

# THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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## I. COUNTRY REVIEWS

### A. South Asia

#### Afghansitan

- **The head of Afghan High Peace Council Salahuddin Rabbani's visit to Pakistan postponed; NATO supplies restored by Afghanistan after private companies paid a customs duty of Rs. 80 million; US soldier killed by gunmen in Paktia province of Eastern Afghanistan**

According to reports, the visit of Salahuddin Rabbani, the head of Afghanistan High Peace Council, to Pakistan has been postponed. The delay accompanies tensions over cross-border shelling that Afghanistan blames on the Pakistani military. Salahuddin Rabbani was scheduled to arrive in Islamabad on August 8, 2012 aimed at reaching out to Taliban leaders based there. A member of the Afghanistan High Peace Council Ismail Qasimyar, on August 8 said that the trip has been postponed for about two weeks noting that more preparations are needed. However, he did not link the delay to the border issue.<sup>1</sup>

Reports noted that Afghan authorities, on August 8, 2012, restored NATO supplies after private companies paid a customs duty of Rs. 80 million. Nanhiali Faizi, a senior official of Afghan Customs, said the issue had been settled and now there was no restriction on the entry of NATO containers into Afghanistan. Earlier, Afghanistan had put restrictions on the entry of NATO containers on July 22, 2012 for non-payment of duty.<sup>2</sup>

In other developments, according to reports, on August 7, 2012, two gunmen wearing Afghan army uniforms fired on NATO troops at a base in Paktia province of eastern Afghanistan in which a US soldier was killed and two others soldiers were injured. This attack came hours after Afghanistan's defense minister stepped down following a weekend no-confidence vote in parliament. The exit of Defense Minister Abdul Rahim Wardak leaves a vacancy at the helm of the ministry that has overseen rapid expansion of the nation's army. Taliban has claimed responsibility for the attack.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Afghan official delays Pakistan trip amid tension", *Dawn*, August 8, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/08/08/afghan-official-delays-pakistan-trip-amid-tension/>

<sup>2</sup> "Afghanistan restores NATO supplies", *Dawn*, August 9, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/08/09/afghanistan-restores-nato-supplies/>

<sup>3</sup> "Gunmen in Afghan uniform kill US soldier", *Dawn*, August 8, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/08/08/gunmen-in-afghan-uniform-kill-us-soldier/>

## Pakistan

- **Reports: The United States and Pakistan reach at an understanding on joint operations against the Haqqani network however no final decision has been taken yet; Reports: Pakistan may release former Quetta Shura chief Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar; Pakistan's PM Pervez Ashraf summoned before the Supreme Court for failing to reopen corruption cases against the President**

According to reports, the United States and Pakistan have reached an understanding on joint operations against the Haqqani network but no final decision has been taken yet. Diplomatic sources noted that the issue of cross-border attacks, by the Haqqani network into Afghanistan and by TTP into Pakistan, was discussed in a series of meetings between senior US and Pakistani officials this week. Meanwhile, US and Pakistani diplomatic sources in Washington indicated that the understanding for joint operations against the Haqqani network was reached at a meeting between senior US and Pakistani military commanders in Islamabad. On August 2, 2012, Gen John Allen, the commander of US-led International Security Assistance Force, met the Pakistan Army Chief Gen Ashfaq Parvez Kayani in Islamabad. A statement issued after the meeting said the two military chiefs made 'significant progress' in improving their operational relationship.<sup>4</sup>

Meanwhile, according to reports, Pakistan may release a key Afghan Taliban commander to provide impetus to Afghanistan's ongoing reconciliation efforts with the Taliban, a move signalling Islamabad's latest approach to seek an end to the decade-long conflict in its neighbouring country. Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, who was captured in Karachi in February 2010, is ranked second in influence to Taliban head Mullah Omar. American officials believe that in addition to overseeing the Taliban's military operations, Mullah Baradar was the head of the so-called Quetta Shura. At the time of his arrest, Baradar was believed to be holding peace talks with the Afghan government and also reportedly met President Hamid Karzai.<sup>5</sup>

In other developments, according to reports, Pakistan's Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf has been summoned before the Supreme Court for failing to reopen corruption cases against the president. The move comes two months after Prime Minister Ashraf's predecessor Yousuf Raza Gilani was found guilty of contempt over the same issue and barred from office. Judge Asif Saeed Khosa said that Mr. Ashraf had been given notice "under [the] contempt of court act 2003, read with article 204 of the constitution to show cause as to why he may not be proceeded [against] in contempt of court by not complying [with the] relevant direction of the court". "He shall appear in person at the next date of hearing. Hearing adjourned until 27 August," Khosa said. The judge noted that it was unfortunate that the prime minister had failed to comply with its orders.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> "Understanding with US on joint action against Haqqanis", *Dawn*, August 6, 2012 at <http://dawn.com/2012/08/06/understanding-with-us-on-joint-action-against-haqqanis/>

