

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. South Asia

Afghanistan

- **Pakistan, Afghanistan and Turkey hold Ankara Summit to weigh the possibility of setting up a “Taliban office” in a neutral country to facilitate peace talks; Afghan Taliban refuses any talks at Paris meet; Afghan President Karzai will submit evidence to Pakistan during a meeting in Ankara**

According to reports, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Turkey will weigh the possibility of setting up a “Taliban office” in a neutral country to facilitate peace talks when their leaders meet in the Turkish capital this week. At the Ankara summit on December 11-12, 2012, Turkish President Abdullah Gul, his Pakistani and Afghan counterparts Asif Ali Zardari and Hamid Karzai will focus on how to push the nascent peace process forward in Afghanistan, diplomatic sources said.¹

In another development, according to reports, amidst speculation that the Afghan Taliban will reach out to their historical nemesis – the Northern Alliance – at an international conference in France this month, the ultraorthodox militia has said that it will not negotiate with any Afghan group or government official. “We accepted the invitation to attend the conference in Paris neither to hold talks with the Afghan government nor with its peace council,” Afghan Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid on December 9.²

In other developments, Afghan President Hamid Karzai will submit evidence to Pakistan during a meeting in Turkey on December 11 suggesting that the attack on Afghanistan’s spy chief was hatched in Pakistan, said Karzai’s spokesperson. “President Karzai will submit all the documents and evidence in hand to Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari, which suggest the attack was hatched in Quetta in Pakistan, and follow this up seriously,” said Siamak Herawi, a spokesperson for Karzai.³

Pakistan

- **Pentagon report: Pakistan is persistently undermining security in Afghanistan by permitting safe havens for insurgents**

According to reports, despite an easing of tensions with the United States, Pakistan is persistently

¹ Push for Afghan peace: Ankara Summit to look afresh at Taliban office plan, *The Express Tribune*, December 10, 2012 at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/477580/push-for-afghan-peace-ankara-summit-to-look-afresh-at-taliban-office-plan/>

² No flexibility: No talks with Afghan Govt at Paris meet says Taliban, *The Express Tribune*, December 10, 2012 at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/477582/no-flexibility-no-talks-with-afghan-govt-at-paris-meet-says-taliban/>

³ Spy Chief attack : Karzai to submit evidence of Pakistan involvement, *The Express Tribune*, December 11, 2012 at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/478178/spy-chief-attack-karzai-to-submit-evidence-of-pakistan-involvement/>

undermining security in Afghanistan by permitting safe havens for insurgents, a Pentagon report said. In a biannual war assessment mandated by Congress, the Defense Department said that the 68,000 US troops in Afghanistan and their allies had succeeded in preventing Taliban advances while limiting civilian casualties. The report, which covered developments from April through September, 2012, said that Pakistan “has contributed to US interests while simultaneously falling short in other areas.”⁴

Bangladesh

- **Dr. Najma Heptulla met PM Sheikh Hasina**

Indian Rajya Sabha member Dr. Najma Heptulla made a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office in Dhaka on December 11, 2012.⁵

Sri Lanka

- **Australian Foreign Minister visits Sri Lanka; Sri Lanka is concerned at the launch of a rocket using ballistic missile technology by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea; Fourth IAF-SLAF Air Staff talks held in Colombo**

According to reports, Australian Foreign Minister Bob Carr was on three days official visit to Sri Lanka for talks with Sri Lankan leaders on measures to deal with the increased flow of boatpeople attempting to seek asylum in Australia. Mr. Carr has announced \$A34.35 million will be spent over four years to help some four million primary and secondary school children in Sri Lanka and contribute to a “stable society with economic growth”.⁶

In another developments, reports noted that Sri Lanka is concerned at the launch of a rocket using ballistic missile technology by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, which is in violation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1874. Issuing a statement the External Affairs Ministry said that “Recognizing the imperative need for dialogue and cooperation between the relevant stakeholders at this juncture, Sri Lanka urges the concerned parties to work in close coordination within the existing UN Security Council Resolutions, in order to ensure peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula.”⁷

In other developments, according to reports, a delegation from the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Sri Lanka Air Force met at the Sri Lanka Air Force Headquarters in Colombo for the fourth IAF-SLAF Air Staff talks held from December 10-12, 2012. The Indian Delegation consisted of 5 officers and was headed by the Assistant Chief of Air Staff Operation, Air Vice Marshal Upkarjit Singh

⁴ US report faults Pakistan over Afghan War, *Dawn*, December 11, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/12/11/us-report-faults-pakistan-over-afghan-war/>

⁵ “Indian Rajya Sabha member Najma Heptulla meets PM”, *The Daily Star*, December 12, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=260823>.

