

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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Editor: Sanjeev Kumar Shrivastav

Contributors

Anwesha Roy Chaudhuri

Gulbin Sultana

Gunjan Singh

Rajorshi Roy

Princy Marine George

Prashant Pradhan

Babjee Pothuraju

Amit Kumar

Keerthi Kumar

Afghanistan, Pakistan

Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bangladesh

China

Central Asia & Russia

Iran, Israel, Syria, Palestine

Yemen, UAE

Africa

Defence Review

UN Review

Review Adviser: S. Kalyanaraman

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INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE
STUDIES & ANALYSES

1, Development Enclave, Rao Tula Ram Marg, New Delhi-110010

Telephone: 91-26717983; Fax: 91-11-26154191 Website: www.idsa.in; Email: twir@idsa.in

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I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

A. South Asia

Afghansitan

- **Six US soldiers killed a roadside bomb blast in Eastern Afghanistan; Gunmen attack police HQ in Kandahar**

According to reports, a roadside bomb in eastern Afghanistan has killed six US soldiers serving with the NATO force. The nationality of the soldiers was not immediately given, but the Pentagon later confirmed they were all American. The incident came as donors meeting in Japan pledged to give Afghanistan \$16bn (£10.3bn) in civilian aid over four years, including the period during which foreign troops are to pull out.¹

In another incident, reports noted that an insurgent attack on a police base in the southern Afghan city of Kandahar has ended after three gunmen were killed. The gunmen entered an empty school, from where they started firing at the headquarters of the Afghan National Police. Six people were injured in the attack, but Kandahar's police chief was unharmed, a government spokesman said.²

Pakistan

- **Pakistan calls for a comprehensive conventional arms trade treaty that strikes a correct balance between motivations for production and acquisition of such arms; According to top US Senators, Pakistan should get \$1.1 billion in US funds that have been held up for months now; PM Ashraf to visit Kabul; US-Pakistan to sign a new deal on NATO supply route**

According to reports, Pakistan has called for a comprehensive conventional arms trade treaty that strikes a correct balance between motivations for production and acquisition of such arms. "The history and politics of arms regulation dictate a comprehensive approach which takes into account priorities of all member states in a non-discriminatory manner," Ambassador Raza Bashir Tarar, Pakistanis deputy permanent representative to the UN, told member states at a session of the first UN Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty. Taking place at UN Headquarters in New York, the four-week Conference has brought together the UN's 193 Member States to negotiate what is seen as the most important initiative ever regarding conventional arms regulation within the United Nations, according to the Conference officials.³

In another development, according to reports, top US senators, on July 10, 2012, have said that Pakistan should get \$1.1 billion in US funds that have been held up for months now that Islamabad

¹ "Afghanistan: US NATO Soldiers killed by roadside bomb", *BBC*, July 8, 2012 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-18764552>

² "Afghanistan gunmen attack police HQ in Kandahar", *BBC*, July 9, 2012 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-18767362>

³ "Pakistan calls for comprehensive conventional arms trade treaty at UN", *Dawn*, July 10, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/07/10/pakistan-calls-for-comprehensive-conventional-arms-trade-treaty-at-un/>

has reopened crucial NATO supply lines to Afghanistan. A major obstacle to releasing the money was removed last week when Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton apologized to Pakistan for the killing of 24 Pakistani troops last fall and Pakistan, in return, agreed to reopen the overland supply lines to US-led coalition forces. Congress has already approved the money to reimburse Pakistan for counterterrorism operations, but it has been on hold for some six months. Armed Services Committee Chairman Carl Levin, D-Michigan, a Democrat and one of the panel's top Republicans, Lindsey Graham, said the money should be released, albeit reluctantly.⁴

Reports noted that Pakistan Prime Minister Raja Parvez Ashraf Ashraf is due to visit Kabul on July 16, 2012, in his first foreign trip since becoming the prime minister. During the visit, he will seek clarity on peace-making efforts. According to officials, Ashraf's upcoming visit now has greater significance in view of a recent breakthrough in ties between Pakistan and the United States.⁵

In other developments, according to reports, Islamabad and Washington will soon formally sign a new agreement to regulate trucks carrying supplies for NATO troops in Afghanistan. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Moazzam Ali Khan told reporters on July 12, 2012 that Pakistan and the United States had almost completed technical discussions, and officials were now consulting with their respective authorities to finalise the new accord. "We are quite hopeful that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will be signed shortly," he stated.⁶

Bangladesh

- **Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina: Government will build the Padma bridge with its own funds; Netherland to provide cooperation and assistance to Bangladesh on priority basis; Exports fell about 3 percent to \$2.31 billion in June, 2012; US Secretary of the Navy visits Bangladesh; BAPEX hit a natural gas reservoir at Srikail in Comilla**

According to reports, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina announced in parliament on July 8, 2012 that the government will build the Padma bridge with its own funds and construction work will begin in the current fiscal year. She said the mega project, estimated to cost around Tk 23,000 crore, would be completed within fiscal year 2015-16.⁷ On the other hand, a large number of Bangladeshi expatriates demonstrated in front of the World Bank (WB) headquarters in Washington protesting the bank's cancellation of the Padma bridge loan over corruption allegations on July 11, 2012. During the demonstration, organised by the US chapter of Awami League (AL), its president Siddiquir Rahman submitted a memorandum to a representative of WB president for reconsidering the loan cancellation decision.⁸

⁴ "US Senators for release of funds to Pakistan", *Dawn*, July 11, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/07/11/us-senators-for-release-of-funds-to-pakistan/>

⁵ "PM Ashraf to visit Kabul to expedite peace process", *The express tribune*, July 10, 2012 at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/406063/pm-ashraf-to-visit-kabul-to-expedite-peace-efforts/>

⁶ "US, Pakistan to ink new deal on NATO supply routes", *The express tribune*, July 13, 2012 at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/407608/us-pakistan-to-ink-new-deal-on-nato-supply-routes/>

⁷ "Padma bridge with own funds", *The Daily Star*, July 9, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=241334>.

⁸ "Loan Cut-off: Bangladeshi expats stage demo in front of WB HQ", *The Daily Star*, July 13, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=241939>.