<sup>5</sup> "Afghan reconciliation: Pakistan may release former chief of Quetta Shura", *The Express Tribune*, August 8, 2012 at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/419044/afghan-reconciliation-pakistan-may-release-former-chief-of-quetta-shura/>

<sup>6</sup> "Pakistan PM Raja Pervez Ashraf summoned over corruption case", *BBC*, August 8, 2012 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-19175306>

## B. East Asia

### South East Asia

- **India- Thailand foreign office consultations held in Bangkok: US firms to spend US\$ 5 billion in Indonesia; Saudi Arabia gives \$ 50 million to Myanmar Rohingyas; Thirteen dead in Myanmar in ethnic clashes; Indian flees from Abu Sayyaf captivity; US begins cleaning up Agent Orange in Vietnam**

Reports noted that India and Thailand, on August 10, 2012, took stock of ongoing measures to enhance connectivity and boost infrastructure between them, besides discussing security issues and status of negotiations on a bilateral FTA. The day-long India-Thailand Foreign Office Consultations held in Bangkok, involved from the Indian side, Sanjay Singh, Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs, while Sihasak Phuangketkeow, Permanent Secretary in the Thai Foreign Affairs Ministry, headed the Thai delegation. Both sides reviewed various elements of bilateral relationship, including follow-up on initiatives agreed during Yingluck's visit that set the course for forging a strategic partnership between the two countries.<sup>7</sup>

According to reports, the United States is likely to invest US\$ 5 billion to develop infrastructure projects in several sectors in Indonesia over the next two years. A Memorandum of Understanding in that regard was signed in Jakarta by the Director General for industrial cooperation at the Industry Ministry Agus Tjahajana and Jose W Fernandez, the US Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs. The US is keen to invest in areas such as the manufacturing, energy and transportation sectors, and in fostering green initiatives, among other things. One project to be realized under the MoU was construction of four ethanol plants, to be jointly built and operated by state owned oil and gas company PT Pertamina and the Texas-based Celanese Corporation in the US. The US is currently the fourth largest source of investment in Indonesia, having pumped USD 702.9 million into the nation in the first half of 2012. Investment is one of the biggest contributors to Indonesia's economy, which grew by 6.4% in the second quarter of 2012, beating expectations.<sup>8</sup>

In another development, Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah has ordered \$50 million in aid be sent to Rohingya Muslim minority in Myanmar. Myanmar, where at least 800,000 Rohingyas are not recognised as one of the country's many ethnic and religious groups. Last week, the Saudi cabinet condemned the violence against Muslims in northwest Myanmar and at a meeting on July 31, 2012, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in the kingdom's second city of Jeddah urged members to send Rohingya Muslims aid.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> 'India, Thailand discuss connectivity, security issues and FTA', *The Economic Times*, August 10, 2012, [http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-08-10/news/33137541\\_1\\_india-asean-fta-india-moves](http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-08-10/news/33137541_1_india-asean-fta-india-moves)

<sup>8</sup> 'US firms 'to invest \$ 5 b' in infrastructure', *The Jakarta Post*, August 12, 2012, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2012/08/09/us-firms-invest-5b-infrastructure.html>

<sup>9</sup> 'Saudi Arabia gives \$50 million aid to Myanmar Muslims', *DNA News*, August 12, 2012, [http://www.dnaindia.com/world/report\\_saudi-arabia-gives-50-million-aid-to-myanmar-muslims\\_1727134](http://www.dnaindia.com/world/report_saudi-arabia-gives-50-million-aid-to-myanmar-muslims_1727134)

According to the media reports released on August 11, 2012, at least 13 people have died in Myanmar in fresh sectarian violence. The violence erupted five days ago in the Kyauktaw township of Rakhine state. Over 300 houses and a rice mill were destroyed in arson. About 3,000 people were affected. Kyauktaw is about 120 km from the state capital Sittway. The clashes broke out between ethnic Rakhinese Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims. Authorities had imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew in Kyauktaw on August 8, 2012, bringing to seven, the total number of areas placed under curfew in the state.<sup>10</sup>

