

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. SOUTH ASIA

AFGHANISTAN

- **36 killed in suicide bomb attack in Afghanistan; General Petraeus: Fight against the Taliban have proved effective in most parts of Afghanistan; President Karzai invites Pakistan Prime Minister Gilani to Kabul**

Reports noted that at least 36 people have been killed in a suicide bombing on an army center in Northern Afghanistan. The Taliban have claimed responsibility for the attack. The Taliban have been warning Afghans not to allow their sons and brothers to join the country's security services.¹

However, top US commander in Afghanistan General David Petraeus has said that fight against the Taliban have proved effective in most parts of Afghanistan. Commending coalition force's efforts in Afghanistan, he expressed confidence and optimism about the operations and its progress.²

Meanwhile, the Afghan President Karzai has invited Pakistani Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani for a visit to Kabul. The invitation focuses on a combined strategy to tackle the terrorism issue for long lasting peace and stability in the region.³

PAKISTAN

- **Defeating Taliban is the best way to persuade Pakistan to do more against terrorist groups; Pakistan stages strong protest against recent US drone strikes, demands apology from US; Reports: Growing discord mars US-Pakistan relationship**

Reports noted that the Commander of US forces in Afghanistan, Gen. David Petraeus has pointed out that best way to persuade Pakistan to do more against terrorist groups is to defeat the Taliban in Afghanistan. He stated, "I think ... the way to influence Pakistan is to show that there can be a certain outcome in Afghanistan that means that there should be every effort to help their Afghan

¹ "Afghanistan 'suicide bombing' kills 36 at army centre", *BBC*, March 14 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12732607>

² "Fight against Taliban making progress: Petraeus", *Dawn*, March 16 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/03/16/fight-against-taliban-making-progress-petraeus.html>

³ "Karzai phones Gilani, invites him to visit Kabul", *Dawn*, March 17 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/03/17/karzai-phones-gilani-invites-him-to-visit-kabul.html>

neighbours and indeed to ensure that they do that on their side of the border as well,”⁴

However, Pakistan demanded an apology and explanation from the US over a drone attack in the North Waziristan area that killed around 40 people. Terming it as a “flagrant violation of human rights”, Pakistan Foreign Ministry spokesperson Tehmina Janjua condemned the drone strike. The drone hit a jirga of elderly tribal leaders.⁵

Meanwhile, reports noted that in a rare condemnation of a US drone attack by Pakistan Army Chief Gen Ashfaq Kayani and Washington’s dismissal of the same highlights increasing strained relations between US and Pakistan. Coupled along this is the public row over killing by CIA contractor Raymond Davis and his controversial release. Pakistan has also pulled out of a trilateral meeting between US-Afghanistan-Pakistan to be held in late March in Brussels. All these are evidence of a growing discord between the two allies which could prove ominous to war on terror and stability Afghanistan.⁶

BANGLADESH

- **Foreign Minister Dipu Moni visited the Bangladeshis who fled the Libyan unrest and were stranded in temporary camps at the border point of Al Salloum in Egypt; Equipments for the proposed Palatana Power Plant in Tripura will be transshipped through Ashuganj-Akhaura road soon; Bangladesh has sent 15 project proposals worth \$781 million under the \$1 billion credit line to the Indian Government for final consent; Bangladesh signed agreements with Canada; Robert O Blake, US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian affairs visits Bangladesh on a four-day visit**

Foreign Minister of Bangladesh Dipu Moni visited the Bangladeshis who fled the Libyan unrest and were stranded in temporary camps at the border point of Al Salloum in Egypt. Ambassador of Bangladesh in Egypt Mizanur Rahman, Foreign Ministry Director General (Africa) Md Wahidur Rahman and private secretary to the Foreign Minister Jishnu Roy Choudhury accompanied her. Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Mijarul Quayes is now also visiting Egypt and Tunisia to coordinate the repatriation and held meetings with the senior

⁴ “US to focus on Afghanistan to make Pakistan do more”, Dawn, March 16 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/03/16/us-to-focus-on-afghanistan-to-make-pakistan-do-more.html>

⁵ “Pakistan demands US apology for drone strike, Dawn, March 18 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/03/18/pakistan-demands-us-apology-for-drone-strike.html>

⁶ “US-Pakistan relationship increasingly strained, Dawn, March 18 at <http://www.dawn.com/2011/03/18/us-pakistan-relationship-increasingly-strained.html>

government officials of both the countries so that the countries continue their support to temporary shelters the Bangladeshis from Libya.⁷

Reports noted that two ships carrying eight heavy equipments for the proposed Palatana Power Plant in Indian state of Tripura have arrived at Ashuganj River Port from Kolkata. The equipment will be transshipped to the Tripura's state capital Agartala by Ashuganj-Akhaura road. However, the transit will take some time as the road and the terminal at Ashuganj port require some repair work to carry such heavy equipment. Foundation of the 4,500 crore rupee Palatana Power Plant was laid back in 2005 but a major roadblock had been the transport of heavy equipment from Kolkata to Tripura. The problem was solved when Bangladesh agreed to allow transshipment through an Indo-Bangla accord during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to New Delhi in January last year.⁸

Meanwhile, Bangladesh has sent 15 project proposals, mostly related to rail and infrastructure, worth \$781 million under the \$1 billion credit line (signed in August last year) to the Indian government for final consent through the High Commission in Dhaka between February 28 and March 16.⁹

In other developments, Bangladesh went into agreements with Canada to boost cooperation in trade and services, education, agriculture and research during a three days visit of Premier of Saskatchewan Province of Canada Brad Wall to Bangladesh.¹⁰ While Robert O Blake, US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian affairs arrived in Dhaka on a four-day visit on March 19, 2011.¹¹

SRI LANKA

- **The Sri Lankan Government grants permission for Tamil Nadu fishermen to visit the Katchathivu Island on St. Anthony's festival; Sri Lanka suspends the import of S-11 Diesel Multiple Units (DMUs) from India; UNHCR takes the responsibility of the Tamil asylum seekers; 310,588 mines have been cleared; Consortium: 2000 Indian trawlers encroach into Sri Lankan waters**

⁷ "Dipu Moni visits camps in Egypt", *The Daily Star*, March 14, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=177608>

⁸ "Equipment from India arrives: Road route not ready yet to take those to power plant site", *The Daily Star*, March 14, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=177610>

⁹ Karim Byron, Rejaul, "15 project proposals sent", *The Daily Star*, March 20, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=178440>

¹⁰ "Trade deal with Canada", *The Daily Star*, March 15, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=177710>

¹¹ "Khaleda, Blake share same view", *The Daily Star*, March 20, 2011 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=178430>

The Sri Lankan government has relaxed its restrictions and granted permission for Tamil Nadu fishermen to visit the Katchathivu Island on March 19 and 20 to participate in the St. Anthony's festival in the island.¹²

