

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. South Asia

Afghansitan

- **Afghan security forces captures intelligence data pointing at the Haqqani network during a raid in Kabul; Afghan parliament passes a vote of no confidence in two of its most senior Afghan ministers**

According to reports, Afghan security forces captured intelligence data pointing at the Haqqani network during a raid in Kabul which killed five insurgents and one wounded on August 2, 2012. The authorities said they had thwarted a massive attack. Soldiers from Afghanistan's spy agency, the National Directorate of Security (NDS), launched the raid just after midnight, entering a single-story house compound on the fringes of Kabul which the insurgents were using as a base. The NDS noted that target maps and telephone numbers recovered from the compound had numbers for the Haqqani network.¹

In another development, reports noted that the Afghan parliament has passed a vote of no confidence in two of its most senior ministers, Interior Minister Besmillah Mohammadi and Defence Minister Abdul Rahim Wardak, and demanded that they be replaced. They were criticised for failing to prevent cross-border shelling from Pakistan and security lapses that resulted in the assassinations of senior officials. President Karzai's office said he would make a decision on August 5, 2012 about the future of two ministers. It would be worthy noting that the President has the power to keep them in their posts for another month. In the past, he has retained his ministers for even longer.²

Pakistan

- **Pakistan invites key Afghan leaders from political groupings drawn from the former Northern Alliance; A new agreement on NATO supplies signed between Pakistan and the US; US Commander General Allen meets Army Chief Kayani**

According to reports, Pakistan has invited key Afghan leaders from political groupings drawn from the former Northern Alliance to visit the country. These include Uzbek and Tajik political leaders. According to Diplomatic and security officials, a delegation comprising non-Pakhtun leaders, including Afghan National Front chief Ahmed Zia Massoud, may travel to Pakistan soon. Afghan National Coalition's Mohamed Yonus Qanooni and around a dozen other Uzbek and

¹ "Afghan forces capture intelligence data pointing at Haqqani network", *The Express Tribune*, August 2, 2012 at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/416518/afghan-forces-capture-intelligence-data-pointing-at-haqqani-network/>

² "Afghan parliament votes to sack key ministers", *BBC*, August 4, 2012 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-19124808>

Tajik leaders from the northern parts of war-torn Afghanistan will also be among those expected in Islamabad. Officials said these leaders might accompany Salahuddin Rabbani, an ethnic Tajik.³

Meanwhile, in a significant development, according to reports, a new agreement on NATO supplies has been signed between Pakistan and the US on July 31, 2012, replacing the existing Memorandum of Understanding in place since 2004.

The new deal was part of an overall review Pakistan had sought in its ties with the US in the wake of last year's NATO cross-border raid which killed 24 soldiers, consequently causing the suspension of the ground lines of communication for NATO-led foreign forces in Afghanistan for over seven months. According to the new accord, Pakistan will not allow transportation of arms and ammunition, as demanded by the parliament in its foreign policy recommendations approved in April this year. However, military equipment for the Afghan National Army would be permitted to pass through the country. Pakistan will also not provide any warehouses or storage facilities for NATO goods.⁴

In other developments, reports noted that the US commander in Afghanistan visited GHQ to hold talks in Pakistan on August 2, 2012 for the first time since Islamabad ended a seven-month blockade on NATO supplies destined for the 10-year war effort. The agenda of the meeting was focused on improving security along the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. During the talks, General Kayani discussed Pak-US relationship and emphasised that their relationship should be based on "mutual trust, respect and transparency". Gen Allen reciprocated with similar sentiments and said that he enjoyed his trips to Pakistan and is "pleased with the upward spiral of Pak-US relationship".⁵

B. East Asia

China

- **Beijing sends warship to Turkey on a visit; Beijing opposes Washington's statement on South China Sea; Beijing launches its largest patrol vessel; China and Indonesia set to start naval dialogue**

Reports noted that two Chinese warships, which included a guided missile destroyer, went on a four day visit to Turkey.⁶

³ "Open invitation: Key Afghan officials to visit Pakistan", *The Express Tribune*, July 30, 2012 at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/414864/open-invitation-key-afghan-officials-to-visit-pakistan/>

⁴ "Pakistan-US sign new agreement on NATO supplies", *The Express Tribune*, July 31, 2012 at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/415419/pakistan-us-sign-new-agreement-on-nato-supplies/>

⁵ "General Allen meets General Kayani", *Dawn*, August 2, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/08/02/gen-allen-to-meet-gen-kayani-in-pakistan/>

⁶ "Chinese warships start 4-day visit to Turkey" *China Daily*, August 5, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-08/05/content_15645675.htm

Meanwhile, according to reports, China expressed its strong dissatisfaction and resolute opposition on the press statement released on August 3, 2012 by the US Department of State on the South China Sea, Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang said August 4, 2012.⁷

In another development, according to reports, Beijing has launched its largest patrol vessel Haixun01.⁸

In other developments, reports noted that China and Indonesia have agreed to establish a dialogue between their navies and hold the first talks within this year.⁹

Japan

- **Japanese Ground SDF to participate with the US marines in Guam exercises; China condemns Japan over the latter's latest Defense White Paper; Japan to provide Myanmar with \$900 million to ease its debt to World Bank and the ADB**