Reports noted that Kolara Veetil Biju, an Indian citizen, on August 10, 2012, escaped from the Abu Sayyaf militants in the Philippines. Biju, 37, who was working in Kuwait, was abducted at gunpoint at the Sulu province in the Philippines, on June 22, 2011. He visited that area on a vacation with his Filipino wife, and two children. The militant group, which has links with al-Qaeda, demanded a ransom of 50 lakh pesos (roughly Rs.66 lakh). K.V. Shybu, Biju's brother, initially kept in touch with the outlawed Islamist outfit that had captured at least six persons — from Malaysia, the United States, and Australia — for ransom.<sup>11</sup>

In other developments in the region, according to reports, on August 9, 2012, after years of rebuffing Vietnamese requests for assistance in a cleanup, the United States inaugurated its first major effort to address the environmental effects of the long war. The programme is expected to cost \$43 million and take four years, was officially welcomed with smiles and handshakes at the ceremony. Over a decade of war, the United States sprayed about 20 million gallons of Agent Orange and other herbicides in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, halting only after scientists commissioned by the Agriculture Department issued a report expressing concerns that dioxin showed "a significant potential to increase birth defects." By the time the spraying stopped, Agent Orange and other herbicides had destroyed 2 million hectares, or 5.5 million acres, of forest and cropland, an area roughly the size of New Jersey.<sup>12</sup>

## C. Russia

- **Russia's Deputy Minister of Economic Development: Average annual capital flight from Russia to reach US\$ 50 billion in 2012; President Putin: Russia was prepared for the 2008 military action in Georgia; Norwegian Statoil in talks with Gazprom over Shtokman; Russia handed over command of Blackseafor to Turkey; Russia signs an oil deal with Syria**

<sup>10</sup> 'fresh violence between Buddhists and Muslims leaves 13 dead in Myanmar', *Times of India*, August 11, 2012, [http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-08-11/south-asia/33152424\\_1\\_fresh-violence-rohingya-muslims-myanmar](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-08-11/south-asia/33152424_1_fresh-violence-rohingya-muslims-myanmar)

<sup>11</sup> 'After 14 months, he gave captors the slip', *The Hindu*, August 11, 2012, <http://www.thehindu.com/news/states/kerala/article3751688.ece>

<sup>12</sup> '4 decades on, US starts cleanup of Agent Orange in Vietnam', *The New York Times*, August 9, 2012, [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/10/world/asia/us-moves-to-address-agent-orange-contamination-in-vietnam.html?\\_r=1&pagewanted=all](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/10/world/asia/us-moves-to-address-agent-orange-contamination-in-vietnam.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all)



According to reports, Russia's Deputy Minister of Economic Development Andrei Klepach has said that the average annual capital flight from Russia in 2012 will reach 50 billion U.S. dollars.<sup>13</sup>

President Vladimir Putin has said that Russia had pre-planned the 2008 military action in Georgia with the military plan endorsed by him in the end of 2006 and the beginning of 2007.<sup>14</sup>

Reports noted that Norwegian Statoil is continuing negotiations with Russian Gazprom to commercialise the Shtokman project. The Shtokman field consists of large proven natural gas resources and Phase 1 of the Shtokman Project is being implemented by Shtokman Development AG. This company was established in February 2008 wherein Gazprom with 51 percent, Total S.A. with 25 percent and Statoil ASA with 24 percent share are the three partners. The plan for Phase 1 is to produce 23.7 billion cubic metres of natural gas per year.<sup>15</sup>

According to reports, Russia handed over the command of the international Black Sea Naval Force (Blackseafor) to Turkey. The Black Sea Naval Force was established in Istanbul on April 2, 2001. Black Sea coastal states – Bulgaria, Georgia, Russia, Romania, Turkey and Ukraine – agreed to set up an international naval force, expressing their readiness to contribute to ensuring regional security and stability and strengthening good neighbourly relations.<sup>16</sup>

In other developments, reports noted that Russia has signed an oil deal with Syria according to which Syria will export its crude oil to Russia in exchange for refined oil products. Syrian Oil Minister Said Hneidi has said that production was less than 140,000 barrels per day.<sup>17</sup>

## D. West Asia

### Iran

- **Iran pushes for release of pilgrims in Syria; Iran earthquakes kill 250; Iran hosts emergency consultations on Syria; Iran to attend Mecca OIC meeting**

According to reports, Iran last week stepped up efforts for the return of 48 pilgrims held in Damascus. Tehran has said that some members of the group were retired Revolutionary Guards and military members and has insisted they were in Syria for a Shia pilgrimage. Iran has requested

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<sup>13</sup> "Average annual capital flight from Russia to reach USD 50 bln", ITAR-TASS, August 6, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/489834.html>

<sup>14</sup> "Putin admits Russia planned response to Georgian aggression beforehand", ITAR-TASS, August 8, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/491720.html>