⁶ “Australia to make a stable society in SL”, *The Daily Mirror*, December 15, 2012 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/24292-australia-to-make-a-stable-society-in-sl.html>.

⁷ “SL raises concerns over Korea rocket launch”, *The Daily Mirror*, December 13, 2012 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/24243-sl-raises-concerns-over-korea-rocket-launch.html>.

and SLAF team consisted of 6 officers and was headed by the Director Operations Air Vice Marshal GP Bulathsinghala.⁸

Maldives

- **Mr. Ahmed Sareer has been appointed as the Permanent Representative of the Maldives to the United Nations**

President Dr Mohamed Waheed has appointed Mr Ahmed Sareer as the Permanent Representative of the Maldives to the United Nations on December 10, 2012.⁹

B. East Asia

Japan

- **Japan reacts strongly to North Korea's ballistic missile test, advocates strong sanctions; US begins coordination with Japan and South Korea on North Korean missile launch**

North Korea's recent launch of what is effectively a long-range ballistic missile on December 12, 2012 has been strongly condemned by the Japanese government. The missile reportedly passed through airspace west of the Okinawa prefecture. Tokyo protested the launch and declared it as "a grave provocation."¹⁰

In the wake of North Korea's recent missile launch, the US has started consulting both its alliance partners-Japan and South Korea-in drafting a resolution or toughening the UN sanctions. The three are reportedly considering the possibility of prohibiting banking transactions with certain banks in North Korea and reinforcement of cargo inspections.¹¹

South Korea

- **South Korea-Spain signs defense support deal**

With a view to expanding their bilateral military ties, South Korea and Spain recently signed a defense support agreement. Under the agreement, both the countries will share military supplies during UN peacekeeping and rescue operations as well as disaster relief efforts.¹²

⁸ "A top Indian AF delegation in Colombo", *The Daily Mirror*, December 12, 2012 at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/24203-a-top-indian-af-delegation-in-colombo.html>.

⁹ "President appoints Permanent Representative to the United Nations", *The President's Office, Republic of Maldives*, December 10, 2012 at <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=8331>.

¹⁰ "N. Korea launches ballistic missile/ Govt lodges protest, slams 'grave provocations'; no interception attempted", *The Yomiuri Daily*, December 13, 2012, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T121212005115.htm>

¹¹ "Govt. to seek tougher UNSC sanctions/Tightened cargo inspections of North Korean ships, curbs on bank transactions eyed", *The Yomiuri Daily*, at <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T121212005136.htm>

¹² "S. Korea signs defense support deal with Spain", *Korea Herald*, December 10, 2012, at <http://nwww.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20121210000215>

North Korea

- **UN condemns North Korea's missile launch**

On December 12, North Korea launched a satellite which is suspected by the international community to be a long-range ballistic missile. Though Pyongyang claimed that the launch was a purely scientific mission aimed at placing a polar-orbiting Earth observation satellite space, the UN strongly condemned that launch. A UN Security Council statement released after the launch said "Members of the Security Council condemned this launch, which is a clear violation of Security Council resolutions 1718 and 1874."¹³

C. West Asia

Syria

- **US, Germany plan to deploy missiles, troops to Syria border**

The American and German governments have announced plans to deploy Patriot missiles and weapons near Turkey's border with Syria. Around 400 American support troops will also be deployed along with advanced "hit to kill" Patriot weapons provided by Germany and The Netherlands. Meanwhile, European Union leaders released a joint statement that said they were "appalled by the increasingly deteriorating situation in Syria". The US last week reiterated its concerns that Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad could use chemical weapons in desperation.¹⁴

Israel/Palestine

- **Palestinian PM calls for boycott of Israeli goods; Israeli foreign minister resigns over pending indictment**

Palestinian prime minister Salaam Fayyad has called on Palestinians to boycott of goods made in Israeli settlements in protests against Israeli's withholding of revenue intended for the Palestinian Authority. Israel cut off the funds in response to the UN General Assembly vote that in November that recognised Palestine as an observer state in the UN. Fayyad has admitted that a Palestinian boycott would violate the terms of its interim peace agreement with Israel, but that the Israeli government was working against this agreement as well by withholding the tax funds.¹⁵