Reports noted that Sri Lanka ordered twenty S-11 power sets from India for Southern Railway Line and three of them were brought to Sri Lanka. However, defects were reported when they were launched on the rail tracks. Consequently, Sri Lanka Minister of Transport Kumar Welgama has suspended the import of the rest of the order of S-11 Diesel Multiple Units (DMUs) from India.¹³

According reports, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has taken the responsibility of the Tamil asylum seekers who fled the country seeking asylum in Australia or to European countries.¹⁴

According to Military Spokesman Major General Ubaya Medawala a total of 310,588 mines have been cleared and defused by the Army Field Engineers, in a land area of 3696 square kilometres by soldiers using mechanical and manual methods.¹⁵

In other developments, the Consortium of Fishermen in the Northern Province and the fishermen's associations in the South that had come together in fighting against the encroachment of Indian fishermen claimed that approximately 2000 Indian trawlers come into Sri Lankan waters every week resulting in 50 percent revenue and production losses.¹⁶

BHUTAN

- **NDFB attacks BSF personnel along the Assam-Bhutan border; Bhutan Premier Thinley visits Pakistan, emphasizes on facilitating strong intra-regional trade ties**

¹² "SL relaxes laws for TN fishermen", *The Daily Mirror*, March 14, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/news/38090.html>

¹³ "Sri Lanka suspends import of S-11 power sets from India", *Colombo Page*, March 14, 2011 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_11/Mar14_1300113189KA.php

¹⁴ Murshideen, B. M., "UNHCR takes responsibility of asylum seekers", *The Daily Mirror*, March 17, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/news/38462.html>

¹⁵ "Demining continues", *The Daily Mirror*, March 17, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/news/38465.html>

¹⁶ "Lanka loses 50% to Indian fishermen, says consortium", *The Daily Mirror*, March 16, 2011 at <http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/news/38350.html>

Reports noted that three BSF Jawans were killed and seven others injured in an ambush at Ultapani Reserve Forest area, situated along the Assam-Bhutan border. NDFB, anti talk faction took the responsibly of the ambush.¹⁷

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Thinley paid a visit to Pakistan from March 18-20, 2011. The visit was a response to the request made by Prime Minister Gilani. The Prime Minister emphasized regional cooperation under SAFTA, and particularly flagged off the need to promote intra-regional trade. The Prime Minister also announced that Bhutan would be hosting a conference of home ministers in August 2011 to discuss the threats posed by terrorism to the South Asian region.¹⁸

At the Indo-Bhutan bilateral level, NHPC Ltd has signed an Agreement with Mangdechhu Hydroelectric Project Authority, for providing engineering and design consultancy services for Mangdechhu Hydroelectric Project (720 MW) in Bhutan.¹⁹

In other developments, India's Ministry of Defence would now be reviewing the procedures for issuing Non-Service Pattern (NSP) weapons to army personnel. The decision has been taken in view of the findings, which claim that some of the weapons were illegally sold to unscrupulous elements. The review decision will particularly be applied to officers posted in Bhutan.²⁰

MALDIVES

- **Maldives welcomes UNSC resolution on no fly zone over Libya; President Nasheed discusses the possibility of assistance and support from the World Bank for future programmes; Maldives mourns widespread loss of life and huge devastation in Japan caused by earthquake and subsequent tsunami; High Commissioner of Singapore accredited to the Maldives meets President Nasheed**

¹⁷ "Three BSF killed and 7 injured in ambush by NDFB, " *Times of Assam*, March 14, 2011, at: <http://www.timesofassam.com/headlines/three-bsf-killed-and-7-injured-in-ambush-by-ndfb>

¹⁸ "Bhutanese PM due on March 18," *Associated Press of Pakistan*, March 17, 2011. at: http://ftpapp.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=134031&Itemid=1 and "Bhutanese PM calls for joint efforts for regional uplift, " *The News International*, March 21, 2011, at <http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=4772&Cat=13&dt=3/21/2011>:

¹⁹ "NHPC to provide consultancy services for 720 MW power project in Bhutan," *Equity Bulls*, March 14, 2011, at: http://www.equitybulls.com/admin/news2006/news_det.asp?id=88727

²⁰ "Personal weapons to army personnel under scrutiny," SC told, MSN News, March 14, 2011, at <http://news.in.msn.com/national/article.aspx?cp-documentid=5022683>

The Maldives has welcomed the United Nations Security Resolution 1973 which imposes a no-fly zone over Libya.²¹ Meanwhile, President Mohamed Nasheed met with World Bank Country Director for the Maldives and Sri Lanka Diarietoy Gaye on March 20, 2011 and discussed World Bank funded development programmes in the Maldives as the possibility of assistance and support from the Bank for future programmes.²²

Reports noted that Maldives national flag was flown at half mast for three days from March 16-19, 2011 in mourning the widespread loss of life and huge devastation in Japan caused by earthquake and subsequent tsunami.²³ The Maldives also held a series of events such as the launch of a 24-hour fundraising telethon, a children's march, entertainment and food tents near the tsunami monument to raise money for victims of the devastating earthquake and tsunami that struck Japan last weekend. Both Dhiraagu and Wataniya have launched an SMS donation service as well.²⁴

In other developments, High Commissioner of Singapore accredited to the Maldives Dr. Chua Yong Hai has paid a courtesy call on President Mohamed Nasheed on March 16, 2011. During the meeting, discussions were focused on advancing the close relations that exist between the Maldives and Singapore. The meeting was also attended by Special Envoy of the President Ibrahim Hussain Zaki and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Ahmed Naseem.²⁵

B. EAST ASIA

CHINA

- **Chinese Defense Minister Liang Guanglie attends SCO Defense Ministers' Meeting; Guanglie meets Uzbek Defence Minister; An important military-legal document released; "Peace 11" conducts actual-troop naval drills**

²¹ "Maldives Welcomes UN Security Council Resolution Imposing Libya No Fly Zone", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, March 18, 2011 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=4963>

²² "President Meets World Bank Country Director", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, March 20, 2011 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=4973>

²³ "Maldives National Flag to Fly at Half Mast in Mourning the Widespread Loss of Life and Devastation in Japan", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, March 15, 2011 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=4947>.

²⁴ "Maldives holds events to raise funds for Japanese earthquake victims", *Minivan News*, March 19, 2011 at <http://minivannews.com/category/news-in-brief>.