<sup>15</sup> "Statoil continues talks with Gazprom on Shtokman", ITAR-TASS, August 9, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/492049.html>

<sup>16</sup> "Russia hands over command of Blackseafor to Turkey", ITAR-TASS, August 10, 2012, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/493039.html>

<sup>17</sup> "Moscow Signs Oil Deal With Syria, Sends Ships", The Moscow Times, August 6, 2012, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/business/article/moscow-signs-oil-deal-with-syria-sends-ships/463181.html>

Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Qatar, all of which have publicly pledged support to the Syrian opposition, to assist in the release of the Iranians.<sup>18</sup> The Free Syrian Army has claimed the kidnapping. Iranian Foreign Minister, Ali Akbar Salehi, visited Ankara last week to confer with the Turkish Foreign Minister on this issue.<sup>19</sup>

In a tragic development, two strong earthquakes that hit north-west Iran on August 11, 2012 have killed more than 250 people and injured around 1,800. The earthquakes which struck near Tabriz and in East Azerbaijan provinces measured 6.4 and 6.3 and were followed by dozens of aftershocks.<sup>20</sup>

In another development, reports noted that Iran convened emergency consultations to discuss the Syrian conflict in Tehran on August 9, 2012. Around 30 countries attended the meeting, including Russia and China. The Iraqi foreign minister who attended the talks said no conclusions or declarations were made by the participants, and the meeting was meant to “keep interest alive, after Kofi Annan’s failure to find a solution for Syria.” The meeting agenda was earlier announced as including “denouncing violence and establishment of national dialogue in Syria”.<sup>21</sup> Iran only announced the meeting a week ago and hence many key diplomats did not attend. Following the talks, the Iranian foreign minister called the meeting a “success” and said more countries would be invited to participate next time.<sup>22</sup> Meanwhile, Iran has announced that it will attend the emergency meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on August 14 and 15, 2012.<sup>23</sup>

## Iraq

### ● Multiple insurgent attacks hit Iraq; Al Qaeda front group claims Iraq attacks

According to reports, a car bomb that exploded near a gathering of Shiite Muslims south of Baghdad on August 8, 2012 killed more than 11 people. Wednesday’s attack was followed by a string of attacks on August 10, 2012, targeting worshippers, a checkpoint, and a police patrol in

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<sup>18</sup> “Iran pushes for return of 48 ‘pilgrims’ from Syria in diplomatic offensive”, The Guardian, August 8, 2012, at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/aug/08/iran-return-pilgrims-syria>

<sup>19</sup> “Salehi arrives in Ankara”, Islamic Republic News Agency, August 7, 2012, at <http://www.irna.ir/News/Politic/Salehi-arrives-in-Ankara/80266441>

<sup>20</sup> “Iran: two earthquakes in north-west leave hundreds dead”, The Guardian, August 12, 2012, at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/aug/11/iran-two-earthquakes-killing-40?newsfeed=true>; “Iran earthquake relief efforts begin after 250 killed”, BBC News, August 12, 2012, at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-19231118>;

<sup>21</sup> “28 countries attend consultative meeting on Syria in Tehran”, Islamic Republic News Agency, August 9, 2012, at <http://www.irna.ir/News/Politic/28-countries-attend-consultative-meeting-on-Syria-in-Tehran/80269091>

<sup>22</sup> “Iran, Excluded From Other Meetings on Syria, Hosts Its Own”, The New York Times, August 9, 2012, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/10/world/middleeast/iran-hosts-its-own-meetings-on-syria-conflict.html?ref=iraq>

<sup>23</sup> “Ahmadinejad: OIC Conference Should Strengthen Solidarity, Decrease Differences”, Fars News Agency, August 13, 2012, at <http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9104254007>



different parts of the country. The attacks followed a threat issued by Al Qaeda in Iraq a month ago to kill judges and investigators.<sup>24</sup> Meanwhile, al Qaeda's front group in Iraq, the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), has claimed 28 attacks in June and July this year, which it says killed more than 70 people. The group claims the attacks were part ISI's campaign to recapture territories that it abandoned between 2006 and 2008.<sup>25</sup>

## Israel/Palestine

- **Hamas prepared to close tunnels if Rafah border opens permanently**

According to reports, a Hamas official has said that it is ready to shut down the smuggling tunnels that operate between Gaza and Egypt if the latter opens the Rafah border permanently. Egypt closed its border with the Gaza Strip following the killing of 16 Egyptian border guards on August 5, 2012. Egyptian officials have vaguely accused Palestinians of having a role in the attack but have not identified any suspects. Hamas officials have said it does not have any proof of a Palestinian role and has condemned the incident.<sup>26</sup>