According to reports, Japanese Ground Self Defense Force (GSDF) is to participate with US marines in exercises to be conducted in Guam and Tinian from August 21 through September 26 this year. Around 40 GSDF from Western Army Troops will join the exercises. These exercises are part of the security cooperation between Japan and the US aimed at countering China's rise in the Asia-Pacific region.¹⁰

In another development, reports noted that China has recently slammed Japan for the latter's latest Defense White Paper which underscores China's rapid military build-up. According to Chinese Foreign Ministry, the Paper unreasonably blamed China and discussed too many Chinese Domestic issues.¹¹ It is worth noting that the White Paper that was released last week, indicated a shifting of balance of power relationship between the Chinese military and the ruling Chinese Communist party, suggesting increasing influence of the military over the country's decision making. This is the first time Japan has made any comment on China's changing power structure.¹²

In other developments, according to reports, Japan has recently decided to extend to Myanmar \$900 million in bridge loans to help the latter ease its debt to the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. Under the World Bank and ADB rules, the borrowing countries are required to clear its debt arrears before asking for new debts. Due to its unpaid debts, Myanmar has not

⁷ "China opposes US statement on South China Sea" *China Daily*, August 5, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-08/05/content_15645059.htm

⁸ "China launches its largest patrol vessel" *China Daily*, July 28, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-07/28/content_15627912.htm

⁹ "China, Indonesia to establish navy dialogue mechanism" *China Daily*, July 26, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-07/26/content_15621921.htm

¹⁰ "GSDF to join marine exercises in Guam" *Yomiuri Daily*, August 4, 2012, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T120803004806.htm>

¹¹ "China slams Japan Defense White Paper", *Yomiuri Daily*, August 2, 2012, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T120801005991.htm>

¹² "Defense Paper detects shift in Chinese Power", *Yomiuri Daily*, August 1, 2012, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T120731004291.htm>

been able to apply for fresh loans from those two economic establishments. However, with Japanese government's assistance, Myanmar is hoping to open the way for financial aid from the World Bank and the ADB.¹³

South Korea

- **South Korea condemns Japan for its renewed claim over the Dokdo islets; South Korea to conduct military exercises near the Dokdo islands**

According to reports, Seoul has reacted strongly to Japan's renewed claim over the controversial Dokdo islands (Takeshima in Japanese) in the latter's Defense White Paper which was released recently. While reiterating South Korea's sovereignty over those islands, South Korean Foreign Ministry demanded an immediate withdrawal of such claims from Japan.¹⁴

Meanwhile, in a significant development, South Korea has recently decided to conduct military exercises near the controversial Dokdo islands later this month. The one-day exercises will be joined by South Korean Army, Navy and Air Forces along with the Coast Guards. The exercise will be carried out under a scenario in which the forces will join together to drive out a vessel that has invaded South Korean territorial waters near Dokdo.¹⁵

North Korea

- **North Korea reacts strongly to South Korea-US joint military exercises**

According to reports, North Korea has reacted strongly to the upcoming South Korea-US joint military exercises. The exercise known as the Ulji Freedom Guardian exercises is to be held during August 20-31, 2012. The troops from seven United Nations Command states-Australia, Britain, Canada, New Zealand, Denmark, Norway and France will be participating in the exercise as observers. North Korea however denounce this exercise as preparation for a nuclear war against the North by South Korea and the US.¹⁶

C. Central Asia & Russia

Central Asia

- **Turkmenistan aims to revitalize the Aral Sea coast; Uzbekistan moves to ban all foreign military bases on territory; Tajikistan begins troop withdrawal from Gorno-Badakhshan;**

¹³ "Japan to extend \$900 million in bridge loans to Myanmar to ease its debt burden", The Japan Times, August 2, 2012, at <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn20120802a5.html>

¹⁴ "S. Korea 'strongly' protests Japan's renewed claim to islets: Yonhap", Mainichi Daily, July 31, 2012, at <http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20120731p2g00m0dm098000c.html>

¹⁵ "Korea to conduct defense drills near Dokdo", Korea Herald, August 2, 2012, at <http://view.koreaherald.com/kh/view.php?ud=20120802000517>

¹⁶ "N. Korea blasts S. Korea-US military drill", Korea Herald, August 4, 2012, at <http://view.koreaherald.com/kh/view.php?ud=20120804000109>

Japan and Kazakhstan sign significant uranium and rare earth minerals deals; Trade turnover between Kyrgyzstan and China grows by 18.5%; The European bank for Reconstruction and Development to invest US\$ 35 million in Tajik Trans Asia highway; Kazakhstan's foreign trade turnover with CIS rises by 31.7%

According to reports, Turkmenistan has formulated a plan to prevent the desertification around the shores of the desiccated Aral Sea. The project foresees the development of a green zone around the Turkmen shore of the Aral Sea, once among the largest lakes in the world before Soviet environmental planning caused the sea to shrink.¹⁷

Reports noted that Uzbekistan is looking to prohibit all foreign military bases on its territory. The legislation noted that the Tashkent government will not collaborate with any military activities beyond its borders and will refuse to host any foreign military bases or soldiers on Uzbek territory. However, Uzbekistan is believed to become an active participant in the Northern Distribution Network (NDN) that will allow U.S. and NATO troops to ferry goods and military materiel out of Afghanistan ahead of NATO withdrawal in 2014.¹⁸