Meanwhile, the Netherlands listed Bangladesh as one of the top 15 countries where it would provide cooperation and assistance on priority basis for the expansion of the emerging economies.⁹

Reports noted that Bangladesh's exports fell about 3 percent to \$2.31 billion in June, 2012 compared to the same month a year earlier, hit by Europe's financial crisis. Bangladesh's full-year exports grew by only 5.93 percent to \$24.28 billion in fiscal 2011-12, compared to 40.5 percent a year ago, according to government data released on July 10, 2012. The country is well below its export growth target set by the government at about 16 percent for the just concluded fiscal year.¹⁰

In other developments, US Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus arrived in Dhaka on July 13, 2012 on a three-day official visit to strengthen the defence relationship between the two countries.¹¹

According to reports, Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration Company (Bapex) hit a natural gas reservoir at Srikail in Comilla on July 13, 2012, seven years after a failed attempt in the area.¹²

Sri Lanka

- **Pro-LTTE Tamil groups in Tamil Nadu staged protests against the presence of two senior Sri Lankan defence officers in the state; India launches the next phase of the Indian Housing Project for constructing 43,000 housing units; India's Minister of Rural Development Jairam Ramesh visits Sri Lanka; Sri Lanka's tourist arrivals rose 21.6 percent in June, 2012**

According to reports, pro-LTTE Tamil groups in the state of Tamil Nadu in India have staged protests against the presence of two senior Sri Lankan defence officers who are in the state to participate in an Annual Interaction Session Monday at the Defence Services Staff College located at Wellington in Tamil Nadu. The police have arrested about 30 MDMK workers, led by their Coimbatore District secretary, Eswaran, when they staged a demonstration and squatted in front of the hotel where the Sri Lankan officers are staying, Indian media reported.¹³

In another development, India launched the next phase of the Indian Housing Project for constructing 43,000 housing units for the resettled families in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka Friday, High Commission of India said in a statement. The High Commission of India signed agreements Friday to award work to four Implementing Agencies (IAs), viz., UN-HABITAT, International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in partnership with Sri Lanka Red Cross, National Housing Development Agency (NHDA) of the Government of Sri Lanka and Habitat for Humanity, Sri Lanka.¹⁴

⁹ "Netherlands Aid List: Bangladesh among top 15", *The Daily Star*, July 9, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=241351>.

¹⁰ "Exports take a blow: June shipments fall 3pc on European woes", *The Daily Star*, July 11, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=241619>.

¹¹ "US Navy secretary due today", *The Daily Star*, July 13, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=241943>.

¹² "Gas found in Comilla", *The Daily Star*, July 14, 2012 at <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=242044>

¹³ "Pro-LTTE Tamil groups protest Sri Lankan defence officers visit to Tamil Nadu", *Colombo Page*, July 15, 2012 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12A/Jul15_1342376546CH.php.

¹⁴ "India launches the next phase of the Indian Housing Project for Sri Lanka's IDPs", *Colombo Page*, July 14, 2012 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12A/Jul14_1342205057CH.php.

Reports noted that India, being a large country in the South Asia region had decided to adopt unilateral concessions to make relationships stronger with the neighbors and not insist on reciprocity, India's Minister of Rural Development and Drinking Water & Sanitation Jairam Ramesh has said. Minister Jairam Ramesh who visited Sri Lanka from 11-13 July 2012 on an invitation extended by Sri Lanka Minister of External Affairs Prof. G.L. Peiris, has highlighted India's desire for the whole region to grow with India and the need for a larger role for cross-investments in the region. During his visit, the Indian Minister called on the Sri Lankan President and had meetings with Prof. Peiris, and Basil Rajapaksa, Minister of Economic Development. During the discussions the Ministers acknowledged the shared experiences between Sri Lanka and India especially in the fields of poverty alleviation and rural development. Minister Ramesh also delivered the keynote address at a Joint Seminar on Poverty Alleviation organized by the Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute for International Relations and Strategic Studies (LKIIRSS), Colombo, and the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), New Delhi.¹⁵

In other developments, according to the data released by the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) showed, Sri Lanka's tourist arrivals rose 21.6 percent in June this year compared to the same period last year. The month recorded 65,245 tourists arriving in the country compared to the 53,636 arrived in June 2011.¹⁶

Maldives

- **High Commission of India expresses concern for the recent escalation of tensions in the Maldives; EXIM Bank of China offers the Maldives a US\$57 million loan; Economic Development Minister Ahmed Mohamed: Value of the US Dollar against the Maldivian Rufiyaa is not expected to fall**

According to reports, the High Commission of India in Maldives has expressed concern for the recent escalation of tensions in the Maldives. Clashes in the capital Male between opposition Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) supporters and security forces have ensued every night after the party vowed to continue with demonstrations until the present government is overthrown or early presidential election dates are announced. In a statement, the Indian High Commission urged all political Parties and socio-political organizations to maintain peace and calm and cooperate in the efforts to maintain law and order. The High Commission also reiterated the need for all the parties to work together in the spirit of cooperation and reconciliation to resolve all the outstanding issues.¹⁷

Reports noted that the state-owned EXIM Bank of China has offered the Maldives a US\$57 million loan to assist the development of IT infrastructure in the country.¹⁸

¹⁵ "India to strengthen cooperation with Sri Lanka on poverty alleviation and rural development", *Colombo Page*, July 13, 2012 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12A/Jul13_1342203093CH.php.

¹⁶ "Sri Lanka tourist arrivals up by 21.6 percent in June", *Colombo Page*, July 14, 2012 at http://www.colombopage.com/archive_12A/Jul14_1342209644CH.php.

¹⁷ Mohamed Visham "India appeals for calm amid escalating tensions in Maldives", *Haveeru Online*, Jul 15, 2012 at <http://www.haveeru.com.mv/news/43412>

¹⁸ "EXIM Bank of China offers US\$57 million loan for IT infrastructure overhaul", *Minivan News*, July 10, 2012 at <http://minivannews.com/category/news-in-brief>.