## Lebanon

- **Lebanon not to attend Tehran meeting on Syria; US sanctions Hezbollah for role in Syrian crisis**

According to reports, sticking to its disassociation policy on the Syrian conflict, Lebanon informed Iran that it would not attend the emergency consultative talks that were held in Tehran last week.<sup>27</sup> Meanwhile, the US has slapped sanctions on Hezbollah for allegedly supporting the Syrian government. It has also blamed the group for coordinating Iranian assistance to the Syrian government. When asked what the sanctions might accomplish, the US Treasury Department said it hopes other countries will follow suit thus restricting Hezbollah operations. The US State Department has recently warned against possible attacks by Hezbollah in Europe and around the world.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> "Iraq: Insurgents Attack Worshipers at Mosque", The New York Times, August 10, 2012, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/11/world/middleeast/iraq-insurgents-attack-worshipers-at-mosque.html?ref=iraq>

<sup>25</sup> "Qaeda front group claims dozens of Iraq attacks", The Daily Star, August 13, 2012, at <http://dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Aug-13/184505-qaeda-front-group-claims-dozens-of-iraq-attacks.ashx#axzz23P9HrI5G>

<sup>26</sup> "Hamas 'ready to close tunnels' if Egypt reopens Rafah", Maan News Agency, August 6, 2012, at <http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=511962>

<sup>27</sup> "Lebanon will not attend Tehran meeting on Syria crisis", The Daily Star, August 8, 2012, at <http://dailystar.com.lb/News/Politics/2012/Aug-08/183818-lebanon-will-not-attend-tehran-meeting-on-syria-crisis.ashx#ixzz23QCjmCZ>

<sup>28</sup> "U.S. slaps sanctions on Hezbollah over Syria role", The Daily Star, August 11, 2012, at <http://dailystar.com.lb/News/Politics/2012/Aug-11/184252-us-slaps-sanctions-on-hezbollah-over-syria-role.ashx#axzz23P9HrI5G>

## Syria

- **US and Turkey consider Syria no-fly zones; US plans new sanctions on Syria, Assad**

According to reports, the United States and Turkey have announced that the possibility of imposing no-fly zones on Syria in order to assist rebel forces fighting against the Syrian government. The announcement came following a meeting between US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, and Turkish Foreign Minister, Ahmet Davutoglu. Meanwhile, Turkey has said urgent action is required by the international community to resolve the humanitarian crisis in cities such as Aleppo and Damascus. Clinton's visit has come amidst plans by the US and other countries to boost humanitarian aid for civilians who have fled the conflict.<sup>29</sup>

Meanwhile, reportedly, the US is also planning to impose new sanctions targeting President Bashar al-Assad's inner circle, including cabinet members, and Iranian individuals and entities that have supported the Assad government. The fresh sanctions are aimed at attempting to hasten the downfall of the Syrian government and will complement existing penalties.<sup>30</sup>

## Yemen

- **UN envoy threatens with non-military sanctions**

According to reports, UN Envoy to Yemen Jamal Bin Omar has said that non-military sanctions under chapter VII resolution of the UN Security Council will be imposed against any officials who attempt to hinder the political settlement in the country. He has further stated that non-military sanctions such as freezing of assets and travel ban will be taken as per the law which allows punitive measures against regimes considered a threat to world peace, including economic sanctions and military intervention. The statements of the UN envoy came after threats the son of the former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, Ahmed, rebelled against decisions issued by President Abdu Rabo Mansour Hadi last week. Benomar urged all Yemeni sides to seriously deal with the transitional justice and reconciliation in accordance with international laws and conventions in order to transfer power peacefully and democratically.<sup>31</sup>

## Kuwait

- **Opposition criticises government over new electoral laws**

According to reports, Kuwaiti opposition has described the government's efforts to change the electoral laws before polls expected this year as a "coup", and promised to push for full parliamentary democracy. In June, 2012, Kuwait's constitutional court effectively dissolved a

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<sup>29</sup> "Syria crisis: US and Turkey consider no-fly zones", *The Guardian*, August 11, 2012, at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/aug/11/syria-us-turkey-no-fly-zones>

<sup>30</sup> "US planning new sanctions on Syria and Assad as Clinton travels to Turkey", *The Guardian*, August 10, 2012, at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/aug/10/us-sanctions-syria-assad-clinton?newsfeed=true>