Meanwhile, reportedly, the Tajik government has begun to withdraw troops from the south-eastern Gorno-Badakhshan province after eliminating militants who reportedly killed a regional security official last week. Tajik President Emomali Rahmon sent troops into the isolated southeastern province on July 24, 2012 to retaliate against militants who allegedly killed the security official. Thirty militants were killed after one night of exchanging fire.¹⁹

According to reports, Japan is increasingly looking to increase uranium imports from Kazakhstan's to roughly around 40% from the current 3-4%. Japan and Kazakhstan will also jointly build a plant in the northern Kazakhstani city of Stepnogorsk, which will isolate dysprosium, a rare earth metal used in electric and hybrid car engines. The plant is set to export 30 tons of dysprosium to Japan annually, which may increase by next year to 50 tons annually which is close to ten percent of Japan's yearly demand.²⁰

In other developments in the region, according to reports, in 2011, the trade volume between China and Kyrgyzstan amounted to \$4.98 billion and grew by 18.5 percent compared to 2010. In the backdrop of a joint intergovernmental commission for trade and economic cooperation meeting in Bishkek, opening of branches of Chinese banks in Kyrgyzstan, construction of a Kazakh-Kyrgyz pipeline, and development of the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway were some of the other issues that were discussed.²¹

¹⁷ "Turkmenistan to revitalize Aral Sea coast", Universal Newswires, August 3, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=12544>

¹⁸ "Uzbekistan moves to ban all foreign military bases on territory", Universal Newswires, August 2, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=12533>

¹⁹ "Tajikistan begins troop withdrawal from Gorno-Badakhshan", Universal Newswires, August 1, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=12526>

²⁰ "Kazakh-Japanese deal on uranium, rare earths reveal trade strategies", Universal Newswires, July 31, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kazakhstan/viewstory.aspx?id=12516>

²¹ "Trade turnover between Kyrgyzstan, China increases 18.5%", Universal Newswires, August 1, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kyrgyzstan/viewstory.aspx?id=12527>

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) will finance upto US\$ 35 million for the construction of a highway in Tajikistan that aims to connect Europe and Asia. The 38 mile road forms part of the CAREC [Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation] III Corridor.²²

Kazakhstan's bilateral trade turnover with member countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) soared by 31.7 percent to \$4.7 billion in the first half of 2012 compared to the same period last year. Trade with the 10-country alliance of former Soviet republics amounts to 12 percent of Kazakhstan's overall business dealings.²³

Russia

- **Russia ready to review UN mission format in Syria but insists it must stay; Russia's three landing ships with marines to call at Syria's Tartus port; Russia-UK seek to strengthen bilateral ties especially in the nuclear power sector field; President Putin signes a bill which regulates navigation on the Arctic route; President Putin: There was nothing wrong about the law which looks to impose a foreign-agent status on foreign-sponsored non-commercial organizations**

According to reports, Russia's Ambassador to the United Nations Vitaly Churkin has said that Russia is ready to review the format of the United Nations observer mission in Syria but categorically opposes its dissolution favoured by a number of Western countries.²⁴

Meanwhile, according to reports, three landing ships of the Russia's Northern Fleet carrying marines with fire arms, and currently sailing in the Mediterranean Sea, will call at the naval supply base of the Syrian port Tartus in a few days. The reasons for the port of call has been given as a "replenish material stock" without elaborating whether Russian marines will stay at the Russian naval base to ensure its security.²⁵

According to reports, President Putin, in the backdrop of his visit to the UK, has said that nuclear power engineering might become one of the key areas of Russian-British economic cooperation. Russia's state nuclear energy corporation Rosatom has not ruled out a possibility of joining the Horizon project for building a new generation nuclear plant in Britain.²⁶

Reports noted that President Putin has signed the federal bill on State Regulation of Commercial Navigation in the Arctic Route Area which aims to bring the existing system of Arctic Route management in keeping with the Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation for the period up

²² "EBRD invests \$35M in Tajik trans-Asia highway", Universal Newswires, July 30, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/tajikistan/viewstory.aspx?id=12511>

²³ "Kazakh foreign trade turnover with CIS up 31.7%", Universal Newswires, August 2, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=12532>

²⁴ "Russia ready to review UN mission format in Syria but insists it must stay", ITAR-TASS, August 3, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/487390.html>

²⁵ "RF big landing ships with marines to call at Syria's Tartus", ITAR-TASS, August 3, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/487668.html>

²⁶ "Putin hopes Rosatom, Rolls Royce to build N-plants in Britain", ITAR-TASS, August 3, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/487345.html>

to 2020. The bill defines the notion of the Arctic Route area, refines the legal status and boundaries of this transportation system of the Russian Federation, envisages establishing the Arctic Route administration in the form of a federal institution organizing vessels' navigation in the area, and stipulating its functions, including the issuing of permissions for vessels' navigation in the Arctic Route area.²⁷

In other developments, President Putin has said that there was nothing wrong about the law which looks to impose a foreign-agent status on foreign-sponsored non-commercial organizations. He stressed that the requirement to register as foreign agents is applicable only to those non-commercial organizations which are engaged in political activities in Russia and are funded from abroad.²⁸