In other developments, Maldives' Economic Development Minister Ahmed Mohamed has claimed in local media that the value of the US Dollar against the Maldivian Rufiyaa is not expected to fall in the "near future", citing the need for a new long-term financial strategy.¹⁹

B. East Asia

China

(July 2-15)

- **China, Indonesia conduct anti-terrorism drill; China Daily Report: US intervention in Asia-Pacific not conducive for the region; Beijing participates in 19th ARF meeting; Beijing wants to improve relations with ASEAN; Beijing-Tokyo ships get involved in spat near Diaoyu Islands; Diaoyu Islands spark protests; Beijing refuses to acknowledge Japanese representation over Diaoyu Islands; CPC celebrates 91st founding anniversary**

According to reports, China and Indonesia concluded an anti-terrorism drill in Jinan.²⁰

In another development, according to a China Daily report, Hillary Clinton's tour of China's neighbourhood has again stirred the South China Sea region. It is being argued that the "strategic pressure" put by the United States is not conducive for the US long term interest in the region.²¹

Meanwhile, during the ASEAN Region Forum meeting of Foreign Ministers, Beijing has asserted that dialogue is the key to the development and stability of the Asia Pacific region.²² China's Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi noted that Beijing will strengthen communication and cooperation with the ASEAN keeping in view long term benefits of the countries.²³

According to reports, three Chinese fishery patrol ships got involved in verbal confrontation with the Japanese Coast Guard ships in waters near Diaoyu Islands.²⁴ There were also protests in Tokyo, by Chinese-Americans over the recent clashes over the Diaoyu Islands.²⁵ Meanwhile Beijing

¹⁹ "Foreign investment key to address dollar supply issues: economic development minister", *Minivan News*, July 9, 2012 at <http://minivannews.com/category/news-in-brief/page/2>.

²⁰ "China, Indonesia hold anti-terrorism drill" *China Daily*, July 15, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-07/15/content_15582581.htm

²¹ "US intervention not conducive to Asia-Pacific stability" *China Daily*, July 14, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-07/14/content_15581082.htm

²² "Chinese FM Yang Jiechi attends 19th ARF" *China Daily*, July 12, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-07/12/content_15575341.htm

²³ "China to strengthen ties with ASEAN" *China Daily*, July 12, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-07/12/content_15571544.htm

²⁴ "Chinese, Japanese ships encounter near Diaoyu Islands" *China Daily*, July 12, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-07/12/content_15575310.htm

²⁵ "Islands move sparks protest" *China Daily*, July 14, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-07/14/content_15579843.htm

has also asserted that, “it does not accept the representation lodged by Tokyo over the Chinese fishery administration vessel’s recent patrol of waters off the Diaoyu Islands”.²⁶

In other developments, on the domestic front, the Chinese Communist Party celebrated its 91st founding anniversary on July 1, 2012. It was announced that the membership of the party reached 82.6 million.²⁷

C. Central Asia & Russia

Central Asia

- **Tajikistan to censor websites; Tajikistan may demand close to US\$ 250 million from Russia for the sue of its military bases; Iran to invest \$10B in Kyrgyzstan; EU looking for higher levels of security and cooperation with Central Asia; Russia and Kazakhstan plan joint air defence system; Ukraine and Kazakh defence chiefs strengthen military ties; Tajikistan and Azerbaijan signs a number of mutual cooperation agreements; European Bank for Reconstruction and Development to provide US\$ 197 million for building the Kazakh link of Europe-Central Asia highway; Turkmenistan to increase gas output 449 bcm by 2016; Four Central Asian states listed on Global Innovation Index**

According to reports, authorities in Tajikistan have said that they will establish a private body of volunteers to monitor and report on web sites containing “insulting content”. The organization will be registered with the justice ministry and manned by ordinary citizens and local journalists with the aim of reporting to state authorities on web sites that they consider libellous.²⁸

Reports noted that Tajikistan is pressing Russia to provide more than \$250 million a year for use of military bases on its territory. Under the current lease, which expires in 2014, Russia has exclusive rights to use three military garrisons and joint use of an air base. In return, Moscow provides military and technical assistance to Tajikistan’s military.²⁹

In another development, in the aftermath of talks held between Kyrgyzstan’s finance minister and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in Tehran, Iran expects to invest \$10 billion in Kyrgyzstan. No details were made available as to the industries or sectors which would see Iranian investment.³⁰

²⁶ “China refuses Japan’s representation over Diaoyu Islands” *China Daily*, July 11, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-07/11/content_15571230.htm

²⁷ “CPC to lead China with improved governance capability” *China Daily*, July 1, 2012 at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-07/01/content_15540521.htm

²⁸ “Tajik authorities to censor web sites”, Central Asia Newswire, July 13, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=12413>

²⁹ “Tajikistan wants \$250M a year for Russian base, paper says”, Central Asia Newswire, July 12, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=12402>

³⁰ “Iran to invest \$10B in Kyrgyzstan”, Central Asia Newswire, July 12, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=12408>

The European Union's Special Representative for Central Asia has said that the EU plans to ramp up cooperation on security with countries in the region. The idea is to build on from the EU five-year strategy for Central Asia launched in 2007.³¹

Reports noted that Kazakhstan and Russia are likely to ink a deal creating a joint air defence network by 2013. Under the terms of the preliminary agreement, Kazakhstan would defend Russian airspace along their shared 4,660-mile border. For its part, Moscow would provide Kazakhstan with cutting-edge Russian S-400 Triumf surface-to-air missile systems.³²

The head of national defence enterprise Kazakhstan Engineering and the defence chief of Ukraine have held talks in Astana in order to strengthen bilateral military-technical cooperation. These include repair and modernization of aircraft and armoured vehicles, ship building, development and manufacture of anti-aircraft defence systems.³³

According to reports, the Presidents of Tajikistan and Azerbaijan have inked a number of bilateral cooperation documents which include copyright protection, mutual recognition of educational qualifications, youth policy and tourism.³⁴

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) has said that it will extend a \$197 million loan to Kazakhstan to reconstruct a highway linking up to a border crossing with Uzbekistan. The north-south road links Shymkent, provincial city of South Kazakhstan, and the border with Uzbekistan.³⁵

In other developments, Turkmenistan is prepared to produce nearly 550 billion cubic meters (bcm) of natural gas by 2016. Gas output in 2011 was close to 66 bcm.³⁶

Reports noted that Kazakhstan (ranked 83rd), Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan (tied at 107th) and Uzbekistan (127th) are the four Central Asia countries on the innovation performance scale of the Global Innovation Index 2012. The Global Innovation Index (GII) analytical report is co-published by UN agency World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and INSEAD, an international graduate business school.³⁷