<sup>31</sup> "Yemen: UN envoy threatens with Chapter VII sanctions", *Yemen Post*, August 13, 2012, at <http://yemenpost.net/Detail123456789.aspx?ID=3&SubID=5855&MainCat=3>

parliament dominated by opposition Islamists and reinstated the previous, more government-friendly assembly. The dispute deepened last week when the government decided to refer the electoral system to the constitutional court. According to an opposition statement on August 12, 2012, "The majority bloc views what is happening as a real coup by the political authority against the constitutional system - a coup aimed at seizing the rights of the nation through the constitutional court." The opposition has also accused the government of dragging the judiciary into a political dispute over the boundaries of parliamentary constituencies that helped the opposition to win a majority in elections in February, 2012.<sup>32</sup>

## E. Africa

- **US and South Africa discuss investment and trade promotion; Reuters survey shows Asia taking record West African oil; Sudan agrees to allow relief supplies to rebel-controlled areas; Egypt orders air strike on Sinai peninsula; African leaders divided on composition of Congo force; Libya votes Mohammed Magarief as new President; US reaffirms its strategic partnership with Nigeria; Qatar announces \$2bn financial support for Egypt**

According to reports, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited South Africa as part of her tour of the continent and participated in the third annual U.S.-South Africa Strategic Dialogue, a high-level summit aimed at promoting U.S. investment and trade. The Summit brought together 200 top business executives representing a range of sectors including aviation, energy and shipping and government officials from both countries. It would be worth noting that South Africa plans to make huge investments in infrastructure over the next 20 years that could create new opportunities for American businesses and jobs in both countries.<sup>33</sup>

According to the Reuters survey of trade and shipping sources, Asia is poised to import record volumes of oil from West Africa in 2012 as increasing supplies of high quality crude affected its export prices and some buyers avoided their traditional oil supplier, Iran. It shows that end-consumers in China, India, Indonesia and other Asian countries have bought around 1.74 million barrels per day (bpd) of West African crude in the first nine months of 2012, up around 8 percent from the same period in 2011. The survey notes that Africa's two biggest oil producers, Nigeria and Angola, have been well placed to meet this extra consumption.<sup>34</sup>

In another development, report noted that Sudan has agreed to allow relief supplies into the two rebel-controlled border states of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, where fighting and denial of aid access for more than a year has left civilians facing a humanitarian disaster. The agreement was

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<sup>32</sup> "Kuwaiti opposition slams government election 'coup'," *The National*, August 13, 2012 at <http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/middle-east/kuwaiti-opposition-slams-government-election-coup>

<sup>33</sup> "Clinton Promotes US Investment in Africa", *Voice of America*, August 6, 2012, at <http://www.voanews.com/content/clinton-promotes-us-investment-in-africa/1456385.html>

<sup>34</sup> Christopher Johnson (2012), "Asia takes record W.Africa oil as buyers shun Iran", *Business Standard*, August 7, 2012, at <http://www.business-standard.com/india/news/asia-takes-record-wafrica-oil-as-buyers-shun-iran/181933/on>

reached between Sudan and South Sudan after Sudan's negotiating team reached a deal with South Sudan over oil transit fees.<sup>35</sup>

According to reports, responding to the killing of sixteen soldiers in the Sinai Peninsula, Egypt's president Mohammed Morsi removed his intelligence chief and one of the most powerful figures in the country, General Murad Mowafi, and ordered the first air strike in the Peninsula after a gap of almost 40 years. The President also dismissed Abdul Wahab Mabruk, the Governor of North Sinai where the raid on the military base took place. The retaliation for the deaths of the troops, killed by Islamist gunmen, came with an Egyptian air raid on a Bedouin settlement in Sinai that left about 20 dead. In addition, Morsi deployed thousands more troops and police near the Israeli border.<sup>36</sup>

Reports noted that the African leaders at the International Conference of Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) have failed to agree on the composition of a proposed neutral force to tackle the insurgency in eastern Democratic of Congo where fighting between M23 rebels and Congolese government forces has displaced nearly half a million people since April 2012. Regional leaders in July 2012 brokered a deal for a "neutral force" to be set up to handle Congo-based rebel groups. However, the heads of state of east and central African nations meeting to discuss the eastern Congo crisis was divided over whether the troops for a mission to Congo would be drawn from regional countries alone, or would be an international force. In the end, all the eleven members of the ICGLR signed a final communiqué in Kampala, pledging to seek "home-grown solutions" to the fighting.<sup>37</sup>

In an important development, according to reports, Libya's national assembly elected former opposition leader Mohammed Magarief of the National Front party as its new President. Magarief, seen as a moderate Islamist, will head the 200-member congress, which will name a prime minister, pass laws and steer Libya to full parliamentary elections after a new constitution is drafted in 2013. Magarief is an economist and former Libyan ambassador to India and had lived in exile since 1980s. He was a leading figure in Libya's oldest opposition movement, the National Front for the Salvation of Libya, which made several attempts to end Muammar Gaddafi's rule.<sup>38</sup>