D. West Asia

Yemen

- **Al Qaeda bombing kills 40 in South Yemen**

According to reports, around 40 people were killed and several others were injured when an al Qaeda bomber blew himself off on August 4, 2012 in the Abyan province. The bombing targeted a condolence ceremony by the pro-government fighters in the Jaar town. The attacker detonated his explosives belt inside a meeting room where the victims were offering condolences to head of the pro-government fighters, who supported the army in the offensive that drove Al-Qaeda militants out of their strongholds in Abyan.²⁹

Many terrorist cells and operatives have been arrested in recent weeks within an extensive hunt for militants who were reported to have planned to regroup and recruit new fighters after their defeat in the south. In retaliation for the severe blows, al-Qaeda has carried out deadly suicide bombings in several Yemeni cities including the capital Sanaa targeting military and security chiefs, personnel, cadets and offices.³⁰

Saudi Arabia

- **One Policeman and a Shiite protester die in a clash in Eastern Province**

Reports noted that a Saudi policeman and an armed protester were killed in overnight clashes in the kingdom's oil-rich, Shiite-populated Eastern Province on August 4, 2012. Interior Ministry

²⁷ "Putin signs bill re state regulatn of navigation on Arctic Route", ITAR-TASS, July 30, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/484426.html>

²⁸ "Putin says he sees no wrong in law on foreign agent non-commercial organizations", ITAR-TASS, July 31, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/485342.html>

²⁹ "Al-Qaeda Deadly Bombing Kills, Injures Dozens in South Yemen, Sources", *Yemen Post*, August 5, 2012, at <http://yemenpost.net/Detail123456789.aspx?ID=3&SubID=5816&MainCat=3>

³⁰ Toll from Southern Yemen Suicide Bombing Rises to over 40, Tens Injured, *Yemen Post*, August 5, 2012, at <http://yemenpost.net/Detail123456789.aspx?ID=3&SubID=5817&MainCat=3>

spokesman Mansur al-Turki has stated that, “a security patrol came under heavy gunfire from four armed rioters on motorbikes in the Shiite district of Qatif. Security forces hunted down the armed rioters who were on motorbikes and exchanged fire with them.” The attackers were reportedly participating in a demonstration that took place in Qatif to mark a Shiite religious celebration which turned violent and police forces opened fire on protesters, wounding at least two. Confrontations have intensified recently between police and protesters mainly in the Eastern Province.³¹

Lebanon

- **Lebanese army chief rules out creation of buffer zone**

According to reports, the head of the Lebanese army has said that they would prevent the establishment of any buffer zone in Lebanon as part of the Syrian crisis. General Jean Qahwaji said that the military would work to minimize the impact of the Syrian conflict on Lebanon. He pledged to uphold Lebanon’s dissociation policy from the Syrian crisis, and said that the army would not allow the country to turn into a battleground for Syrian differences.³²

Turkey

- **Turkish military build-up continues along Syrian border; Turkish Foreign Minister holds talks with Iraqi Kurdish government**

Reports noted that Turkey has beefed up its military presence along its border with Syria after the Syrian army launched attacks on Syria’s second largest city of Aleppo, on July 30, 2012. The build-up consisted of more troops, tanks, armoured infantry vehicles and missile launchers.³³

Meanwhile, Turkish Foreign Minister, Ahmet Davutoglu, arrived in Arbil in northern Iraq on August 1, 2012 to hold talks with Kurdistan Regional Government President, Masoud Barzani. The talks focused on the Syrian crisis, particularly relating to Kurdish areas in Syria, and the situation on the joint borders. Davutoglu also met with Syrian Kurdish parties. Separately, members of the Syrian Kurdish community abroad have called on the UN, the US, and the EU to work to establish a safe haven in northern Syria, devoid of internal or regional military presence, to protect Kurds and religious minorities.³⁴

³¹ “Saudi policeman, armed protester die as Shiite celebration turns violent”, *The National*, August 5, 2012, at <http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/middle-east/saudi-policeman-armed-protester-die-as-shiite-celebration-turns-violent>

³² “Lebanese army chief rules out Syria buffer zone”, The Daily Star website, July 30, 2012, at <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Politics/2012/Jul-30/182620-lebanese-army-to-confront-israel-until-occupied-lands-liberated-kahwagi.ashx>

³³ “Turkey continues military buildup on border with Syria”, Xinhua News, July 30, 2012, at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2012-07/30/c_131748764.htm

³⁴ “Davutoglu in Iraqi Kurdistan for talks”, The Daily Star website, August 1, 2012, at <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Aug-01/182949-turkish-minister-to-meet-iraqi-kurds-over-syria.ashx#axzz22lCaFrOv>

Syria

- **Syrian opposition urges international community to take military action to end the continuing violence in Syria; Deputy Head of Syrian diplomatic mission in Nigeria defects; India abstains from vote on UN resolution on Syria**

According to reports, the Syrian National Council (SNC) has urged the international community to take military action to end the continuing violence in Syria, most recently in Aleppo. SNC chairman Abd-al-Basit Sida said that the influence of the Syrian government is declining, especially in major cities such as Damascus and Aleppo. According to the SNC, the death toll from the violence has so far reached 20,000. He also called on international supporters to arm the uprising against the regime, and provide financial aid to the rebels and the Syrian people.³⁵

Meanwhile, according to a news report on July 30, 2012, deputy head of the Syrian diplomatic mission in Nigeria announced his defection from the Syrian government.³⁶ This is the most recent of several high-profile defections by Syrian diplomats and government officials in the last few months.