²⁵ "Singaporean High Commissioner Pays Courtesy Call on President", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, March 16, 2011 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=4950>

Chinese Defense Minister Liang Guanglie has recently declared that China was willing to promote military cooperation with the other five member countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. He was addressing the one-day SCO Defense Ministers' meeting on 17 March 2011. On this occasion, he said that the SCO contributed a lot to maintain regional security and stability and boost common development and prosperity of the SCO member countries.²⁶

Chinese Defense Minister Liang Guanglie visited Uzbekistan last week. He met Uzbek President Islam Karimov and held talks with him on 18 March 2011. The purpose of his visit to Uzbekistan was to deepen bilateral relations. In fact, the media learnt that Liang's visit was the first by a Chinese defense minister since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Uzbekistan and China in 1992.²⁷

Recently, the Central Committee for Comprehensive Management of Public Security of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the General Political Department of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) jointly issued a document regarding "military-related legal rights protection work into the assessment of comprehensive management objectives of public security". It deals with preventing and cracking down on military-related crimes, handling problems threatening national defense security, safeguarding legitimate rights and interests of the military servicemen and their dependents, mass-protecting and mass-managing of important military targets, environmental harnessing around military barracks, and establishment and improvement of organizational structure and working mechanism in this regard.²⁸

In other developments, the "Peace 11" multi-national maritime joint exercise carried out actual-troop drills at Karachi air port on 11 March 2011. The Chinese Navy along with Pakistani and other navies participated in this drill. This drill consisted of transitions of ship formation, guarding against attacking small targets at high speed, lateral ship-to-ship replenishment in navigation, primary gun fire at the sea, maritime coordinated anti-ship attack, air defense of ship formation, airborne checking and capturing suspects, helicopters' cross landing on ships, joint anti-submarine operations, and searching and rescuing personnel dropping in the sea. Han Xiaohu, commander of the Chinese Naval ships, was

²⁶ "Defense minister says China hopes to boost military cooperation with SCO members", *PLA Daily* (Online), 18 March 2011, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2011-03/18/content_4405832.htm.

²⁷ "Uzbek president meets Chinese defense minister on relations", *PLA Daily* (Online), 19 March 2011, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2011-03/19/content_4406743.htm.

²⁸ "Military-related legal rights safeguarding included into national objective assessment system", *PLA Daily* (Online), 18 March 2011, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2011-03/18/content_4406413.htm.

quoted as saying about the success of the drill, “This is what we want, and our efforts have paid off”.²⁹

SOUTHEAST ASIA

- **Thailand, Vietnam pledge to cooperate in ICT; Thai coalition government survives no-confidence vote; Myanmar Army set to launch newspaper; Jakarta on alert after bomb blast; Southeast Asia’s biggest IPO hit by Japan crisis**

The Information and Communications Technology (ICT) business giants of Thailand and Vietnam met at Thailand Software Park in Bangkok. The 30 representatives discussed the possibilities of further cooperation, while appreciating the fact that Vietnam’s ICT sector has gained remarkable achievements, recording a turnover of 6.17 billion US \$ in 2009, an increase of 18.14 percent over last year. Thailand, on the other hand, already has a strong ICT industry.³⁰

In a significant development, the Thai coalition government has survived the no-confidence vote on 19 March, 2011. Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva won by 249 to 184 votes. Other eight ministers also won by similar margins. The developments are seen as a prelude to the general elections expected to be held in late June to early July this year.³¹

According to the official sources, the army in Myanmar is launching a daily newspaper by the end of March 2011. The newspaper is expected to focus on military affairs. The upcoming newspaper ‘Myawaddy’ will be in Burmese language, and will be the fourth major daily of Myanmar.³²

According to reports, a bomb exploded on the outskirts of Jakarta on 18 March, 2011, putting the Indonesian capital on alert. The device was found in Cibibur area, and followed a series of ‘book bombs’ blamed on an Islamist group. The attacks are targeted both against the civilians and moderate Islamic leaders.³³

²⁹ “Peace 11” multi-national naval joint exercise enters maritime actual-troop drill phrase”, *PLA Daily* (Online), 14 March 2011, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2011-03/14/content_4403226.htm.

³⁰ Vietnam, Thailand step up cooperation in ICT, *VOV News*, 20 March, 2011, <http://english.vovnews.vn/Home/Vietnam-Thailand-step-up-cooperation-in-ICT/20113/124929.vov>

³¹ Thai government survives no-confidence vote, *The Hindu*, 19 March, 2011

³² Myanmar’s army launching newspaper, *Straits Times*, 18 March, 2011, http://www.straitstimes.com/BreakingNews/SEAsia/Story/STIStory_646661.htmlhttp://www.straitstimes.com/BreakingNews/SEAsia/Story/STIStory_646661.html

³³ Latest bomb blast puts Indonesia capital on alert, *Asia One News*, 18 March, 2011, <http://news.asiaone.com/News/Latest%2BNews/Asia/Story/A1Story20110318-268892.html>

In other developments in the region, shares in the China port unit of Hutchison Whampoa fell six percent on their debut in Singapore. Experts and media are linking it with the disastrous events of Japan. The initial public offering for Hutchison Port Holdings has raised \$ 5.5 billion, making it the region's biggest and the world largest so far in 2011. According to reports, the company closed at \$ 0.950 a share on the Singapore Exchange, down around 6 percent from its IPO price.³⁴

JAPAN

- **Japan backs U.N.-mandated attacks on Libya; Pentagon sends hazardous-materials experts and surveillance drone to aid Japan; 116 nations and 28 international organizations offer help to quake-hit Japan; Japanese suggested to stay indoors following radiation leak**

On the international front, Japan has backed attacks on Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi's troops by multilateral forces. Japan also condemned the Libyan authorities for continued violence against citizens. The Japanese foreign minister said that "The Japanese government...backs U.N. member states taking measures in line with U.N. Security Council Resolution 1973".³⁵

In other developments the Defense Secretary Robert Gates has authorized up to \$35 million in humanitarian assistance to Japan from the Pentagon. It is also reported that about 17,000 U.S. military personnel are involved in relief operations. In addition the U.S. military has also sent a nine-member team of hazardous-materials experts, a sophisticated unmanned surveillance craft, which will be used to help Japan with its nuclear crisis, a Pentagon spokesman said.³⁶

Meanwhile a total of 116 countries and regions, and 28 international organizations have offered assistance to Japan. On the other hand, Japanese diplomatic missions abroad have started to raise funds to help survivors of the disaster, according to the ministry.³⁷

In other developments, reports noted that Japan's Prime Minister Naoto Kan recommended at around 11:00 JST on March 15 that Japanese people should

³⁴ SE Asia's biggest IPO hit by Japan crisis, *Daily Times*, 19 March, 2011, http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2011\03\19\story_19-3-2011_pg5_19

³⁵ "Japan backs U.N.-mandated attacks on Libya" *Associated Press*, March 20, 2011 at http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9M2MGLO0&show_article=1

³⁶ "Pentagon sends hazardous-materials experts and surveillance drone to aid Japan" *LA Times*, March 17, 2011 at <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/sc-dc-0318-japan-us-military-20110317.0.5032360.story>

³⁷ "116 nations, regions offer help to quake-hit Japan" *Associated Press*, March 17, 2011 at http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9M0DMI80&show_article=1

remain indoors after two explosions and a fire at the Fukushima No 1 Plant following the quake and tsunami which knocked out cooling system. It is reported that the crisis at the Fukushima No.1 plant, which is about 250 kilometers Northeast of Tokyo, has now spread to four out of its six reactors.³⁸