In another development, Israeli foreign minister Avigdor Liberman announced last week that he would resign as foreign minister and vice premier in view of a pending indictment against him

¹³ UN Condemns N. Korean launch", The Japan Times, December 14, 2012, at <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn20121214a8.html>

¹⁴ "American troops, Patriot missiles to deploy on Syrian border", The Daily Star, December 15, 2012 at <http://dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Dec-15/198594-american-troops-patriot-missiles-to-deploy-on-syrian-border.ashx#axzz2FHbGDS9R>

¹⁵ "Boycott Israeli goods – Palestinian PM", The Jordan Times, December 16, 2012 at <http://jordantimes.com/boycott-israeli-goods—palestinian-pm>

for fraud and breach of trust. Liberman has said he hopes the legal proceedings related to this matter are concluded prior to the scheduled January 22 national elections.¹⁶

Jordan

- **Refugee influx into Jordan intensifies, UN forecasts up to 1.8 million refugees by 2013**

According to reports, the Syrian refugee influx into Jordan has intensified with more than 1,500 Syrians, many of them wounded, entering the country on December 16. The increased numbers are a result of intensified violence in southern Syria. The UN High Commission for Refugees has said that the humanitarian crisis in Syria is likely to worsen next year, and that it is bracing for an influx of between 1.1 and 1.8 million refugees by end of 2013. It would be worth noting that Jordan has followed an open-border policy since the start of the Syrian crisis, and has taken in more than 250,000 Syrians so far, far more than any of Syria's other neighbours.¹⁷

II. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

Jammu & Kashmir

- **Shutdown in Kashmir in protest against life sentences; Union Home Minister remarks no withdrawal of AFSPA from JK till peace prevails; Union Home Minister: Hizbul Mujahideen and Lashkar-e-Toiba remain dominant groups in JK; Militants killed in encounters at Sopore; Union Home Secretary to visit Jammu**

According to reports, normal life across Kashmir was paralyzed on December 10 due to the shutdown called by the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front to protest the recent life sentences to two Kashmiri youths by a TADA court in Jammu on December 3. The strike called by the JKLF chairman Muhammad Yasin Malik was supported by the Hurriyat Conference (M), Hurriyat Conference (G), High Court Bar Association (HCBA), Lashkar-e-Toiba, Mahaz-e-Azadi, Dukhtaran-e-Millat and others.¹⁸

Meanwhile, according to reports, Home Minister Sushilkumar Shinde on December 10 said the partial withdrawal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) from some areas of Jammu and Kashmir is unlikely to take place in near future. On the issue of AFSPA, the Home Minister set at rest all speculations stating that the issue could be settled only after peace is restored in Kashmir.¹⁹

¹⁶ "FM Avigdor Liberman to resign over indictment", The Jerusalem Post, December 14, 2012 at <http://www.jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=295946>

¹⁷ "Syrian exodus to Jordan intensifies as UN ups refugee forecasts", The Jordan Times, December 16, 2012 at <http://jordantimes.com/syrian-exodus-to-jordan-intensifies-as-un-ups-refugee-forecasts>

¹⁸ "Kashmir shuts against life-sentences", *Greater Kashmir*, December 10, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Dec/11/kashmir-shuts-against-life-sentences-55.asp>

¹⁹ "No AFSPA withdrawal in JK till peace returns: Shinde", *Greater Kashmir*, December 10, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Dec/11/no-afspa-withdrawal-in-jk-till-peace-returns-shinde-48.asp>

In another development, reports noted that Home Minister Sushilkumar Shinde on December 13 said the militant outfits Hizbul-Mujahideen and Lashkar-e-Toiba still remain to be the dominant militant groups operating in some parts of Jammu and Kashmir despite the situation showing improvement. Stating this at the Home Ministry's Parliamentary Consultative Committee meeting at New Delhi, the Shri Shinde said that these militant groups are mostly operating in districts of Baramulla, Kupwara, Bandipore, Anantnag and Pulwama in Kashmir and Poonch, Ramban and Rajouri in Jammu region.²⁰

Meanwhile, reports noted that Union Home Secretary R K Singh is scheduled to arrive in Jammu on December 17 for a one day visit would also conduct an aerial survey of Mughal Road. Union Home Secretary will be briefed about the steps being taken to avoid closing of the Mughal road during the winters and a permanent solution being found to prevent landslides from occurring frequently. Engineers taking care of the Road project would also brief the Union Home Secretary about it.²¹