In another development, according to reports, India has abstained from voting on a UN General Assembly resolution that denounced the escalating violence in Syria and demanded a political transition. The Saudi-drafted resolution got 133 votes in the 193-member body. The resolution is not legally binding and is of a moral nature. Explaining India's stance, Permanent Representative to the UN, Hardeep Singh Puri, said that while India was not in favour of any particular Syrian leader, it could not support openly calling for President Bashar al-Assad to step down and for UN members to sever diplomatic ties with Syria. Puri had held several rounds of talks with his Saudi and Qatari counterparts prior to the vote, but abstained since the final draft still had references for Assad to step down. India has said that it is critical the UN remains strongly involved with Syrian parties so as to end the 18-month old crisis.³⁷

E. Africa

- **Egypt, Tunisia and Libya issue "Cairo Declaration", discuss deeper cooperation among them; South Africa halts oil imports from Iran in June; Somalia's constituent assembly endorses draft constitution; Italian oil major announces new gas discovery off Mozambique; Seven members of Iran's Red Crescent kidnapped in Libya; South Africa wants extension of African Growth and Opportunity Act; Sudan, South Sudan reach an agreement on oil transportation fees; Ghana and Nigeria pledge to deepen bilateral ties**

According to reports, the Egyptian, Tunisian and Libyan foreign ministers has issued the "Cairo

³⁵ "Syrian opposition urges military action to end unrest", Gulf News website, July 29, 2012, at <http://gulfnews.com/news/region/syria/syrian-national-council-wants-un-military-action-1.1054661>

³⁶ "Deputy head of Syrian diplomatic mission in Nigeria defects", Al-Jazeera TV, July 30, 2012

³⁷ "UNGA adopts resolution on Syria, India abstains", The Indian Express, August 4, 2012, at <http://m.indianexpress.com/news/unga-adopts-resolution-on-syria-india-abstains/983794/>

Declaration". The declaration highlights that Egypt, Tunisia and Libya were considering whether to allow citizens to travel among the three countries without the need for a visa. Egypt's President Mohamed Morsi is entrusted with the task of investigating the suggestion. The declaration is an agreement towards political and economic cooperation among the three countries. Pan-Arab objectives were emphasised in the declaration as well as the importance of good coordination to reach their objectives. The three ministers further welcomed any Arab country that is willing to participate in the consulting process.³⁸

In another development, the Pretoria-based South African Revenue Service said that South Africa halted oil imports from Iran in June 2012 as the Middle Eastern nation faces sanctions over its nuclear development programme. South Africa received shipments of crude worth 13.3 billion rand (\$1.62 billion) in June, with 60 percent coming from Saudi Arabia, 19 percent from Angola and 18 percent from Nigeria. Comparatively, in May, Iran supplied 13 percent of South Africa's 14.9 billion rand of oil imports and Saudi Arabia 30 percent.³⁹

Meanwhile, Somalia's constituent assembly endorsed a draft constitution, considered as a key step to ending decades of civil war. The assembly took eight days to examine, debate and vote the country's new constitution in Mogadishu. Prime Minister Abdiweli Mohamed Ali congratulated the 825-strong assembly after it approved the draft by a landslide 96 percent. The provisional constitution applies immediately, but it must be finally ratified by a national referendum. However, shortly before the vote, two suicide bombers blew themselves after they were stopped by security forces, killing only themselves while one security guard was wounded in the blast.⁴⁰

According to reports, Italian oil and gas group Eni announced that it had made a "new and important" natural gas discovery at its Mamba field off Mozambique. Eni, one of the largest foreign oil and gas producers in Africa, said the new discovery at its Mozambique field would take gas in place to an estimated 1.974 billion cubic metres. State-controlled Eni, the world's sixth-biggest international oil group, also said that it expects output for 2012 to increase due to recovery of production in Libya, which is expected to return to pre-war levels by year end.⁴¹

Reports noted that seven members of Iran's Red Crescent, a humanitarian group, were kidnapped in the eastern city of Benghazi by an unknown armed militia in Libya. In response, Iran has called on the Libyan government to secure the release of its nationals. Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, Iran's deputy foreign minister for Arab and African affairs, criticised Libyan authorities for failing to provide necessary security for the members of the Iranian Red Crescent who were on a humanitarian mission inside the country. The seven men were on their way back to the hotel in

³⁸ "Libya, Tunisia and Egypt consider cancelling travel visas for citizens", *Ahram Online*, July 30, 2012, at <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContentP/1/49028/Egypt/Libya,-Tunisia-and-Egypt-consider-cancelling-trave.aspx>

³⁹ Mike Cohen (2012), "South Africa Halts Iran Oil Imports as U.S. Imposes Sanctions", *Bloomberg*, July 31, 2012, at <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-07-31/south-africa-halts-iran-oil-imports-as-u-s-imposes-sanctions.html>