C. CENTRAL ASIA & RUSSIA

CENTRAL ASIA

- **Defense Ministers from SCO states adopt two-year security agreement; CSTO says NATO pull out will destabilizing Central Asia; Uzbekistan opposes CASA-1000 project; Pakistan Prime Minister visits Bishkek; President Nazarbayev meets Russian President; Kyrgyz Prime Minister visits Moscow**

Defense ministers from the Kazakh, Tajik, Uzbek, Kyrgyz, Chinese and Russian of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) adopted a two-year security cooperation plan 2012-2013 during a Defence Ministers' of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) meeting in the Kazakh capital Astana on March 17. Fighting terrorism and raising trust between member states' security forces were among top security matters under discussion apart from strengthening security and stability among member states, to combat extremism, separatism, and drug trafficking, and to develop economic and energy cooperation, along with boosting scientific and cultural dialogue.³⁹ An agreement was reached between Kazakh Defense Minister Adilbek Dzhaksybekov and Kyrgyz Defense Minister Abibilla Kudaiberdiyev during this meeting in Astana wherein Kazakhstan would provide free military training and technical support to Kyrgyzstan.⁴⁰

Meanwhile, Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) Secretary-General Nikolai Bordyuzha was in Tajikistan on March 14 for a week's meetings on regional security and discussion on security concerns in Afghanistan. During this time, he stressed that CSTO must take concerted measures to counteract the flow of drugs and militants from Afghanistan to ensure stability in Central Asian

³⁸ "Japanese suggested to stay indoors following radiation leak" *The Nation*, March 15, 2011 at <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/2011/03/15/headlines/Japanese-suggested-to-stay-indoors-following-radia-30150927.html>

³⁹ "Shanghai Pact states sign two-year security agreement, *Central Asia Newswire*, March 17, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Regional/Shanghai-Pact-states-sign-two-year-security-agreement/viewstory.aspx?id=3565>

⁴⁰ "Kazakhstan to give Kyrgyzstan free military training, technical support, *Central Asia Newswire*, March 18, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Regional/Kazakhstan-to-give-Kyrgyzstan-free-military-trainingnbsptechnical-support/viewstory.aspx?id=3574>

nations.⁴¹ Bordyuzha told senior envoys of the group's member nations meeting in Dushanbe that withdrawing NATO troops from Afghanistan will risk destabilizing the Central Asian republics. Afghanistan and Central Asian security, drug trafficking and terrorism, topped the agenda of the CSTO's two-day conference.⁴²

However, in a letter obtained by the Dawn news agency in Pakistan, the Uzbek ambassador to Pakistan expressed his displeasure over the Tajik plan to build a 466-mile transmission line to Pakistan to provide it with much-needed electricity and said it violates international agreements. Uzbekistan's opposition to the electricity deal is rooted in its opposition to Tajikistan's planned completion of its massive Roghun dam. The electricity Tajikistan would send to Pakistan and Afghanistan under what is known as the CASA-1000 project would be drawn from the Roghun dam's hydropower plant.⁴³ While dismissing Uzbekistan's criticism of the project, Kyrgyzstan intends to uphold its end of the CASA-1000 project to supply energy to Afghanistan and Pakistan, but acknowledges the obstacles to completing the project.⁴⁴

Meanwhile, on March 16, Kyrgyz Prime Minister Atambaev agreed with his visiting Pakistani counterpart Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani to revive a four-country transit trade pact and authorize a bilateral military training plan. The Pakistani premier promised Atambaev to remove all obstacles standing in the way of the Quadrilateral Traffic in Transit Agreement (QTTA), agreed between Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Kazakhstan and China in 2004. The agreement, signed by the Defense Secretaries of both countries, authorized their defense ministries to set up training programs of Kyrgyz military personnel by Pakistani trainers. Both agreed to establish a Joint Business Council to smooth interaction between their Chambers of Commerce and Industries; to exchange parliamentary delegations at regular intervals; to boost cooperation in trade, communication and infrastructure; to press for direct air links between their capital cities; and other

⁴¹ 'CSTO chief in Tajikistan to discuss regional, Afghan security, *Central Asia Newswire*, March 14, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Tajikistan/CSTOnbspchief-in-Tajikistan-to-discuss-regional-Afghan-security/viewstory.aspx?id=3525>

⁴² 'CSTO: NATO forces must remain in Afghanistan for Central Asian stability, *Central Asia Newswire*, March 18, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Regional/CSTO-NATO-forces-must-remain-in-Afghanistan-for-Central-Asian-stability/viewstory.aspx?id=3575>

⁴³ 'Uzbekistan opposes Tajikistan-to-Pakistan electricity deal, *Central Asia Newswire*, March 14, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Regional/Uzbekistan-opposes-Tajikistan-to-Pakistan-electricity-deal/viewstory.aspx?id=3535>

⁴⁴ 'Kyrgyzstan reaffirms commitment to CASA-1000 project, *Central Asia Newswire*, March 17, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Regional/Kyrgyzstan-reaffirms-commitment-to-CASA-1000-project/viewstory.aspx?id=3564>

agreements were on renewable energy, cargo transit, terrorism and arms and drugs trafficking.⁴⁵

In other developments in the region, Kazakh President Nazarbayev met with his Russian counterpart on March 17 to discuss and review the prospects for economic cooperation between the two states, particularly in the energy sector, as well as current issues on the regional and international agenda. Separately the two leaders discussed issues related to the development of the Customs Union of Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus and the next steps towards shaping a common economic space of the three countries.⁴⁶ The Kazakh leader also announced that Russia and Kazakhstan will discontinue customs checks at their border crossings starting on July 1. They discussed a wide range of issues: the status of several joint projects ranging from space exploration to international highway construction; Russia's use of the Baikonur launch site in Kazakhstan; joint venture to build Russia's own space complex Baiterek; negotiated the creation and launch of a KazSat-2 telecoms satellite; joint use of the GLONASS global navigation satellite system; on activities of the bilateral venture fund set up for the development of projects in the field of nanotechnology; and on plans to build an international highway linking Europe with China via Central Asia.⁴⁷ In the meanwhile Kyrgyz Prime Minister Almazbek Atambayev met his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin to discuss eliminating fuel taxes and enhancing economic cooperation on 18th March in Moscow. The agreement wherein Russia had earlier agreed to lift excise taxes on gas exported to Kyrgyzstan was to come into effect on February 15 has been delayed. Kyrgyzstan's debt to Russia was also discussed by the prime ministers.⁴⁸

RUSSIA

- **Russia regrets western states' military intervention in Libya; Russia seeks to improve economic ties with Turkey, discusses range of issues; US Secretary of Defence Robert Gates visits Russia in an attempt to consolidate the gains in US-Russia ties; US may share Missile Defence launch data; Russian navy plans to commission up-to 10 nuclear power**