³¹ "EU eyes higher levels of security, cooperation with Central Asia", Central Asia Newswire, July 12, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=12400>

³² "Russia, Kazakhstan plan joint air defense system", Central Asia Newswire, July 11, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=12396>

³³ "Ukraine, Kazakh defense chiefs strengthen military ties", Central Asia Newswire, July 11, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kazakhstan/viewstory.aspx?id=12362>

³⁴ "Tajik, Azeri presidents sign raft of agreements in Baku", Central Asia Newswire, July 12, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/viewstory.aspx?id=12403>

³⁵ "EBRD gives \$197M for Kazakh link of Europe-Central Asia highway", Central Asia Newswire, July 12, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kazakhstan/viewstory.aspx?id=12369>

³⁶ "Turkmens to increase gas output 449 bcm by 2016", Central Asia Newswire, July 9, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/turkmenistan/viewstory.aspx?id=12375>

³⁷ "Four Central Asian states listed on Global Innovation Index", Central Asia Newswire, July 11, 2012, <http://www.universalnewswires.com/centralasia/kyrgyzstan/viewstory.aspx?id=12392>

Russia

- **Kofi Annan to visit Moscow to discuss the Syrian crisis; Russia will not support sanctions against Syria; Russia is ready for easing visa formalities with the European Union; Kyrgyzstan to raise lease fees for Russia's military bases in 2014; Russia's Constitutional Court has ruled that the protocol on accession to WTO is lawful; Warships of three Russian fleets are headed for the Mediterranean for drill combat and training missions; Duma has ratified the protocol on Russia's WTO accession; An anti-defamation law passed by the State Duma; Bill on foreign funded NGO's passed by the Duma; Russia and Ukraine sign agreements for mutual cooperation; Russia-Israel trade turnover grows to \$960 million in Jan-April 2012; OSCE Parliamentary Assembly passes Magnitsky resolution; Russia urges Armenia to join CIS free trade zone agreements**

According to reports, the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for the Syrian Crisis Kofi Annan will travel to Moscow on July 16-17, 2012 in order to discuss the latest events in Syria with the Russian Foreign Minister. They are also likely to discuss a three-month extension of the mandate of the U.N. Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) that expires on the night from July 20 to July 21.³⁸

In another development, the First Deputy of Russia's UN envoy Alexander Pankin has said that Russia is prepared to compromise in discussing a UN Security Council resolution on prolonging the mandate of the UN supervision mission in Syria, but it will not support sanctions against the present incumbent.³⁹

President Putin has said that Russia is ready to ease visa formalities with the European Union as part of a rapprochement with Brussels.⁴⁰

Reports noted that Kyrgyzstan will increase the fees for three military bases Russia leases on its territory. At present Russia pays 15 million roubles to Bishkek as per the agreement signed in 2007. However, the increase in fees will extend to the Kant airbase.⁴¹

Russia's Constitutional Court upheld the protocol on Russia's accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) as conforming to the Constitution. The Constitutional Court announced its verdict following an inquiry made by a group of MPs who contested the constitutionality of certain provisions of the international treaty and its ratification procedure.⁴²

According to reports, warships of three Russian fleets (Northern, Baltic and Black Sea) have set

³⁸ "Annan to visit to Moscow to discuss Syrian crisis", ITAR-TASS, July 13, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/472363.html>

³⁹ "Russia will not support sanctions against Syria", ITAR-TASS, July 14, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/472459.html>

⁴⁰ "RF ready for cancelling visa formalities with EU - Putin", ITAR-TASS, July 15, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/468150.html>

⁴¹ "Kyrgyzstan to raise lease fees for Russia's military bases in 2014", ITAR-TASS, July 11, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/469772.html>

⁴² "Constitutional Court says protocol on accession to WTO lawful", ITAR-TASS, July 9, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/468408.html>

off on a voyage to the Mediterranean for drill combat and training tasks in the Mediterranean and Black Seas.⁴³

The Russian State Duma has ratified Protocol on Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization by 238 votes to 208 with one abstention. The lower chamber of Russian parliament has 450 deputies. A simple majority of votes was enough for the bill to be passed.⁴⁴

In another development, Russia's State Duma has passed an anti-defamation bill envisaging criminal liability for defamation and libel. As per the provision of the law, a person deliberately spreading false information that dishonours another person and harms his or her reputation will be fined up to 500,000 roubles. Defamation made in a public statement or in mass media carries a fine of up to one million roubles and defamation with the abuse of power envisages a fine of up to two million roubles. Tougher sanctions are envisaged for false statements about someone's disease hazardous for others – from 500,000 to three million roubles. Other sanctions include compulsory labour for a term of up to 480 hours.⁴⁵

The State Duma has passed a bill on non-governmental (non-commercial) organizations (NGOs) funded from abroad. The bill, initiated by the ruling party, gives the status of "foreign agents" to foreign-funded NGOs involved in political activity.⁴⁶

According to reports, leaders of Russia and Ukraine have signed several documents following the 5th meeting of the Russian-Ukrainian inter-state commission co-chaired by President Vladimir Putin and his Ukrainian counterpart Viktor Yanukovich. These include; a memorandum on integration and cooperation between the Russian Federal Agency for Nuclear Energy and the Ukrainian Energy Ministry; a Joint statement of the presidents of Russia and Ukraine; a Declaration on the content of Russian-Ukrainian partnership; a joint statement on delimitation of sea water areas in the Azov and Black Seas; an inter-governmental agreement on interaction in warning about emergency situations linked to the activities of military units of the Black Sea fleet in the territory of Ukraine and liquidation of their consequences; an inter-governmental agreement on parallel operations of the two countries' energy systems.⁴⁷

In other developments, on the sidelines of the conference of Russia's ambassadors and heads of diplomatic missions in Moscow, Russia's Ambassador to Israel has said that Russian-Israeli trade relations are developing and bilateral trade turnover reached 960 million U.S. dollars in the first four months of the year 2012.⁴⁸

⁴³ "Warships of three Russian fleets head for Mediterranean", ITAR-TASS, July 10, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/469401.html>

