.xml§ion=middleeast&col=

⁶⁰ "Huge Israeli drone that can reach Iran crashes," *Khaleej Times*, January 29, 2012, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/displayarticle.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2012/January/middleeast_January794.xml§ion=middleeast&col=

⁶¹ "Attacks by suspected insurgents kill 17 in Iraq," *Khaleej Times*, January 27, 2012, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/displayarticle.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2012/January/middleeast_January710.xml§ion=middleeast&col=

spokesman said, after the lone US Marine convicted in the killings reached a deal to escape jail time. Residents in Haditha, a former Sunni insurgent stronghold of about 85,000 people have expressed outrage at the American military justice system for allowing Staff Sgt. Frank Wultrich to avoid prison. 'The Haditha incident was a big crime against innocent civilians,' said Ali Al Moussawi, a spokesman for the Iraqi government. 'We will follow up all legal procedures and judiciary measures' to seek justice in the case, he added.⁶²

II. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

Jammu & Kashmir

(January 16-22, 2012)

- **A Militant killed in an encounter in Poonch**

According to reports, a militant was killed when a gun-battle broke out between militants and security forces near the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district. Acting on a tip off, soldiers of 39 Rashtriya Rifles and Special Operation Group of police launched a cordon and search operation in Chak Banola (Chatral) forest belt in Mendhar tehsil of Poonch district. The militants opened fire on the security forces who also retaliated which resulted in a fierce gun-battle between the two sides.⁶³

(January 23-29, 2012)

- **A Congress activist killed in Pulwama**

According to reports, an unidentified gunman shot dead a Congress activist in the South Kashmir district of Pulwama. The deceased was a Congress Sewa Dal worker while his wife Shahzada is also a Panch. Police immediately cordoned off the area and launched search operation to nab the culprits.⁶⁴

North East India

(January 16-22, 2012)

- **North East Ultras on India-Myanmar talks agenda; Nine militant outfits of Assam to lay**

⁶² "Iraq will take legal action over US raid," *Khaleej Times*, January 26, 2012, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/displayarticle.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2012/January/middleeast_January703.xml§ion=middleeast&col=

⁶³ "Militant killed in Poonch encounter", *Greater Kashmir*, January 19, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Jan/20/militant-killed-in-poonch-encounter-30.asp>

⁶⁴ "Cong activist killed in Pulwama", *Greater Kashmir*, January 24, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Jan/25/cong-activist-killed-in-pulwama-60.asp>

down arms; Centre extends ceasefire with DHD-J and NDFB-P; Explosives recovered in Lumding, Assam; One killed in militant attack in Speaker's house in Manipur

According to reports, a joint strategy to deal with Northeast insurgent groups, checking of drug smuggling, arms and ammunition will be high on the agenda during the Home Secretary-level talks between India and Myanmar to be held on January 19 in Myanmarese capital of Naypyitaw. Home Secretary RK Singh will travel to Naypyitaw to hold annual bilateral talks with his counterpart where he will impress upon the neighbouring country to take action against the Northeast-based insurgent groups having bases across the border. India and Myanmar are expected to discuss how to check cross-border crimes, especially smuggling of drugs, arms and ammunition and may formulate a joint strategy to deal with the menace.⁶⁵

In another development, according to reports, Union Home Minister P Chidambaram is likely to arrive in Guwahati on January 24 to oversee surrender of weapons by nine militant outfits of the State. Official sources have confirmed that the Home Minister would pay a daylong visit to the State ahead of the Republic Day celebrations. He has agreed to be the chief guest of the function organised by the State Government. The nine militant groups, which are laying down arms, include four Adivasi militant groups like Adivasi Cobra Militants of Assam, Birsa Commando Force, Santhal Tiger Force, Adivasi People's Army and Adivasi National Liberation Army, besides Hmar Peoples Convention, Kuki Liberation Army, Kuki Revolutionary Army and United Kuki Defence Army.⁶⁶

Reports noted that the Centre announced extension of the ceasefire pacts with Dima Haram Daogah (DHD)-J faction and National Democratic Front of Boroland (Progressive) (NDFB-P). Official sources said it has been mutually agreed with the (DHD) group in North Cachar Hills district of Assam to further extend suspension of operations (SoO) for a period of six months till June 30. An agreement of Suspension of Operations (SoO) between the security forces and DHD has been in operation since January 1, 2003 and has been extended. Agreed ground rules have been revised making them stricter.⁶⁷

According to reports, security has been beefed up by the Northeast Frontier Railway in parts of Assam, following the discovery of a sizeable quantity of explosive materials at Lumding station and also because of threat perceptions in the run-up to the Republic Day. It is suspected that the consignment could have been brought to Lumding for transshipment to some other place. According to sources in the NFR at Maligaon, no arrests have been made till the time of filing this report. Soon after the discovery, the NFR sounded the alarm and raised the level of security in all the major stations across the State.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ "NE ultra on India-Myanmar talks agenda", *The Assam Tribune*, January 16, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan1712/at094>