⁴⁵ 'Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan revive transit pact, ink military training plan', *Central Asia Newswire*, March 16, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Kyrgyzstan/Kyrgyzstan-Pakistan-revive-transit-pact-ink-military-trainingnbspplannbsp/viewstory.aspx?id=3553>

⁴⁶ 'Meeting with President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev', *President of Russia*, March 18, 2011 at <http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/1919>

⁴⁷ 'Kazakh, Russian presidents meet in Moscow', *Central Asia Newswire*, March 17, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Kazakhstan/Kazakh-Russian-presidents-meet-in-Moscow/viewstory.aspx?id=3570>

⁴⁸ 'Kyrgyz, Russian PMs talk energy taxes in Moscow', *Central Asia Newswire*, March 18, 2011 at <http://centralasianewswire.com/Kyrgyzstan/Kyrgyz-Russian-PMs-talk-energy-taxes-in-Moscow/viewstory.aspx?id=3576>

submarines by 2020; Russian military will get 36 ICBM's and 2 missile submarines in 2011; Reports: Disagreement between Rosneft and China National Petroleum Cooperation over the price of Russian oil; Ruling 'United Russia' wins regional polls

Russia has regretted the continued western military action on Libya. This comes in the backdrop of Russia abstaining rather than vetoing the UN proposal to initiate military action and imposition of a no-fly zone in the beleaguered nation of Libya. Russia has called on the international military force striking Libyan targets to stop the "indiscriminate" use of force as it has the potential to kill innocent civilians.⁴⁹

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited Russia and presented Russian President Dmitry Medvedev a copy of the treaty on friendship and fraternity between the two states and a stamp issued by Turkish authorities to mark 90 anniversary of the document, recalling that on March 16, 1921 Soviet Russia recognized the Republic of Turkey and gave security guarantees of the joint borders. On March 16, 1921, the Treaty of Moscow was signed.⁵⁰ During Erdogan's visit, the second meeting of the High-Level Cooperation Council between Russia and Turkey -- an intergovernmental cooperation mechanism -- was held with Erdogan and Medvedev co-presiding the meeting. Russia and Turkey agreed last year during Medvedev's May visit to launch the High-Level Cooperation Council and held the first meeting then. According to agreement, Medvedev and Erdogan will meet annually to review ties. Reports noted that last year, bilateral trade volume with Russia rose to \$26.6 billion, representing an annual increase of 15.7 percent. Turkish exports to Russia surged 44.7 percent last year to \$4.6 billion, while imports -- consisting mostly of energy items -- advanced 11 percent to \$21.5 billion. In January this year, Turkish exports to Russia rose to \$420 million, an increase of more than 69 percent compared to January 2010. Imports rose 13.9 percent to \$2 billion. Russia currently hosts nearly 2,000 Turkish businesses. Companies from Turkey have invested \$7 billion in Russia. Turkish contractors have completed 1,252 projects in the country worth \$33.8 billion.⁵¹

⁴⁹ "Russia says regrets West's military action in Libya", Reuters, March 19, 2011, <http://in.reuters.com/article/2011/03/19/libya-russia-idINLDE72I03920110319>

⁵⁰ "Russia, Turkey to take final step in visa-free regime", News.AZ, March 15, 2011, <http://news.az/articles/turkey/32912>

⁵¹ "Turkey to strengthen business ties with Russia", Hurriyet Daily News and Economic Review, March 13, 2011, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=turkey-strengthens-business-ties-with-russia-2011-03-13>

Meanwhile both the leaders have termed nuclear energy safe and promised to press ahead with the construction of a Russian atomic power plant in Turkey despite Japan's nuclear crisis. "With these conditions met, nuclear power is safe and more and more beneficial for mankind," Medvedev said. Russia and Turkey signed a \$20 billion agreement last year for the construction of a four reactor power plant in Akkuyu in the south of the country, some 25 from an active fault line.⁵² Both the sides have also agreed to work out the modalities of introducing a visa free regime between the two countries.⁵³

Reports noted that Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan's trip to Moscow focused primarily on 'energy' but the two sides failed to achieve a breakthrough on gas cooperation. Meanwhile, according to other reports, Russia and Turkey are engaged in close cooperation to solve the Caucasus problem. Turkish Prime Minister was quoted as saying "we have also taken a step to launch an initiative to bring together Russia, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia under a Caucasus cooperation council."⁵⁴

The US Secretary of Defence Robert Gates who was on an official visit to Moscow, praised bilateral efforts what he called the "extraordinary" progress" that the Russia and the United States have made in improving their ties in recent years. He pointed to Russia's cooperation with the U.S.-led coalition in the Afghan war and its support of United Nations Security Council resolutions targeting North Korea and Iran. He also noted that Russia had abstained in last week's Security Council vote on military intervention in Libya, effectively allowing for the allied assault on Muammar Qaddafi's regime to go forward.⁵⁵ However, Secretary Gates noted that U.S. and Russian cooperation on missile defense, long an irritant between the two nations, may include exchanging launch information and setting up a joint data center. The U.S. may also reveal more information about its missile-defense plans and exercises and conduct a joint analysis with Russia to determine how the two nations can collaborate in the future.⁵⁶

⁵² "Turkey, Russia vow to build new nuclear plant", Radio Free Europe, March 16, 2011, http://www.rferl.org/content/russia_turkey_to_build_nuclear_plant/2340411.html

⁵³ "Russia, Turkey to take final step in visa-free regime", Today's Zaman, March 15, 2011, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-238220-russia-turkey-to-take-final-step-in-visa-free-regime.html>

⁵⁴ "Russia, Turkey working together to solve Caucasus issues", ArmenianDiaspora.com, March 16, 2011, <http://www.armeniandiaspora.com/showthread.php?253487-ANKARA-Russia-Turkey-Working-Together-To-Solve-Caucasus-Issues-T>

⁵⁵ "US Defense Chief Gates arrives in Russia, praises ties with Moscow", Radio Free Europe, March 21, 2011, http://www.rferl.org/content/gates_in_russia/2344620.html

⁵⁶ V Gienger, "Russia, US may share missile-defense launch data, Gate says", Bloomberg, March 21, 2011, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-03-21/russia-u-s-may-share-missile-defense-launch-data-gates-says.html>

Reports noted that as part of the major defence modernization programme, the Russian navy is planning to induct up-to 10 Graney class nuclear-powered attack submarines by 2020.⁵⁷ The first Graney class submarine will enter service with the Navy by the end of 2011. The second vessel, the Kazan, is being built at the Sevmash shipyard in the northern Russian city of Severodvinsk. The construction of the third Graney class submarine will begin in 2011. Graney class nuclear submarines are designed to launch a variety of long-range cruise missiles (up to 3,100 miles or 5,000 km), with conventional or nuclear warheads, and effectively engage submarines, surface warships and land-based targets. The submarine's armament includes 24 cruise missiles and eight torpedo launchers, as well as mines and anti-ship missiles.