⁴⁴ "Duma ratifies Protocol on Russia's WTO accession", ITAR-TASS, July 10, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/469317.html>

⁴⁵ "Russian State Duma passes anti-defamation law", ITAR-TASS, July 13, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/472002.html>

⁴⁶ "Russia State Duma passes bill on foreign-funded NGOs in second reading", ITAR-TASS, July 13, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/472007.html>

⁴⁷ "Russia, Ukraine signs a dozen documents on mutual coop", ITAR-TASS, July 12, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/471609.html>

⁴⁸ "Russian-Israeli trade turnover grows to \$960 mln in Jan-April 2012", ITAR-TASS, July 10, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/469186.html>

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has passed the so-called Magnitsky resolution at its 21st annual session in Monaco. The document, entitled Rule of Law in Russia: Case of Sergei Magnitsky, has supported the 2011 decision of the US State Department, the UK Foreign Office and the Dutch Parliament to impose visa bans on some 60 Russian officials believed to be involved in the death of Sergei Magnitsky as a result of the Russian authorities inaction. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has called on national parliaments of member countries to “take action to impose visa sanctions and asset freezes on persons responsible for the false arrest, torture, denial of medical care and death of Sergei Magnitsky.”⁴⁹

According to reports, Russian Federation Council Chairperson Valentina Matviyenko has urged Armenia to speed up its accession to the CIS free trade zone agreement. The CIS free trade zone agreement was signed on October 18, 2011 in St. Petersburg by the heads of government from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Tajikistan, Moldova, and Kyrgyzstan. Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan did not sign the document but had said that they would join in later. The Eurasian Economic Community consists of Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan with Armenia as an observer. A new comprehensive Eurasian Union treaty is expected to be signed by January 1, 2015.⁵⁰

D. West Asia

Iran

- **Chinese firms are investing in Iran’s oil fields; South Korea may resume oil imports from Iran; Iran slams US objection to Iran as deputy of Arms Trade Treaty Summit; India begins rupee payments for Iranian oil imports**

According to reports, Iranian Oil Minister, Rostam Qasem, has said that Chinese companies are now investing US\$ 20 billion in Iranian oil fields in North and South Azadegan, and Yadavaran regions to increase current levels of production to 700,000 barrels per day. Several contracts have been signed over recent months to develop and exploit oil wells in 12 new oil fields.⁵¹

In another development, reports noted that South Korea may resume oil imports from Iran as early as next month. South Korea government has concluded tentatively that it would accept Iran’s proposal to supply oil to South Korea on its own tankers. Iran has planned to provide US\$ 1 billion worth sovereign guarantees to its tankers that carry crude oil to South Korea.⁵² Iran has

⁴⁹ “OSCE Parliamentary Assembly passes Magnitsky resolution”, ITAR-TASS, July 9, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/467514.html>

⁵⁰ “Matviyenko urges Armenia to join CIS free trade zone agt, Eurasian integration”, ITAR-TASS, July 12, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/470670.html>

⁵¹ “Oil minister: China investing dlrs 20bn in Azadegan, Yadavaran oil fields”, Islamic Republic News Agency, July 8, 2012, at <http://www.irna.ir/News/Economic/Oil-minister,-China-investing-dlrs-20bn-in-Azadegan,-Yadavaran-oil-fields/80219468>

⁵² “South Korea may resume oil imports from Iran - local media”, Xinhua news agency, July 13, 2012, at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2012-07/13/c_131714358.htm

been shipping oil to its main Asian buyers – China, India, South Korea and Japan - despite EU and US sanctions against its crude sales.⁵³

Meanwhile, according to reports, three foreign envoys in Iran have said sanctions imposed by the US and the EU on Iranian oil exports will have a negative impact on the world economy. The Italian ambassador has said that the sanctions will not have any impact on Iran, but will affect the world oil market; the Vietnamese envoy reiterated this, while Brazil has said it is against unilateral sanctions against Iran.⁵⁴

Reports noted that the Iranian representative at the United Nations has strongly reacted to US objection to the selection of Iran as deputy of the Arms Trade Treaty Summit. The US delegation harshly criticised the selection and accused Iran of “perusing “illegal” nuclear activities, deployment of arms to Lebanon’s Hezbollah as well as Syria and disturbing international peace and security”. The Iranian delegation has questioned American credentials and asked UN members to judge the issue themselves.⁵⁵

In other developments, according to reports, India has begun using its own currency to purchase Iranian oil. A member of the Federation of Export Organisations of India has said that the move will bolster trade between the two countries as Iran will need to use the rupees earned to buy goods from New Delhi. India procures about 12 per cent of its oil requirements from Tehran. India, along with countries like China, has said that it will abide by United Nations sanctions and not follow those imposed by Western countries.⁵⁶

Syria

- **Syrian ambassador to Iraq defects; Syrian opposition figure rules out dialogue with Al-Assad following another massacre; UN mission head says contributing to facilitating dialogue in Syria**

According to reports, Syria’s ambassador to Iraq, Nawaf al-Fares, has announced that he has defected and joined the revolution against President Bashar al-Assad. He is the first senior diplomat to quit the Syrian government since the start of crisis. Al-Fares has said that government forces have been killing civilians during the crackdown on the 16-month old uprising. He did not give details of his location.⁵⁷

⁵³ “Iran shipping oil to “top” Asian buyers despite sanctions - Tehran report”, Fars News Agency website, July 14, 2012, at <http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9103086276>

⁵⁴ “Foreign envoys say oil sanctions on Iran bad for world economy - Tehran report”, Islamic Republic News Agency, July 14, 2012, at <http://www.irna.ir/News/Economic/Anti-Iran-sanctions-to-create-tension-in-world-energy-markets,-foreign-envoys/80228208>

⁵⁵ “Delegation slams US criticism to Iran as deputy of Arms Trade Treaty Summit”, ISNA website, July 13, 2012

⁵⁶ “India Starts Rupee Payments for Iranian Oil Imports”, Fars News Agency website, July 14, 2012, at <http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9103086274>

⁵⁷ “Syrian ambassador defects, says joined revolution”, Reuters, July 12, 2012, at <http://in.reuters.com/article/2012/07/11/syria-crisis-ambassador-statement-idINDEE86A0J920120711>