⁴⁰ "Somalia's constituent assembly endorses draft constitution", *Ahram Online*, August 1, 2012, at <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/49251/World/Region/Somalias-constituent-assembly-endorses-draft-const.aspx>

⁴¹ Stephen Jewkes (2012), "Eni announces big gas discovery off Mozambique", *Reuters*, August 1, 2012, at <http://in.reuters.com/article/2012/08/01/eni-results-idINL6E8J11XO20120801>

middle of Benghazi when the armed group kidnapped them from their vehicles. Libyan officials said that the seven are believed to be safe and healthy.⁴²

South Africa called for extension of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) beyond 2015, stressing that it has boosted trade with the U.S. These comments came ahead of a visit by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to South Africa when economic ties will be a key point of discussion. To recall, AGOA was enacted in 2000 and gives trade preferences to a number of products.⁴³

The African Union chief mediator Mbeki announced that Sudan and South Sudan have reached an agreement on oil transportation fees in the Ethiopian capital where the two parties discussed a number of unresolved issues since the secession in July 2011. However, he did not provide further details. Sudanese delegation earlier released a position paper where it lowered its initial demand, \$36, for oil transportation package to \$22.20. However, Khartoum negotiating team reduced it once again to \$15. Finally, the two parties agreed on \$25.80 per barrel.⁴⁴

In other developments, Ghana and Nigeria have pledged their commitment to deepen their political, economic and cultural relations for their mutual benefit. President of Ghana, John Dramani Mahama, and the visiting Nigerian Vice-President, Mohammed Namadi Sambo made this commitment when the latter called on President Mahama in Accra. The visit of the Nigerian Vice President followed a letter of notice on the passing on of President Mills that President Mahama sent to his Nigerian counterpart.⁴⁵

II. DEFENCE REVIEW

National

- **Increase in India's missiles' range on the anvil; Military transport aircraft C-17 globe master-III will be used in tactical airlifts**

According to reports, India's missile power will be enhanced with Indian defence scientists now working towards increasing the range of various missiles. The range of surface-to-air missiles, which is presently 50 km, will be increased to 300 km. According to Avinash Chander, DRDO chief controller R&D (missiles and strategic systems) and director Advanced Systems Laboratory (ASL), DRDO is also aiming to increase the range of air-to-surface missiles up to 400 km and air-

⁴² "Iran seeks release of its aid workers abducted in Libya", *Guardian*, August 2, 2012, at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/iran-blog/2012/aug/02/seven-iranian-aid-workers-abducted-libya>

⁴³ "South Africa Wants Africa Economic Growth Act Extended", *The Wall Street Journal*, August 3, 2012, at <http://online.wsj.com/article/BT-CO-20120803-712089.html>

⁴⁴ "East Africa: Sudan, South Sudan Reach Deal Over Oil Transportation Fees – Mediator", *All Africa*, August 3, 2012, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201208040289.html>

⁴⁵ "Ghana, Nigeria pledge to deepen ties", *My Joy Online*, August 3, 2012, at <http://edition.myjoyonline.com/pages/news/201208/91575.php>

to-air missiles up to 300 km. Avinash Chander said work was on the 'seek and destroy' class of missiles, smart bombs, underwater cruise missiles. "We are confident that we can make our weaponry capabilities better than world class," he said. DRDO chief controller R&D also noted that the focus is now on having the entire avionics on a chip. "A nano missile with low cost and low weight is what we are aiming for," he said.⁴⁶

In another development, according to reports, Air Marshal S.P. Singh, the outgoing Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Southern Air Command, has said that the C-17 globe master-III military transport aircraft, scheduled to be inducted into the Indian Air Force in 2013, will be used primarily to airlift the country's Special Forces in the event of Mumbai-type terrorist attacks, hijacks, and other national emergencies. Air Marshal S.P. Singh noted that the aircraft's capability to operate from small and rugged airstrips and in all-weather and light conditions made it ideal for speedy 'tactical airlift' of troops and airdrop missions. Reportedly, the IAF would initially acquire one squadron of C-17s. It would add six more squadrons of C-130 Hercules turbo-prop driven military transport aircraft to its table.⁴⁷

International

- **Russian media reports: Russian amphibious assault ships to dock in a Moscow-leased Syrian port; Polish Army plans to acquire up to 1,000 new tanks**

According to reports by Russian news agencies on August 3, 2012, three Russian amphibious assault ships carrying hundreds of armed navy personnel will briefly dock in a Moscow-leased Syrian port in the coming days. The warships are conducting planned exercises in the Mediterranean Sea and will make a port call in Tartus to pick up fresh food and water supplies. "Our ships will enter Tartus to replenish their material supplies," a General Staff source was quoted as saying by the ITAR-TASS news agency. "They will spend a few days there and then head toward the northeastern section of the Mediterranean Sea" before heading toward the Russian coast, said the official. Russian news agencies earlier reported, quoting sources that Moscow would be sending warships to Syria, but officials have denied those reports in the past. On August 3, 2012, the defense ministry issued a statement saying there was no plan to send warships to Syria but stressed they had every right to re-stock at the Syrian port of Tartus should they decide to do so.⁴⁸