According to reports, under the defence modernization programme, the Russian Defence Ministry will buy 36 strategic ballistic missiles, two strategic missile submarines and 20 strategic cruise missiles in the year 2011. Over 19 trillion rubles (\$665 billion) has been set aside for the state arms procurement program. The budget will also cover spacecraft (5), warplanes (35), helicopters (109), missile defense systems (21), multirole nuclear powered submarines (3) and a surface warship.⁵⁸

However, Russia's Rosneft and China's National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) have bickered over the price of Russian oil supplied under the 2009 contract. The disagreement runs contrary to the intergovernmental oil deal signed in February 2009 when China agreed to lend \$25 billion to Rosneft and pipeline monopoly Transneft in exchange for long-term oil supplies. Rosneft used the funds to refinance debt and fund its investment program, while Transneft completed the pipeline link to China and used the remaining cash for current operations. Rosneft believes China unilaterally cut the price of the crude supplied, causing the state oil producer a shortfall of \$40 million in January, the source said.⁵⁹

In other developments, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's ruling party United Russia has swept local elections held on March 13. The vote is seen as a test run indicating voters' leanings in the impending parliamentary and presidential elections, scheduled for December 2011 and March 2012, respectively. Opposition figures, however, say the vote was marred by fraud, including ballot stuffing and multiple voting -- and the authorities' ability to utilize the so-called "administrative resources" to maximize the party's vote.

⁵⁷ "Russian navy to receive 10 Graney class attack subs by 2020", Ria Novosti, March 19, 2011, http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20110319/163086398.html

⁵⁸ "Russian military to buy 36 ICBM's, 2 missile subs in 2011", Ria Novosti, March 18, 2011, http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20110318/163075432.html

⁵⁹ "Rosneft-CNPC conflict threatens Russia's largest oil supply deal", Kommersant, March 18, 2011, <http://en.rian.ru/papers/20110318/163078366.html>

United Russia won a combined total of 68 percent of seats in regional legislatures, down from the 76 percent it gained in regional elections last October. They also won elections to city legislatures, which were held in 10 provincial capitals.⁶⁰

D. WEST ASIA

IRAN

- **Iran calls Saudi Arabia and the UAE to quit Bahrain ‘immediately’; Hillary Clinton: Iran undermining peace and stability in the gulf region**

The National Security and Foreign Policy Commission of Iranian Parliament issued a statement in support of the Bahraini people and called Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to leave Bahrain's soil ‘immediately’. The statement issued by commission stressed that “the oppressed people of Bahrain are a part of the Islamic world and the Islamic Republic of Iran feels obligated to support them.” They also expressed that the United States is definitely responsible for the murder of Bahrainis by ordering its “regional mercenaries” to invade the country and repress peaceful protesters.⁶¹

However, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton blamed Iran of undermining peace and stability in the Gulf by trying to advance its agenda in neighbouring countries. She also added that “the United States has an abiding commitment to Gulf security... and a top priority is working together with our partners on our shared concerns about Iranian behaviour in the region.”⁶²

IRAQ

- **Head of provincial council of Kirkuk quits office due to lack of solutions for the same**

According to reports, Provincial Council head of Iraq’s oil-rich Kirkuk province Rizkar Ali Hama has resigned, saying that he was frustrated at being caught in

⁶⁰ E Barry, “Russia’s ruling party stumbles in regional elections”, The New York Times, March 14, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/15/world/europe/15russia.html?_r=1&ref=russia

⁶¹ “Iran call on Saudi Arabia, UAE to leave Bahrain ‘immediately,’” *Tehran Times*, March 17, 2011, at http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=237697

⁶² “Clinton says Iran undermining Gulf stability,” *Khaleej Times*, March 19, 2011, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2011/March/middleeast_March3_51.xml§ion=middleeast

the middle of a continuing impasse between the central government and the autonomous Kurdish region. He said that he quitted over a "lack of solutions for Kirkuk," a multi-ethnic province of Arabs, Kurds and Turkmen that is at the centre of a dispute between the Baghdad government and autonomous Kurdistan. The Provincial Governor, Abdul Rahman Mustapha also indicated that he would also step down over the next few days for the same reason. Both officials are ethnic Kurds. Officials in Kurdistan wish to incorporate Kirkuk into their own autonomous region, but it is also claimed by the central government in Baghdad.⁶³

LIBYA, YEMEN, BAHRAIN

- **UN approves no-fly zone over Libya; Western forces launch air attack; 47 people killed in Saana, Yemen declares 'state of emergency'; Bahrain declares state of emergency**

The United Nations Security Council voted on March 17 to impose a no-fly zone over Libya and authorize "all necessary measures" to protect civilians from attacks by Muammar Gaddafi's forces. The UN vote paved the way for possible international air strikes on Gaddafi's advancing military and reflected the past week's swift reversal of the situation in Libya, where once-confident rebels are now in danger of being obliterated by an overpowering pro-Qaddafi force using rockets, artillery, tanks, warplanes. That force has advanced along the Mediterranean coast aiming to recapture the rebel-held eastern half of Libya. The resolution establishes "a ban on all flights in the airspace of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in order to help protect civilians." It also authorizes UN member states to take "all necessary measures ... to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, including Benghazi, while excluding a foreign occupation force of any form on any part of Libyan territory."⁶⁴

The United States in a coalition with Britain, France, Italy and Canada among others have launched air strikes on Libya on March 19. The allied forces launched a second wave of air strikes on March 20 as officials in Tripoli said a missile intended to kill Muammar Gaddafi had destroyed a building in his fortified compound. Government Spokesman Musa Ibrahim has stated that "It was a barbaric bombing." Earlier on March 19, the first air strikes halted the

⁶³ "Iraqi official quits over Kirkuk dispute," *Khaleej Times*, March 16, 2011, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2011/March/middleeast_March256.xml§ion=middleeast

⁶⁴ "UN approves no-fly zone over Libya; Qaddafi defiant", *Arab News*, March 18, 2011, at <http://arabnews.com/middleeast/article320890.ece>

advance of Gaddafi's forces on the rebel-held eastern city of Benghazi and had targeted Libya's air defenses in order to let Western warplanes patrol the skies of Libya. The second wave of Western air strikes also hit Gaddafi's troops around Ajdabiyah, a strategic town in the barren, scrub of east Libya that rebels aim to retake and where their fighters said they need more help to take the fight to the enemy.⁶⁵

However, Yemen's President declared a state of emergency on March 18 after many protesters were killed at an anti-government rally, and has alleged that armed groups were behind the violence.⁶⁶ The announcement will give the government the ability to restrict people's rights and spy on their networks according to a senior government official. "The country is witnessing a real crisis, and the state of emergency is the only option in ensuring that Yemen can be safe," a senior Interior Ministry official said. Legal attorney Hussein Al-Mashdali, however, said that the calling for a state of emergency is not constitutional because a state of emergency law does not exist. President Saleh has ordered that a fact finding committee be made up to investigate today's killings and report back to the government within days.⁶⁷