In a separate report of an interview to the media on July 12, 2012, Al-Fares said that he would support the people's revolution, particularly the Free Syrian Army, the Local Coordination Committees, and revolutionaries.⁵⁸ He has also stated that more defections are likely from the Syrian diplomatic corps as there are an increasing number of officials who no longer identify with serving a state that has responded with brutality to calls for openness and democracy.⁵⁹

Meanwhile, according to reports, following another massacre in Hama apparently resulting from Syrian military operations, the head of the Syrian National Council has said this is another indication that dialogue with the Assad regime is not possible. Another member of the Council has accused the West of indifference. At least 267 people were reported killed and more than 300 injured in this latest round of killings. The Syrian General Revolutionary Council has said that women and children were killed after having their throats slashed, being hung or burned to death.⁶⁰

In other developments, the Head of the UN Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS), General Robert Mood, has said that following Kofi Annan's latest visit to Syria, the mission is engaging in localities to facilitate dialogue between parties in order to build confidence and end the increasing spiral of violence. He said that progress has been made in the Deir Ezzor locality with a significant reduction in violence. He underlined the need for the Syria government and opposition to negotiate to end the crisis. UNSMIS observers are still based in different provinces and engage with parties on the ground.⁶¹

Israel/Palestine

- **Israel seeking new missiles, vessels; Palestinian National Authority President Mahmoud Abbas says he will resume attempts for UN recognition if talks not relaunched**

According to reports, the Israeli Navy is seeking to install short and long-range surface-to-surface missiles on new vessels that it hopes to purchase in the coming year. The new requirement is based on Israel's desire to assist large-scale IDF ground offensives in the Gaza Strip, Lebanon or Syria. The navy has played a minimal support role in Israel's recent wars and operations.⁶²

In another development, according to reports, Palestinian National Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has said in an interview that while negotiations with Israel were his "first, second and third option", he would resume attempts to gain UN recognition if talks were not relaunched. He said that negotiations hinged on Israel releasing 123 Palestinian prisoners who have been in Israeli

⁵⁸ "Defected Syrian ambassador says Al-Asad can only leave by force", Al-Jazeera TV, July 12, 2012

⁵⁹ "Syria's ex-envoy to Iraq tells Italian paper more diplomats likely to defect", L'Unita, Rome, July 12, 2012

⁶⁰ "Syrian opposition figure rules out dialogue with Al-Asad after Hama massacre", Anadolu news agency, July 13, 2012; See "Turkey condemns massacre in Syria's Hama", Anadolu news agency, July 13, 2012, at <http://www.aa.com.tr/en/news/64636-turkey-condemns-massacre-in-syria-s-hama>

⁶¹ "Mood: UN Observer Mission Contributes to Facilitating Dialogue", Syrian Aran News Agency, July 13, 2012, at <http://www.sana.sy/eng/21/2012/07/13/431261.htm>

⁶² "Concerned by missile threat, navy seeks new ships", The Jerusalem Post, July 9, 2012, at <http://www.jpost.com/Defense/Article.aspx?id=276800>

jails since prior to the 1993 Oslo Accords. Attempts to gain UNSC recognition last year failed when Abbas could not garner enough support in the Council. The UNESCO remains the only UN agency that has recognised Palestine as a state. The PNA plans to attempt to gain at least non-member status in the UN General Assembly which could be significant as it will allow Palestinians to bring cases against Israel in the International Criminal Court.⁶³

Yemen

- **Yemen's President Abdrabu Mansour Hadi orders formation of Dialogue Preparatory Committee**

According to reports, Yemen's President Abdrabu Mansour Hadi issued the republican decree No 30 for 2012 on July 14, 2012 forming a technical committee to prepare for a comprehensive national dialogue. The move came after more than a month of liaising with the groups mentioned in a power-transfer deal and its UN-sponsored implementation mechanism. The deal and its mechanism called for holding the dialogue in early stages of the second transition period, which started after electing the president in late February. The committee comprised of 25 members from all concerned groups specified by the deal and its responsibility is to prepare for the dialogue, scheduled to take place in November this year. According to the decree, the committee is not authorized to assume acts related to the ideas of the dialogue and its outcomes. The groups to participate in the dialogue are: the national coalition (the General People's Congress and its allies), the national council (the Joint Meeting Parties and its allies), other active political parties and forces, the youth movements, the Southern Movement, Harak, the Shiite Houthi Group, SCOs and the women. The committee will start its job in ten days since its formation, with the first step expected to be electing its head, first and second deputies and a reporter.⁶⁴

UAE

- **UAE starts up pipeline to bypass Strait of Hormuz**

According to reports, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) inaugurated an overland oil pipeline on July 14, 2012 that bypasses the Strait of Hormuz, giving the country insurance against repeated Iranian threats to block the Strait. The 380-kilometer (236-mile) Abu Dhabi Crude Oil Pipeline passes across western desert dunes and over the craggy Hajar Mountains to the city of Fujairah on the UAE's Indian Ocean coast, south of the Strait of Hormuz. Until now, all Emirati exports were loaded in the Gulf and then sailed out through the Strait of Hormuz. Once it is running at full capacity, the pipeline could allow the UAE to ship as much as two-thirds of its peak production through the eastern port city. It is designed to carry at least 1.5 million barrels a day of crude, though capacity is expected to eventually rise to 1.8 million barrels daily.⁶⁵

⁶³ "Abbas: We will resume UN statehood bid if talks fail", The Jerusalem Post, July 7, 2012, <http://www.jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=276604>

⁶⁴ "Yemen Forms Dialogue Preparatory Committee, Outlines Dialogue Themes, Outcomes", *Yemen Post*, July 14, 2012, at <http://yemenpost.net/Detail123456789.aspx?ID=3&SubID=5704&MainCat=3>

⁶⁵ "UAE starts up pipeline to bypass Strait of Hormuz", *Arab News*, July 16, 2012, at <http://arabnews.com/uae-starts-pipeline-bypass-strait-hormuz-1>

E. Africa

- **India and South Africa to work on enhancing small business base; South Africa suspends Yusuf Saloojee over MTN bribery case; Egypt and Saudi Arabia discuss regional stability; Second African Women Economic Summit insists on women empowerment; African leaders discuss regional issues at the AU Summit; US discusses post-election security issues with Libya; US held consultations with Egyptian leaders over democratic transition**