In other developments, three unidentified militants were killed and four soldiers injured in two separate encounters in Sopore area of north Kashmir's Baramulla district. The encounters took place in Cherhar Tujar and Mundji areas of Sopore.²²

North East India

- **Kuki State Demand Committee (KSDC) threatens to block ASEAN car rally; American Business Centre opened in Guwahati; Linking North-East with South-East Asia to be the focus of ASEAN-India trade conclave**

Reports noted that the Kuki State Demand Committee (KSDC) has decided to block entry of 2nd ASEAN Car Rally in Manipur besides resuming its 'public blockade' on all National and State Highways from 5pm of December 14. The 2nd ASEAN Car Rally which was flagged off from Indonesia on November 26 is scheduled to enter Moreh, a border town, 110 km south of Imphal on December 15. Reiterating its demand for creation of a separate State, KSDC also announced resumption of its 'public blockade' on all National and State Highways passing through Kuki inhabited areas in the State. The blockade will begin from 5 pm of December 14.²³

In another development, according to reports, US Ambassador to India Nancy J Powell December 13, formally launched the American Business Corner (ABC) in Guwahati, making it the first such centre in Eastern India. The Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) is the partner organisation in the centre. American Business Corners are designed to showcase catalogues and business materials of US companies at the dedicated ABC space allocated by partner organisations nationwide.

²⁰ "Hizb LeT dominant militant groups in JK: Home Minister", *Greater Kashmir*, December 13, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Dec/14/hizb-let-dominant-militant-groups-in-jk-home-minister-73.asp>

²¹ "Union Home Secretary to visit Jammu on Monday", *Greater Kashmir*, December 15, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Dec/16/union-home-secretary-to-visit-jammu-on-monday-63.asp>

²² "3 militants killed in Sopore encounters", *Greater Kashmir*, December 13, 2012 at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Dec/14/3-militants-killed-in-sopore-encounters-68.asp>

²³ "Kuki body threatens to block ASEAN car rally", *The Assam Tribune*, December 11, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=dec1212/oth05>

Launching the corner, Powell said that it would act as a bridge between entrepreneurs of the North-east and American firms for enhancing bilateral cooperation in matters of trade and commerce, tourism, investment services, etc.²⁴

Reports noted that the ASEAN-India Trade Conclave with special focus on the North-east which is being organized by the Industries and Commerce Department, Assam in association with Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and scheduled for December 17 at the Karmabir Nabin Chandra Hall of Sarusajai Stadium – will witness deliberations on prospects of bilateral trade and commerce between the North-east and South-East Asia. A host of dignitaries including ministers and trade representatives from South East Asia are taking part in the event, which would coincide with the flag-down ceremony of the ASEAN-India Car Rally. The conclave would be chaired by Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi. The focus of this conclave would be to demonstrate proximity of India with ASEAN countries, create public awareness of India-ASEAN relations, promote connectivity, especially road transport, and enhance trade, investment, tourism and people-to-people contact between India and the ASEAN countries. The main themes for the conclave are business, development, culture and tourism.²⁵

Ministry of home Affairs (MHA) News

● Consultative Committee of Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) reviewed J&K security situation

According to reports, the Consultative Committee of Members of Parliament attached to the Ministry of Home Affairs reviewed the security situation in J&K in its meeting in New Delhi on December 12 under the Chairmanship of Union Home Minister Shri Sushilkumar Shinde. The Members deliberated on the current security scenario, infiltration, border encounters, incidents of stone pelting and hawala funding in detail in the State. The coordination amongst security agencies, modernization of state police forces, visit of all-party delegation to the State, reports of interlocutors and action on these reports were also deliberated in the meeting. The issues of migrants, rehabilitation of the surrendered militants and speedy implementation of Prime Minister's Reconstruction Programme and PM's Package for Return and Rehabilitation of Kashmiri migrants to the State were also discussed.²⁶

III. UNITED NATIONS (UN) REVIEW

● India expresses concern over piracy off the coast of Somalia; India criticises missile launch by North Korea; India satisfied with Climate talks in Doha; Divisions continue over UN internet talks; UN condemns the arrest of Mali's PM; Security Council expresses concern

²⁴ "US Ambassador opens Business Centre in city", *The Assam Tribune*, December 13, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=dec1412/at09>

²⁵ "Focus on linking NE with SE Asia", *The Assam Tribune*, December 15, 2012 at <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=dec1612/at06>