Reports noted that as part of her 11-day, nine-country Africa tour, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited Nigeria and reaffirmed what she called the "vital" strategic partnership between the two countries and offered U.S. assistance in marshaling Nigeria's security against the militant

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<sup>35</sup> Peter Moszynski (2012), "Sudan reaches agreement on aid access to rebel-controlled areas", *Guardian*, August 8, 2012, at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/2012/aug/08/sudan-agreement-aid-access-rebel-areas?newsfeed=true>

<sup>36</sup> Rebecca Collard & David Blair (2012), "Egypt's new president orders first air strike on Sinai for 40 years", *Daily News & Analysis*, August 9, 2012, at [http://www.dnaindia.com/world/report\\_egypt-s-new-president-orders-first-air-strike-on-sinai-for-40-years\\_1725924](http://www.dnaindia.com/world/report_egypt-s-new-president-orders-first-air-strike-on-sinai-for-40-years_1725924)

<sup>37</sup> Drazen Jorgic (2012), "African leaders fail to agree on Congo force", *Reuters*, August 9, 2012, at <http://in.reuters.com/article/2012/08/08/congo-democratic-rebels-idINDEE8770GG20120808>

<sup>38</sup> Ali Shuaib (2012), "Libyan assembly votes Gaddafi opponent as president", *Reuters*, August 9, 2012, at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/08/10/us-libya-assembly-idUSBRE8781ID20120810>

Islamist sect Boko Haram. She reiterated Washington's commitment to the bilateral relationship and support for Nigerian reforms, including anti-corruption efforts. Further, the United States offered to help Nigeria "harmonize" the efforts of its police, military and other security forces.<sup>39</sup>

In other developments, Egyptian state news agency *MENA* reported that Qatar has decided to give \$2 billion in financial support to Egypt, which is affected by serious economic challenges. The announcement came after a Cairo meeting between President Mohamed Morsi and Qatar's emir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani.<sup>40</sup>

## II. DEFENCE REVIEW

### National

- **Navy chief Admiral Nirmal Verma favoures the creation of a five-star post of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) as a single-point military advisor to the government; Air Chief assures that design issues in Sukhois' fly-by-wire controls will be addressed**

According to reports, Indian Navy chief Admiral Nirmal Verma on August 7, 2012, favoured the creation of a five-star post of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) as a single-point military advisor to the government as had been recommended more than a decade ago. A counter-proposal to appoint a permanent chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) should only be "a stepping stone" toward the post. Verma's backing to the proposal of the Kargil Review Committee came in response to a question on the Naresh Chandra Task Force recommending a permanent COSC chairman. "There have been various reasons for CDS not happening. Perhaps the effort was to find a via media to have a permanent chairman COSC. It certainly forms a stepping stone to the larger concept of CDS whenever it happens," Verma said.<sup>41</sup>

In another development, according to reports, Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal N A K Browne has said that the Indian Air Force (IAF) has taken up certain issues related to the design of the fly-by-wire (FBW) controls in the Sukhoi-30 Mk-I aircraft with the concerned design agency after having identified the faults in the Su-30 crash at Wade Bolhai near Pune last December. The FBW system replaces the conventional manual flight controls of an aircraft with an electronic interface. He pointed out, "We have identified the problem and some more checks are being taken up to prevent recurrence". He noted "There was a problem with the aircraft's FBW controls and there is

<sup>39</sup> "Clinton Offers Aid to Nigerian Security Forces against Boko Haram", *Voice of America*, August 9, 2012, at <http://www.voanews.com/content/clinton-nigeria-boko-haram/1483662.html>

<sup>40</sup> "Qatar helps Egypt with \$2bn central bank deposit", *AFP*, August 12, 2012, at [http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jLhC\\_NcSukXua8KzSTy6K2PdPdBw?docId=CNG.418ada8b8e9532b0e4d2148cb0e80185.6f1](http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jLhC_NcSukXua8KzSTy6K2PdPdBw?docId=CNG.418ada8b8e9532b0e4d2148cb0e80185.6f1)

<sup>41</sup> "Indian Navy chief favours five-star CDS," *IANS*, August 7, at <http://www.newstrackindia.com/newsdetails/2012/08/07/335-Indian-Navy-chief-favours-five-star-CDS-.html>



also an issue of design, which we have taken up with the concerned agency,”. While insisting that the airworthiness of the frontline Su-30 aircraft cannot be questioned, Browne said, “I myself came here and flew the aircraft within days of the crash. There is nothing wrong with it,”. “In the FBW, because it is electronically used, there are areas where it can give problems. The Su-30 is not the only case but such problems have occurred with aircraft using fly-by-wire controls,” he added.<sup>42</sup>