According to reports, Indian High Commissioner to South Africa, Virendra Gupta said that more than 70 small and medium scale businesses from India would interact with the local industry to help South Africa evolve a strong Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) base to boost growth and job creation, while showcasing their products at the annual South African International Trade Exhibition (SAITEX) exhibition. Ambassador Gupta said that India would be a partner country at SAITEX this year, with the biggest-ever participation to show the kind of collaboration that was possible between India and the countries of Southern Africa.⁶⁶

In another development, according to reports, South Africa suspended its former ambassador to Iran amid allegations that he took bribe from MTN Group Ltd. to help the mobile-phone operator get an Iranian business license. The South African foreign ministry said that Yusuf Saloojee, who was Pretoria's ambassador to Iran when MTN obtained a business license in 2005, was suspended early July 2012. The foreign ministry has been investigating whether Saloojee committed any wrongdoing as ambassador, but hasn't released anything on the probe as of yet.⁶⁷

Reports noted that President Mohammed Mursi of Egypt visited Saudi Arabia for his first foreign trip since taking office and met with King Abdullah, along with Prince Salman bin Abdul Aziz, crown prince, deputy prime minister and defence minister. Both the leaders discussed various issues related to both the countries as well as regional stability. Earlier, Riyadh has deposited \$1 billion into the Egyptian Central Bank as a loan guarantee. Egypt also received a \$1 billion pledge of assistance from the Saudi-based Islamic Development Bank. Saudi Arabia has also allocated \$250 million for natural gas exports to Egypt.⁶⁸

The Second African Women Economic Summit opened in Lagos, Nigeria with a call on more decision makers to promote women empowerment and to remove the barriers that impede women's economic progress throughout the African continent. In her opening remarks, Ms Cecilia Akintomide, Vice-President & Secretary General of the African Development Bank (AfDB) said that Africa must focus on solving the problems faced by African women such as education, access to health, and capacity building. African women, who represent over half of the population, hold only 26% of small size businesses in Sub-Saharan Africa and only 15% on the global front.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ "Indian SMEs, South Africa to work on enlarging small business base", *The Economic Times*, July 11, 2012, at http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-07-11/news/32633213_1_indian-smes-sme-sector-sme-development

⁶⁷ Rubinfeld, Samuel (2012), "South Africa Suspends Ambassador Amid MTN Bribery Case", *The Wall Street Journal*, July 12, 2012, at <http://blogs.wsj.com/corruption-currents/2012/07/12/south-africa-suspends-ambassador-amid-mtn-bribery-case/>

⁶⁸ "Egyptian President Mursi and Saudi King Abdullah discuss regional stability", *Al Arabiya*, July 12, 2012, at <http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/07/11/225853.html>

⁶⁹ Capucine Dayen (2012), "African women's economic summit opens in Lagos", *Afrik News*, July 13, 2012, at <http://www.afrik-news.com/article19254.html>

Meanwhile, according to reports, US Deputy Secretary of State William Burns visited Tripoli for talks with Libyan interim Prime Minister Abdel Rahim al-Kib on enhancing security after historic elections. He said that a stable, prosperous future for Libya would rest on achieving progress on security, including Libya's ability to secure its borders, control weapons and prevent any group from undermining the progress made thus far. Burns praised the Libyan authorities for guiding the country through a complicated transition period and hailed the elections as a "critical milestone" on the path to establishing lasting democratic institutions. Talks also touched on health and education as areas for cooperation.⁷⁰

Reports noted that US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton held talks with Egypt's top military leaders and asked them to contribute in the country's full transition to democracy. After her first meeting with Morsi, Egypt's first democratically elected president, Clinton held talks with Field Marshal Hussein Tantawi, the country's interim military ruler. It is to be noted that Morsi is locked in a standoff with the military after he ordered parliament to reconvene, defying an army decision to disband the house.⁷¹

In other developments, according to reports, at the African Union (AU) meeting in Addis Ababa, the African leaders said that Africa faces a serious threat from al Qaeda and its allies trying to set up a sanctuary in northern Mali. They also pondered political and military strategies aimed at reuniting the divided West African state, which along with Guinea Bissau has put blots on the continent's democratic credentials. They also sought to reconcile feuding neighbours Sudan and South Sudan.⁷²

II. DEFENCE REVIEW

National

- **Indigenously built nuclear-capable surface-to-surface Agni-I missile successfully test fired; SFC can independently fire the 700-km range nuclear capable Agni-1 missile**

According to reports, India on July 13, 2012, test fired its indigenously built nuclear-capable surface-to-surface Agni-I missile from Wheeler Island off the Odisha coast, about 200 km east of Bhubaneswar. The missile, which has a range of 700 km and payload of one tonne, was test fired at 10.09 am by the armed forces. MVKV Prasad, Director, Integrated Test Range (ITR) of the Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) at Chandipur stated, "It was a perfect test. The missile hit the target with 100% accuracy." DRDO chief VK Saraswat and Chief Controller (missiles and strategic systems) Avinash Chander witnessed the test. Already inducted in the

⁷⁰ "US envoy Burns visits Libya after landmark vote", *AFP*, July 14, 2012, at <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iVudMmCBuWe0C9-j6rrN3CpawEA?docId=CNG.40992966a83ac7a41c76618c19df3ca9.601>

⁷¹ "Clinton meets Egypt generals after urging 'smooth transition'", *Ahram*, July 15, 2012, at <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/47719/Egypt/Politics-/Clinton-meets-Egypt-generals-after-urging-smooth-t.aspx>

⁷² Pascal Fletcher and Aaron Maasho (2012), "North Mali 'terrorist' haven threatens Africa - leaders", July 14, 2012, at <http://in.reuters.com/article/2012/07/14/africa-security-mali-qaeda-idINDEE86D04720120714>

Army, Agni-I was first test fired in January 25, 2002. Since then DRDO has conducted several trials of the missile. It is meant to bridge the gap between indigenously built short-range missile Prithvi and Agni-II that has a range of 2000 km. The test of Agni-I comes after the successful launch of 5,000-km range Agni-V on April 19.⁷³