²⁶ "Consultative Committee of MHA Reviewed Security Situation in J&K", *Greater Kashmir*, December 13, 2012 at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=90553>

over situation in Guinea-Bissau; UNSC extends sanctions on Liberia; UNSC extends term of judges with Tribunal for Rwanda; India's CAG re-elected to UN

According to reports, speaking at the UN General Assembly session, India's Permanent Mission to the UN, V D Sharma expressed serious concern over piracy especially, off the coast of Somalia saying that the "menace" endangers lives of seafarers and affects national security. India called on the international community as a whole to continue to extend full cooperation in efforts towards ensuring the proper management and sustainable use of the oceans and seas.²⁷

In another development, the latest successful missile launch by North Korea was criticised by the UN Security Council. Meanwhile, India said that the action violated UN Security Council resolution 1974. India further added that the unwarranted action by the government of DPRK adversely impacted peace and stability in the Korea Peninsula and called on the North Korea to refrain from such actions.²⁸

According to reports, at the Doha Climate Change Negotiations, India managed to retrieve ground it had lost in Copenhagen and Durban. The final outcome of the Doha negotiations has accommodated issues like intellectual property rights in technology transfer and development, equity and unilateral measures. India will also continue to push for a broader treatment on these important issues and make them the key elements of future negotiations.²⁹

Reports noted that the closed-door talks at the 193-nation UN International Telecommunications Union have led to deep divisions with Russia and others advocating for more government sway while the US-led group warned against restrictions on freedom in cyberspace. The conference held in Dubai is not empowered to bring about any immediate changes on how the internet operates.³⁰

According to reports, the UN Security Council and Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon condemned the arrest of Mali's Prime Minister by members of the country's armed forces and the eventual dismissal of the government. Ban Ki-moon also called for an end to military interference in politics. The Council stressed its commitment to authorize the immediate deployment of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali.³¹

²⁷ "India expresses serious concern over piracy", *The Economic Times*, December 13, 2012 at http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-12-13/news/35796846_1_oceans-piracy-biodiversity-loss

²⁸ "North Korea's rocket launch unwarranted: India", *The Times of India*, December 13, 2012 at http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-12-13/rest-of-world/35795784_1_unha-3-sohae-space-center-kwangmyongsong-3

²⁹ "UN Climate Change Negotiations 2012: India satisfied at negotiations; manages to retrieve key issues it lost in Copenhagen & Durban", *The Economic Times*, December 11, 2012 at http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-12-11/news/35749510_1_key-issues-intellectual-property-rights-indian-negotiator

³⁰ "Deep divides in Dubai at UN talks on internet", *The Times of India*, December 11, 2012 at http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-12-11/internet/35748480_1_internet-governance-proposals-google-and-microsoft

³¹ "UN Secretary-General and Security Council speak out after arrest of Malian Prime Minister", *UN News Centre*, December 11, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=43740&Cr=+mali+&Cr1=#.UNAPfuS7Iq9>

The UN Security Council expressed 'serious concern' over the lack of progress in the restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau. The 15-member body underscored that stabilisation can be achieved only through a consensual, inclusive and nationally-owned transition process that was based on genuine dialogue and effective civilian oversight over the military.³²

In other developments, the sanctions imposed on Liberia was extended by the Security Council due to the lack of progress in implementing the financial measures imposed by a 2004 Council resolution that demanded that all assets of former president Charles Taylor and others be frozen. The Council also demanded that the Liberian government make all necessary efforts to fulfil its obligations.³³

The UN Security Council extended the term of office of the five judges serving with the UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda until 31 December 2014 or until the completion of the cases to which they are assigned.³⁴

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India, Vinod Rai has been re-elected as the Chairman of the UN Panel of External Auditors for 2013.³⁵

³² "Guinea-Bissau: Security Council seriously concerned over lack of progress on return to constitutional order", *UN News Centre*, December 13, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=43770&Cr=bissau&Cr1=#.UNAPe-S7Iq9>

³³ "Security Council extends sanctions on Liberia for another year", *UN News Centre*, December 12, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=43757&Cr=liberia&Cr1=#.UNAPfOS7Iq9>

³⁴ "Security Council extends terms of judges serving on UN Rwanda genocide tribunal", *UN News Centre*, December 12, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=43758&Cr=rwanda&Cr1=tribunal#.UNAPeuS7Iq9>

³⁵ "Vinod Rai re-elected as chair of UN auditors panel", *The Times of India*, December 12, 2012 at http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-12-12/india/35772922_1_cag-vinod-rai-auditors-panel-external-auditors