⁶⁶ "9 militant outfits of State to lay down arms", *The Assam Tribune*, January 18, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan1912/at05>

⁶⁷ "Centre extends ceasefire with DHD-J, NDFB-P", *The Assam Tribune*, January 18, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan1912/at06>

⁶⁸ "Explosives recovered in Lumding", *The Assam Tribune*, January 18, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan1912/state07>

In other developments, according to reports, intensifying their attacks ahead of the Assembly polls, unidentified militants exploded a bomb near the house of Manipur Assembly Speaker I Hemochandra Singh in Imphal West district killing one person and leaving at least three wounded. The militants, who have been targeting Congress leaders and workers in the State going to polls on January 28, hurled the bomb outside the Singemei house of the Speaker who is also a Congress candidate for the elections.⁶⁹

(January 23-29, 2012)

- **Seven hundred militants surrender arms in Assam; Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is concerned about the situation in Manipur on the eve of the Assembly elections as NSCN (IM) is interfering in Manipur poll process; Shutdown plagued Manipur votes; One injured in a blast in Imphal just a day before the Assembly polls; Six killed in Manipur with a poll turn out of 70 per cent**

According to reports, seven hundred militants from nine separatist groups in Assam laid down their arms to join the mainstream in the presence of Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram. In one of northeast India's biggest surrender ceremonies in Assam's main city of Guwahati, a total of 676 militants laid down weapons and in return received roses from the home minister. The nine groups are part of two major ethnic groups - the tribal Kukis in eastern Assam and the Adivasis inhabiting the northern and western parts of Assam. Among the major groups that surrendered were the Kuki Revolutionary Army, the Hmar People's Convention, the Birsa Commando Force, and the Adivasi Cobra Militant of Assam. All the nine militant groups are already observing ceasefires with the government, although formal peace talks are yet to begin.⁷⁰

Meanwhile, according to reports, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is concerned about the situation in Manipur on the eve of the Assembly elections in the state and has directed the security forces to deal firmly with any armed militant found to be involved in unlawful activities. The Ministry recently sent a team of officers to the state, which fine tuned the deployment of the security forces in consultation with officials of the state government. MHA sources admitted that members of the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (I-M) are interfering with the poll process in Manipur in violation of the ground rules of the cease-fire agreement with the Government of India. The action of the members of the militant group puts the Government in an embarrassing situation but the MHA has decided to act tough against members of the outfit. Sources said that the NSCN members are openly supporting the candidates of the Naga People's Front (NPF).⁷¹

Reports noted that a total of 279 candidates, including 14 women, are in the fray for January 28 polls to the 60-member assembly in Manipur, battling debilitating blockades and dragging

⁶⁹ "1 killed in militant attack on Speaker's house", *The Assam Tribune*, January 22, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan2312/oth05>

⁷⁰ "700 militants surrender arms in Assam", *The Assam Tribune*, January 24, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan2412/at013>

⁷¹ "NSCN (IM) interfering in Manipur poll process", *The Assam Tribune*, January 24, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan2512/at09>

insurgency. A total of 1.7 million people are eligible to vote in 2,357 polling booths in the state. For most, the biggest issues are shutdowns, with an over 120-day blockade last year having created huge hardships. While the ruling Congress is trying hard to make it to a third consecutive term, opposition parties have formed a five-party alliance to prevent the ruling party from making it a hat-trick.⁷²

Meanwhile, a blast rocked the Manipur Capital Imphal, a day before the Assembly polls. One person was injured. The blast took place at Thangmeiban Iikamdewan Leiki locality. An Improvised Explosive Device (IED) was triggered by a remote device.⁷³

In other developments, according to reports, at least six people, including a suspected Naga militant and a paramilitary trooper, were killed in violence during elections to the Manipur Assembly. The state recorded 70 percent polling. Police sources confirmed six people were killed during poll violence in the state. A major tragedy was averted in Sagolband constituency after police and security forces recovered an Improvised Explosive Device (IED). It was later defused. The violence took place in Chandel district as a group of armed militants tried to capture a polling booth in remote Chakpi Karong village but were thwarted by security personnel. A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) trooper was killed and five others were seriously injured in the ensuing gun battle.⁷⁴

⁷² "Shutdown-plagued Manipur votes tomorrow", *The Assam Tribune*, January 27, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan2712/at04>

⁷³ "Blast in Imphal, one injured", *The Assam Tribune*, January 27 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan2712/at041>

⁷⁴ "Six killed in Manipur, poll turnout over 70 per cent", *The Assam Tribune*, January 28, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jan2812/at0132>