In another development, according to reports, the Polish Army plans to acquire up to 1,000 new tanks in different variants. It is expected that Poland's Ministry of Defense will sign a deal to launch production of the Anders, the tank prototype developed by Bumar Group's OBRUM Gliwice research unit, according to the Polish newspaper Rzeczpospolita. "The order will be

⁴⁶ "DRDO to increase missiles' range," TNN, July 31, 2012, at http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-07-31/hyderabad/32961035_1_missiles-research-centre-imar-at-avinash-chander

⁴⁷ "C-17s will be used in tactical airlifts: S.P. Singh," The Hindu, August 1, 2012, at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Thiruvananthapuram/article3710636.ece>

⁴⁸ "Reports: Russia to Send Warships to Syria," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, August 3, 2012, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120803/DEFREG04/308030001/Reports-Russia-Send-Warships-Syria?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE>

placed with the Polish defense industry, but to boost the design and production phase, it will be vital to cooperate with top foreign defense manufacturers,” said General (retired) Waldemar Skrzypczak, Poland’s deputy defense minister responsible for the armed forces’ modernization. The Polish tank program is part of a plan to overhaul the country’s land forces.⁴⁹

III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

Jammu & Kashmir

- **Militants carry out several grenade attacks across Valley; LeT militant killed in an encounter with security forces in Kupwara; Strike observed in Shopian town after alleged killing of youth**

According to reports, suspected militants carried out several grenade attacks across the valley on August 1, 2012, resulting in injuries to a policeman and damage to some vehicles. Suspected militants hurled a grenade on Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in Channapora locality of Srinagar. In Nagri village of Kupwara, unidentified militants hurled a grenade at the residential house of village Sarpanch Muhammad Rustum Dar. In another incident in the town, suspected militants carried out a grenade attack in Iqbal Market on July 31, 2012, resulting in injuries to a policeman.⁵⁰

In another development, according to reports, Police claimed that a joint party of forces killed a commander of Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) in a gunfight in frontier district of Kupwara. A police spokesman said the personnel of Special Operation Group (SOG) Handwara, 21 Rashtriya Rifles and 92 battalion CRPF cordoned off Doodipora village in Handwara and launched searches. The militant present inside a mud house fired upon the joint search party which retaliated, triggering an encounter in which the LeT commander Abu Hanzla was killed.⁵¹

In other developments, according to reports, amid complete strike, protests took place in Shopian town in South Kashmir after a civilian was allegedly killed by security forces in a local CRPF camp. However, police has termed the death as an accident.⁵²

Northeast India

- **Blast in Goalpara, Assam leaves an army man dead and six injured; Home Minister P. Chidambaram faces ire of riot affected people while visiting relief camps; Fresh incidents of**

⁴⁹ “Poland To Acquire 1,000 New Tanks,” August 3, 2012, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120803/DEFREG01/308030004/Poland-Acquire-1-000-New-Tanks?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE>

⁵⁰ “4 grenade attacks in 24 hours”, *Greater Kashmir*, August 1, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Aug/2/4-grenade-attacks-in-24-hours-76.asp>

⁵¹ “LeT militant killed: Police”, *Greater Kashmir*, August 3, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Aug/4/let-militant-killed-police-38.asp>

⁵² “CRPF beat Shopian youth to death”, *Greater Kashmir*, July 31, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Aug/1/-crpf-beat-shopian-youth-to-death-59.asp>

killing in Chirang; Formal NSCN-Centre dialogue to happen soon; All Bodo Minority Students' Union (ABMSU) claims no involvement of radical group in the recent violence

According to reports, an army man was killed and six others were injured when suspected militants triggered a powerful bomb blast in Goalpara district of Assam on July 31, 2012. Police officials suspect it to be an IED blast triggered by a remote control device. The incident took place in Bamunghopa near the Panchratna area of Goalpara district. The attack took place at a time when union Home Minister P Chidambaram visited some relief camps in Dhubri district close to Goalpara on the same day, in the morning.⁵³

Meanwhile, reports noted that P Chidambaram, then Union Home Minister, visited relief camps on July 30, 2012. During the visit, he had to face the ire of the people, who expressed their resentment against the local administration and the failure of the State Government to tackle the situation. Meanwhile, taking stock of the situation, the Union Home Minister held several rounds of discussions with high level officials. Chidambaram appealed to all sections of the people in the affected areas to extend their cooperation in resolving the crisis. During his visit to Kokrajhar, the Home Minister was accompanied by DoNER Minister Pawan Singh Ghatowar, BTC chief Hagrama Mohilary and others. He met some relief camp inmates at Titaguri HS School and Bhotgaon HS School and at Basugaon College in Chirang.⁵⁴

However, according to reports, tension gripped Chirang district again on August 5, 2012 following a 31C National Highway blockade by an angry mob at Bortola under Dhaligaon PS in the morning hours demanding rescue of two auto drivers who went missing from August 4, 2012 morning after taking passengers to Karigaon in Kokrajhar district. The mob attacked a bus injured the driver Apraj Narzary and eight passengers. The bus was going towards Udalguri from Kokrajhar. Security forces reached the spot immediately and dispersed the mob opening blank fire. Later the bodies of the missing auto drivers were found at Karigaon near Champa river in Kokrajhar district. Sensing a likely backlash the district administration imposed curfew for indefinite period in Chirang district.⁵⁵