In another development, according to reports, the Strategic Forces Command (SFC) of the Indian Army can now independently fire the 700-km range nuclear capable Agni-1 missile when the occasion arises. The SFC will need no help from defence scientists as the test firing of the missile from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Wheeler Island, Balasore in Odisha on Friday demonstrated that SFC had acquired complete knowledge of it. The SFC which forms part of the Nuclear Command Authority (NCA) in the country is the agency that will have to use the missiles if need arises. DRDO chief and scientific advisor to defence minister, V K Saraswat told, "When the test firing was carried out by the SFC, we were merely spectators. The DRDO has developed the technology and the production facility of the missiles is in place. The SFC now has the capability to fire the missiles." Saraswat said the Agni-1 missile would add strength to the defence capabilities of the country. "There are no more improvements needed for the Agni-1 as such but we have our own plans of developing variants," Saraswat added.⁷⁴

International

● Pentagon's 2013 budget proposal underestimates budget spending by 4.7 Percent; Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki calls for the U.S. to speed up the transfer of weapons to Iraq

According to a Congressional Budget Office (CBO) report, in its 2013 budget proposal, the Pentagon has underestimated how much its five-year spending plan will cost by \$123 billion, or 4.7 percent. To reach its conclusions, CBO assumed Congress would undo many of the Pentagon's budget-cutting proposals. However, Pentagon Press Secretary George Little said at a July 12 briefing, "CBO's analysis makes clear that if Congress blocks proposals to achieve cost savings contained in the department's 2013 budget, particularly efforts to address skyrocketing personnel costs, we will risk violating the strict spending caps that Congress itself imposed on the department in the Budget Control Act."⁷⁵

In another development, according to reports, Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki on July 15, 2012 called for the U.S. to speed up the transfer of weapons to Iraq, which lacks the ability to defend its airspace or borders, six months after American troops withdrew. The Iraqi premier also pointedly said during a meeting with Gen. James Mattis, the visiting head of U.S. Central Command, that only the central government would decide which arms purchases would be made,

⁷³ "India successfully tests N-capable Agni-I missile," Hindustan Times, July 13, 2012, at <http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/Odisha/India-successfully-tests-N-capable-Agni-I-missile/Article1-888153.aspx>

⁷⁴ "Army's Strategic Forces Command can fire Agni-I on its own," TNN, Jul 15, 2012, at http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-07-15/hyderabad/32684733_1_agni-1-integrated-test-range-avinash-chander

⁷⁵ "CBO: Pentagon Underestimates Spending by 4.7 Percent," Defence News, July 13, 2012, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120713/DEFREG02/307130007/CBO-Pentagon-Underestimates-Spending-by-4-7-Percent?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE>

in an apparent swipe at Kurdish complaints over the acquisition of F-16 warplanes. “His excellency called for the acceleration of equipping the army, in a way that makes it able to defend Iraq, and its sovereignty and independence,” a statement issued by the premier’s office said.⁷⁶

III. UNITED NATIONS (UN) REVIEW

- **UN Secretary-General: UN Mission in Syria could play a valuable role; Ban Ki-moon asks Security Council to respond immediately to the crisis; UNSC welcomes elections in Libya; India sends aid to Yemen on UN’s request; India reassures that it will meet the MDGs by 2015; UN Report: India, third most favoured investment destination**

In a report to UN Security Council, the UN Secretary-General has noted the ‘valuable role’ the UN Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) could play in the country. With the term of the mission coming to end on July 20, 2012, Ban Ki-moon has stated the role that the mission could play in supporting political dialogue and local confidence-building and also in establishing facts on the ground and reporting clearly and objectively to the international community. The Secretary-General, in the report, has also put forward options for reorientation of UNMIS in case the violence persists or openings for political dialogue develop.⁷⁷

Separately, after Russia objected to a draft resolution on Syria, Ban Ki-moon asked the Security Council to act immediately on the Syrian crisis and warned that any failure would be giving ‘a license for further massacres’.⁷⁸

In another development, the first national elections held in Libya after nearly five decades was welcomed by the UN Security Council. The Council also congratulated the Libyan authorities and the people for the largely peaceful elections and condemned isolated incidents of violence.⁷⁹

Reports noted that following an UN appeal to the international community to assist Yemen, India extended humanitarian food assistance comprising rice.⁸⁰

In other developments, after certain UN bodies, including WHO expressed fear that India may miss the Millennium Development Goals in maternal and child health, India reassured that thus

⁷⁶ “Iraq PM Calls for U.S. To Speed Up Arms Transfers,” Defence News, July 15, 2012, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120715/DEFREG03/307150008/Iraq-PM-Calls-U-S-Speed-Up-Arms-Transfers?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE>

⁷⁷ “In report, Ban outlines options for future of UN Supervision Mission in Syria”, *UN News Centre*, July 11, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=42450&Cr=syria&Cr1=>

⁷⁸ “UN Council’s failure on Syria will be ‘license’ to kill: Ban”, *Indian Express*, July 14, 2012 at <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/un-councils-failure-on-syria-will-be-license-to-kill-ban/974376/0>

⁷⁹ “Security Council welcomes holding of elections in Libya”, *UN News Centre*, July 11, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=42444&Cr=Libya&Cr1=>

⁸⁰ “India sending humanitarian food assistance to Yemen”, *Zeeneews.india.com*, July 09, 2012 at http://zeeneews.india.com/news/nation/india-sending-humanitarian-food-assistance-to-yeme_786462.html

far the country has been able to achieve a marked decline in both Under-Five Mortality Rate and Maternal Mortality Ratio. If the rate of decline continues, then India will be able to achieve the MDG target by 2015.⁸¹

According to a UN report, India is the third most favoured investment destination by major global companies after China and the United States. The report also predicted that investment inflows could increase by more than 20 per cent this year as well as the next.⁸²

⁸¹ "India dispels UN fears on meeting MDG targets", *IBNLive.com*, July 10, 2012 at <http://ibnlive.in.com/generalnewsfeed/news/india-dispels-un-fears-on-meeting-mdg-targets/1021087.html>

⁸² "India third most-favoured investment destination after China, US: UN report", *NDTV Profit*, July 08, 2012 at <http://profit.ndtv.com/News/Article/india-third-most-favoured-investment-destination-after-china-us-un-report-307508>