## International

### ● Collision between U.S. Navy destroyer and Japanese oil tanker in Persian Gulf; U.S. to retain close ties with Egypt’s military

According to the U.S. 5th Fleet said in a news release, the U.S. Navy destroyer Porter and a Japanese-owned oil tanker collided near the Strait of Hormuz on August 12, 2012, with an impact that tore open the destroyer’s starboard side but left both crews unharmed. The collision between Porter and the bulk oil tanker Otowasan, operating under a Panamanian flag, was not “combat related,” the release noted. The circumstances of the collision whether the collision was in the channel, the relative speeds at impact, or which ship had right of way, remain unclear. 5th Fleet spokesman Lt. Greg Raelson said that Porter had just completed an inbound transit through the Strait of Hormuz into the Persian Gulf. Raelson stated, “The Japanese tanker was heading out of the [Persian] Gulf into the Strait of Hormuz” toward the Gulf of Oman, however, adding that he didn’t have the exact coordinates of the collision available.<sup>43</sup>

In another development, according to reports, the U.S. military expects to maintain close ties with Egypt’s armed forces despite the dismissal of the country’s powerful defense minister, a US spokesman said on August 13, 2012. Pentagon press secretary George Little told reporters, “We had expected President (Mohamed) Morsi at some point to coordinate changes in the military leadership, to name a new team.” “The United States and the Department of Defense in particular look forward to continuing a very close relationship with the SCAF (Supreme Council of the Armed Forces),” Little said. Morsi on August 12, 2012 retired Defense Minister Field Marshal Hussein Tantawi, and armed forces Chief of Staff Sami Anan. He also scrapped a constitutional document that gave the military legislative and other powers. The Egyptian president replaced Tantawi, who had forged links with top American brass over decades, with Abdel Fattah al-Sissi, head of military intelligence. “The new defense minister is someone who’s known to us; he comes from within the ranks of the SCAF, and we believe we’ll be able to continue the strong partnership that we have with Egypt,” Little said. U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta “looks forward” to calling him “at the earliest possible moment,” he added.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>42</sup> “Design issues in Sukhois’ fly-by-wire controls being addressed: IAF chief,” TNN, August 5, 2012, at [http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-08-05/pune/33048388\\_1\\_su-30-sukhois-fbw](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-08-05/pune/33048388_1_su-30-sukhois-fbw)

<sup>43</sup> “U.S. Navy Destroyer, Oil Tanker Collide in Persian Gulf,” August 12, 2012, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120812/DEFREG02/308120001/U-S-Navy-Destroyer-Oil-Tanker-Collide-Persian-Gulf?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE>

<sup>44</sup> “Pentagon: U.S. to Retain Close Ties with Egypt’s Military,” August 13, 2012, at <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120813/DEFREG04/308130005/Pentagon-U-S-Retain-Close-Ties-Egypt-8217-s-Military?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE>



### III. UNITED NATIONS (UN) REVIEW

- **UN Security Council condemns human rights violations in Mali; Council welcomes political progress in Somalia; UNSC supports preventive diplomacy in Central Asia**

According to reports, the UN Security Council condemned human rights violations and the destruction of ancient sites in Mali and encouraged countries and organizations in the region to prepare detailed proposals for a stabilization force for the country.<sup>45</sup>

In other developments, the UN Security Council welcomed the recent progress made in Somalia in progressing towards the end of its temporary governing arrangements especially the adoption of the new Somali provisional constitution by the National Constituent Assembly. The Council also called upon all participants in the Transition process to ensure quick and transparent selection of the new Parliament.<sup>46</sup>

Meanwhile, the UNSC expressed its support for the role that preventive diplomacy and early warning mechanisms play in settling disputes peacefully specifically in Central Asia and commended the work carried out by the UN centre there. The Council also emphasized the need to increase cooperation and coordination among governments in Central Asia.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> "Mali: Security Council requests details of proposed West African stabilization force", *UN News Centre*, August 10, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=42667&Cr=+mali+&Cr1=>

<sup>46</sup> "Somalia: UN envoy hails presidential decree, Security Council welcomes political progress", *UN News Centre*, August 10, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=42659&Cr=Somalia&Cr1=>

<sup>47</sup> "Security Council reaffirms role of preventive diplomacy for stability in Central Asia", *UN News Centre*, August 09, 2012 at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=42650&Cr=Central+Asia&Cr1=>