In another development, reports noted that a series of informal talks is going on between the Government of India and the NSCN, led by Isak Chsi Swu and Thuigaleng Muivah, in New Delhi. However, formal talks are expected to begin only after a week or so.⁵⁶

In other developments, according to reports, the All Bodoland Minority Students' Union (ABMSU) denied allegations that a newly-formed group was involved in the recent clashes in parts of lower Assam, saying there was no evidence about it. ABMSU general secretary Mujib Ali Ahmed said

⁵³ "Army man killed, six injured in Goalpara blast", *The Assam Tribune*, July 31, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jul3112/at041>

⁵⁴ "PC faces ire of clash-hit people", *The Assam Tribune*, July 30, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jul3112/at06>

⁵⁵ "Fresh incidents in Chirang, 4 killed", *The Assam Tribune*, August 5, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=aug0612/at05>

⁵⁶ "Formal NSCN-Centre dialogue soon", *The Assam Tribune*, August 2, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=aug0312/oth06>

that the charges made by one ex-Bodoland Liberation Tigers (BLT) member that a newly-formed United Muslim National Army was involved in the clashes are totally false. There is no evidence of existence of any such outfit, he added.⁵⁷

IV. UNITED NATIONS (UN) REVIEW

- **India abstains from UNGA resolution on Syria; Kofi Annan resigns as UN Special Envoy for Syria; All parties in Guinea-Bissau called upon to restore order; UN-AU peacekeeping mandate in Darfur extended; UNSC demands DRC's renegade soldiers, M23 to cease their activities; Indian economist part of panel on global development agenda beyond 2015**

According to reports, after all efforts to pass a resolution on Syria in the UN Security Council had failed, the UN General Assembly adopted a Saudi-drafted resolution on Syria which denounced the escalating violence in the country and also demanded political transition. The resolution secured 133 votes while 12 countries voted against it. India was one among the 31 countries that had abstained. Explaining India's stand on the issue, UN ambassador H S Puri said that the resolution made specific reference to the League of Arab States resolution which openly called for President Assad to step down from power and for other UN members to sever ties with Syria. India was not in favour of demands for regime change but said that the international community has to send a united message to the Syrian parties to refrain from adopting a military approach and to resolve the crisis through a Syrian-led political process.⁵⁸ India also found that the text made scant mention of the role of the armed opposition which could set a 'dangerous trend'.⁵⁹

Meanwhile, Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon announced the resignation of the UN-League of Arab States Joint Special Envoy for the Syrian crisis, Kofi Annan. Annan on a separate occasion stated that the increasing militarization on the ground in Syria and the lack of unity in the Security Council had 'fundamentally changed the circumstances for the effective exercise' of his role.⁶⁰

In another development, all political actors and civil society in Guinea-Bissau were called upon by the UN Security Council to engage in consensual, inclusive and nationally-owned process to restore constitutional order in the country. The Council also reaffirmed the importance of the coordination of international efforts to address the crisis in the country and called on the Secretary-General to engage actively in the process.⁶¹

⁵⁷ "No radical group involved in violence: ABMSU", *The Assam Tribune*, August 4, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=aug0412/at044>

⁵⁸ "UN adopts resolution on Syria, India abstains", *Zeeneews.com*, August 04, 2012 at http://zeeneews.india.com/news/world/un-adopts-resolution-on-syria-india-abstains_791625.html

⁵⁹ "No mention of opposition violence in Syria resolution", *The Hindu*, August 05, 2012 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/article3728284.ece>

⁶⁰ "Kofi Annan resigns as UN-Arab League Joint Special Envoy for Syrian crisis", *UN News Centre*, August 02, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=42609&Cr=Syria&Cr1=>

⁶¹ "Security Council calls for consensus on restoring stability in Guinea-Bissau", *UN News Centre*, July 30, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=42590&Cr=bissau&Cr1=>

According to reports, the mandate of the joint UN-African Union peacekeeping force in Darfur (UNAMID) was extended for another year. On the same occasion, the Council also demanded that all parties to the conflict in the region immediately end violence and work towards a comprehensive peace settlement.⁶²

In other developments, voicing deep concern at the worsening humanitarian situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the UN Security Council demanded that the group of renegade soldiers known as M23 immediately cease efforts to destabilize the region. The Council also strongly condemned 'any and all outside support' to the M23 and demanded that all support to the armed group, including from outside countries cease immediately.⁶³

Indian economist Abhijit Banerjee was among the twenty six people named by the UN Secretary-General as members of a high-level panel to advise the UN on the global development agenda beyond 2015. The panel is expected to submit its report in the first half of 2013.⁶⁴

⁶² "Security Council extends mandate of UN-African Union Darfur peacekeepers", *UN News Centre*, July 31, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=42595&Cr=&Cr1=>

⁶³ "Security Council reiterates demand on renegade soldiers to cease hostilities in DR Congo", *UN News Centre*, August 02, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=42614&Cr=Democratic&Cr1=Congo>

⁶⁴ "Indian economist on UN panel on post-2016 agenda", *Hindustan Times*, August 01, 2012 at <http://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/Europe/Indian-economist-on-UN-panel-on-post-2015-agenda/Article1-906404.aspx>