President Ali Abdullah Saleh sacked the government on March 20 and later reappointed it as a caretaker government until a new government is formed. The decision included ordering the government to manage the ordinary public affairs but there were no new appointments. It came amid the escalating protests demanding the ouster of the regime across the republic. The move came after collective resignations of officials including ministers, ambassadors and other senior officials from their posts and from the General People's Congress, the ruling party.⁶⁸

Meanwhile, in a clash between the protesters and the security forces, 47 people were killed and more than hundred injured in the capital Saana. It has been alleged that during the shootings, a governmental helicopter was patrolling the area of the protests for more than ten minutes. The government on its part has denied the involvement of security forces in the attack against the protesters.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ "Western planes hit Gaddafi compound, Tripoli says" *Asharq al Awsat*, March 21, 2011, at <http://www.aawsat.com/english/news.asp?section=1&id=24583>

⁶⁶ "Yemen declares 'state of emergency'", *Khaleej Times*, March 19 2011, at http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle09.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2011/March/middleeast_March_335.xml§ion=middleeast

⁶⁷ "State of Emergency Announced in Yemen; Death Toll Rises to Forty Seven", *Yemen Post*, March 19, 2011, at <http://www.yemenpost.net/Detail123456789.aspx?ID=100&SubID=3296&MainCat=3>

⁶⁸ "Saleh Sacks Government, Reappoints It Caretaker Government amid Escalating Unrest" *Yemen Post*, March 20, 2011, at <http://www.yemenpost.net/Detail123456789.aspx?ID=3&SubID=3311&MainCat=3>

⁶⁹ "State of Emergency Announced in Yemen; Death Toll Rises to Forty Seven", *Yemen Post*, March 19, 2011, at <http://www.yemenpost.net/Detail123456789.aspx?ID=100&SubID=3296&MainCat=3>

However, Bahrain declared a three-month state of emergency on March 15, following sporadic clashes that broke out in several parts of the country. In capital Manama and other places, anti-government protesters clashed with the security forces. The situation became uglier when two people were killed in the Shiite area of Sitra and more than 200 people were wounded in various incidents. The government however clarified that the promulgation of the state of emergency was not akin to martial law. According to the government sources, "There are no specific restrictions on the movement of civilians. This state of emergency is meant to protect the life and property of Bahrainis from hooligans who are out to destroy our country." Meanwhile, Bahraini opposition parties have urged the government to give ironclad guarantees that it will carry out political reforms as promised by Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa.⁷⁰

E. USA

- **Reports: Pentagon officials want to see American intervention in Libya end as soon as possible; U.S.-led coalition forces had launched more than 100 Tomahawk missiles on key air defense sites across Libya till last report**

Reports noted that Pentagon officials want to see American intervention in Libya end as soon as possible. They are not in favor of a third confrontation in a Muslim state. At the same time, confusion persists on who would lead the military attacks once US backed out, especially if US backed out before the normalization of the situation in Libya. In Washington, "lawmakers from both parties argued that President Obama had exceeded his constitutional authority by authorizing the military's participation without Congressional approval. The President said in a letter to Congress that he had the power to authorize the strikes, which would be limited in duration and scope, and that preventing a humanitarian disaster in Libya was in the national interest."⁷¹

Earlier, US led forces launched attacks on Libya to deter Gadhafi from continuing his military campaign against the rebel forces. "U.S.-led coalition forces have launched more than 100 Tomahawk missiles on key air defense

⁷⁰ "Clashes erupt as Bahrain declares state of emergency", *Arab News*, March 16, 2011, at <http://arabnews.com/middleeast/article318418.ece?comments=all>

⁷¹ "U.S. Led Assault Nears Goal in Libya" *New York Times*. March 21, 2011 at <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/22/world/africa/22libya.html>

sites across Libya as part of operations to protect the population from the forces of long-time leader Moammar Gadhafi.”⁷²

II. DEFENCE REVIEW

NATIONAL

- **Reports: CAG rapped MoD for "over-estimation" of requirement of funds and "poor planning" for procurement and projects; Medium-Range Loitering Missile for Indian Army**

Reports noted that the CAG rapped the MoD for "over-estimation" of requirement of funds and "poor planning" for procurement and projects, leading to non- utilisation of budgetary allocation which results in "persistent large savings". The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) also criticized the ministry for excess expenditure under certain heads without budgetary provisions for them.⁷³

Meanwhile, the Indian Army is all set to acquire medium-range loitering missile in a bid to upgrade its artillery, according to the Defence Ministry's annual report. It can strike at a target after hovering over it for 30 minutes and sending in critical data on the enemy. The army needs the missile to carry a conventional warhead, and anti-tank and anti-material warheads with deep armour penetration capability. Israel Aerospace Industries and US' Lockheed Martin are the two major loitering missile developers and manufacturers.⁷⁴

INTERNATIONAL

- **Iran steps up space and missile launch projects; Russian Navy to get 10 Graney Class nuke submarines by 2020**

Reports noted that Iran is significantly, and at an unprecedented pace expanding capabilities to accommodate larger missiles and satellite launch vehicles (SLVs), including the Simorgh 3 SLV in construction at Semnan space centre, according to *Jane's* analysis of satellite imagery of the site. The site is likely to assume

⁷² “US Allies attack Libya”. March 19, 2011. <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/africa/US-Allies-Attack-Libya-118304704.html>

⁷³ “Defence ministry rapped by CAG”, (PTI) New Delhi, Mar 18, at <http://in.news.yahoo.com/defence-ministry-rapped-cag-20110318-054100-138.html>

⁷⁴ “Indian Army to procure Medium-Range Loitering Missile”, *Frontier India*, March 17, 2011 at <http://www.bharat-rakshak.com/NEWS/newsrfr.php?newsid=14531>

operational readiness by 2013, judging by the pace of construction. Iran's growing capabilities should become a cause of concern for the US, which has mounted pressure on the Iranian regime to forgo its nuclear weaponisation programme.⁷⁵

However, Russian Navy is planning to commission up to 10 Graney class nuclear-powered attack submarines, which are designed to launch a variety of long-range cruise missiles (up to 3,100 miles or 5,000 km), with conventional or nuclear warheads, and effectively engage submarines, surface warships and land-based targets, by 2020. It is reported that the submarine's armament includes 24 cruise missiles and eight torpedo launchers, as well as mines and anti-ship missiles. Russia's renewed efforts to revive its military might is backed by her impressive show on the economic front and triggered by the desire to play important role at the world stage.⁷⁶

III. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

JAMMU & KASHMIR

- **Defence Ministry annual report listed in Parliament; Lt. General Hasnain states that the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) and Disturbed Areas Act (DAA) in Jammu and Kashmir should not be revoked; Interlocutors: Traditional routes should be opened; Chief Minister Omar told US to stop viewing JK through security prism**

The Annual Defence Ministry report was tabled in the Parliament in which India has implicated Pakistan's constant attempts to destabilize Jammu and Kashmir and also Pakistan's continuing efforts till date allowing many undiminished activities of terrorist organizations to operate from its territory.⁷⁷

Meanwhile General Officer Commanding (GOC) Lt. General Hasnain stated that the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) and Disturbed Areas Act (DAA) in Jammu and Kashmir should not be revoked as it would result to confronting situations where Army has to compromise on its operational capabilities.⁷⁸

⁷⁵. "Iran accelerates space and missile launch projects", IHS Jane's, 18 March 2011 at http://www.janes.com/news/defence/jdw/jdw110318_1_n.shtml

⁷⁶. "Russian Navy Planning To Get 10 Graney Class Attack Submarines By 2020", Mar 18, 2011 at <http://asian-defence.blogspot.com/>

⁷⁷ "Annual Defence Ministry report tabled in Parliament", *Kashmir Times*, March 16, 2011 at <http://anax8a.pressmart.com/kashmirtimes/Index.aspx>.

⁷⁸ "AFSPA Revocation Detrimental: Lt. General Hasnain", *Greater Kashmir*, March 18, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Mar/18/-af-pak-turbulence-to-create-ripples-in-jk-31.asp>

However, New Delhi appointed interlocutors have recommended to Government of India to open all traditional routes connecting the state with Central Asia and beyond so as to restore Jammu and Kashmir as the centre stage of the region. The idea behind opening of all traditional routes would help the state in harnessing its economic potential and regain central stage.⁷⁹

In other developments, Jammu & Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdulla has urged the United States that it should stop viewing Jammu and Kashmir only through the prism of security and rather should recognize ways for extending its expertise in capacity building, environment projects and other areas.⁸⁰

NORTH EAST INDIA

- **Manipur Chief Minister: Repealing of AFSPA not the call of State Government; UNLF says plebiscite stands the only option; ULFA claims responsibility for the grenade blast**

Chief Minister of Manipur Ibobi has stated that the complete repealing of AFSPA is not the call of the State Government. He further mentioned that the problem in the state considering the multiple insurgency problems cannot be solved if the act will be lifted from the state.⁸¹

However, the UNLF in a press release by the senior publicity officer of the outfit, Ksh. Yoiheiba stated that the UNLF sticks by the proposed stand of carrying out a plebiscite which can bring an end to the conflict situation. The statement also noted that the stance of the Indian government sidelining the proposal is a challenge to the state and a gross discrimination of human rights.⁸²

Meanwhile, in a bomb attacks by insurgents, four Congress leaders were injured at the party's high-security headquarters in Guwahat on March 14. It was suspected to be an improvised explosive device (IED). ULFA 'commander-in-chief' Paresh Baruah made no delay to claim the responsibility for the blast. Earlier, Paresh Baruah had threatened the Congress of dire consequences for

⁷⁹ "Interlocutors recommend opening of traditional routes", *Greater Kashmir*, March 19, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Mar19/interlocutors-recommend-opening-of-traditional-routes-66.asp>

⁸⁰ "Stop seeing JK through security prism: Omar to US", *Greater Kashmir*, March 18, 2011 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/March/18/stop-seeing-jk-thorough-security-prism-omar-to-us-21.asp>

⁸¹ "Commenting on decade old Sharmila issue CM says total repeal of AFSPA impossible at moment", *Imphal Free Press*, March 17, 2011 at <http://www.ifp.co.in/imphal-free-press-full-story.php?newsid=15862>

⁸² "UNLF stands for plebiscite", *Imphal Free Press*, March 14, 2011 at <http://www.ifp.co.in/imphal-free-press-full-story.php?newsid=15792>

“splitting the ULFA”. The blast occurred near the main entrance of Rajiv Bhavan.⁸³

IV. UNITED NATIONS (UN) REVIEW

- **India abstains from UNSC vote for imposition of no-fly zone over Libya; India wishes to fight piracy under the UN flag; Humanitarian agencies in Somalia exempt from UNSC financial sanctions**

India abstained from voting on a United Nations Security Council Resolution approving ‘all necessary measures’, including imposition of a no-fly zone over Libya. The resolution also calls for stronger enforcement of the U.N. arms embargo imposed in February, adds names of individuals, companies and other entities to the list of those subject to travel bans and asset freezes, and requires all countries to ban Libyan flights. India’s Deputy Ambassador to the U.N. Manjeev Singh Puri said that the country abstained because the resolution authorizes “far reaching measures ... with relatively little credible information on the situation on the ground in Libya.”⁸⁴ Despite being pressurized into voting by the U.S., India’s position remained clear of not supporting the use of force. India contended that the UNSC should have focused on ceasefire and bringing violence under control. India said there was no clarity on details of enforcement measure and also expressed concern for civilians including its own nationals. India also pointed out the lack of a report by the Special U.N. Envoy on Libya or even from the Secretariat.⁸⁵

Meanwhile, Expressing concern over “linkages of terrorists based in Somalia with transnational organized crime”, India has said it wants to fight piracy, but under the UN flag. The Defence Ministry stated in its annual report placed before the Parliament, “India is in favour of strengthening multilateral cooperation under a UN framework to meet the complex challenges of maritime security... the threat of piracy emerging from Somalian waters continues to endanger the safety of sea lanes and is a matter of concern for the international community.”⁸⁶

⁸³ “ULFA triggers blast at Rajiv Bhavan”, *The Sentinel*, March 14, 2011 at <http://www.sentinelassam.com/mainnews/story.php?sec=1&subsec=0&id=67836&dtP=2011-03-15&ppr=1#67836>

⁸⁴ “UN Security Council OKs no-fly zone for Libya and ‘all means necessary’ to protect civilians”, *The Washington Post*, 18 March, 2011 at http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/un-security-council-oks-no-fly-zone-for-libya-and-all-means-necessary-to-protect-civilians/2011/03/17/AB5WCtj_story.html

⁸⁵ “India abstains from U.N. vote on Libya”, *The Hindu*, 19 March 2011 at <http://www.hindu.com/2011/03/19/stories/2011031965811600.htm>

⁸⁶ “India wants to fight piracy under UN flag”, *Indian Express*, 17 March 2011 at <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/india-wants-to-fight-piracy-under-un-flag/763447/>

In other developments, the Security Council voted to exempt the work of humanitarian agencies operating in Somalia for a period of 16 months from a resolution that obliges states to impose financial sanctions on groups and individuals who obstruct efforts to restore peace and stability in the country.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ “Somalia: Security Council exempts humanitarian activities from sanctions provisions”, *UN News Centre*, 17 March 2011 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=37804&Cr=somali&Cr1=>