

Weekly Media Updates **(09-15 October, 2017)**

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Africa

- **Huge Explosion Hits Somali Capital Mogadishu¹**

A vehicle exploded at a busy road junction in the Somali capital Mogadishu on Saturday afternoon, killing at least 250 people and wounding many others. A truck loaded with explosives detonated at the K5 intersection. The area, known as Zoppe, is lined with government offices, hotels, and shops. Witnesses said the blast, which threw a thick cloud of smoke into the sky that could be seen across the city, badly damaged a nearby hotel and left scenes of devastation on the busy road.

The attack is one of the deadliest attacks in sub-Saharan Africa, larger than the Garissa University attack in Kenya in 2015, in which 148 died, and the U.S. Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, in which about 219 were killed.

Countries including Kenya and Ethiopia have offered to send medical aid in response to what Somali's government has called a "national disaster."

Al-Shabab, which for more than a decade has waged war in Somalia, often targets high-profile areas of the capital. Earlier this year, it vowed to step up attacks after both the Trump administration and Somalia's recently elected president announced new military efforts against the group”

Saturday's blast occurred two days after the head of the U.S. Africa Command was in Mogadishu to meet with Somalia's president, and two days after the country's defense minister and army chief resigned for undisclosed reasons.²

- **Boko Haram Militants Surrender to Authorities in Cameroon³**

About 60 men who said they were captured by the Boko Haram terrorist group and forced to fight have surrendered to authorities in northern Cameroon. According to reports, after spending two years with Boko Haram, the men decided to flee with their families and hand themselves in, according to several men who had surrendered and spoke to journalists at a ceremony in the town of Mozogo. A total of nearly 400 people originally from Cameroon - 58 men, 86 women and 244 children - said they had been taken hostage by Boko Haram fighters during attacks on their villages and taken to Nigeria, where they were forced to join the jihadist group.

¹ The East African, 14 October 2017, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201710140159.html>

² <https://www.10tv.com/article/somalia-truck-bombing-toll-over-300-scores-missing>

³ The Day, 15 October 2017, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201710150071.html>

China

- **18th CPC Central Committee concludes 7th Plenum in China**

The four-day Seventh Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) concluded in Beijing on 14 October 2017 with a communiqué issued. Entrusted by the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee, delivered a work report at the meeting. It was decided that the 19th CPC National Congress will be convened from October 18 in Beijing, according to the communiqué.

A report to be made by the 18th CPC Central Committee to the 19th CPC National Congress, a work report of the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) to the congress, as well as an amendment to the CPC Constitution were discussed and approved.⁴

- **Big data report on Belt and Road progress released**

Compiled by the State Information Center and published by the Commercial Press of China, the second annual report, *Belt and Road Big Data Report 2017* indicated growing interest in local participation, media coverage and academic research as the BAR initiative moves forward. The report was released on 12 October 2017. The report is internationally sourced from 500 billion rows of data from over 200 companies, 800 think tanks and 1,000 media outlets in over 60 Belt and Road countries to assess progress of the China-proposed initiative in eight aspects.

According to the report, cooperation between China and the Belt and Road countries is increasing, with Russia, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Thailand and Vietnam ranking as the top five partners. Chinese provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions have shown increased participation in the initiative, with east China taking the lead and west China demonstrating stronger potential.⁵

- **Chinese ocean-going naval task group ends visits to 20 countries**

A Chinese naval task group on an ocean-going visit mission came back to a naval port in Zhoushan City, Zhejiang Province on October 15, after completing its mission of visiting 20 countries in Asia, Africa and Europe. The task group consisted of the guided-missile destroyer Changchun, the guided-missile frigate Jingzhou and the comprehensive supply ship Chaohu. The 176-day-long mission, with a navigational distance of more than 31,000 nautical miles, covered two oceans and three continents.

⁴ http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2017-10/14/content_33251595.htm

⁵ <https://eng.yidaiyilu.gov.cn/qwyw/rdxw/30288.htm>

Since its departure on April 23, the Chinese naval task group has passed through the Pacific Ocean, the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, as well as 26 international straits and waterways such as the Strait of Malacca and the Suez Canal.

The naval task group visited 20 countries in Asia, Africa and Europe, including Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Iran, Oman, Djibouti, Italy, Turkey, Greece, Saudi Arabia, Tanzania, Maldives, Indonesia, Brunei, Cambodia and Thailand.⁶

European Union

- **Italian Prime Minister to Visit India**

Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni will visit India in October 2017. It would be first prime ministerial visit from Italy to India in a decade. Relations between India and Italy have been soured over Italian marine case. It seems that India and Italy are now trying to improve their relations. The visit of Prime Minister Gentiloni will contribute in improving the bilateral partnership between the two countries. As reported, India and Italy are looking for an enhanced economic engagement. They may look for investment opportunities in leather, design sector, food sector and technology and defence manufacturing.⁷

- **Brexit Negotiations**

After the fifth round of negotiation, Michel Barnier said that British Prime Minister Theresa May's Florence speech has given momentum to the Brexit negotiations. He noted that the EU and the UK worked 'constructively,' however, he added no forward step was made in the negotiations. The EU negotiator stated about about EU citizen rights, Ireland and financial settlement. On the financial settlement, he noted, "We are, therefore, at a deadlock on this question. This is extremely worrying for European taxpayers and those who benefit from EU policies."⁸

- **Poland and the UK Will Sign Defence Partnership Deal**

Polish Defence Minister Antoni Macierewicz said that a Polish-British defence partnership treaty would be signed in December. The treaty will include all aspects of national security. Polish foreign minister and defence minister are visiting the

⁶ http://eng.mod.gov.cn/news/2017-10/16/content_4794670.htm

⁷ Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury, India to host Italian PM Paolo Gentiloni, first in a decade, The Economic Times, October 14, 2017. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/india-to-host-italian-pm-paolo-gentiloni-first-in-a-decade/articleshow/61074995.cms>

⁸ European Commission – Statement, Press statement by Michel Barnier following the fifth round of Article 50 negotiations with the United Kingdom, Brussels, 12 October 2017

UK. The Polish defence minister said that talks between the UK and Poland were focused on bilateral and global security issues, including cyber security.⁹

East Asia /South-East Asia

Korean Peninsula and Japan

- **Trump says ‘open to negotiations’ with North Korea**

On October 13, 2017 US President Donald Trump said he is open to negotiations with North Korea over its nuclear program. During a press conference Trump said “we’re going to see what happens with North Korea,” he told reporters at the White House on Friday (local time). “That’s all I can say. We’re totally prepared for numerous things. If something can happen where we negotiate, I’m always open to that.”¹⁰

On October 15, 2017 US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said that the US President Donald Trump wants a diplomatic solution to the nuclear standoff with North Korea. Tillerson said in a TV interview that the President Trump has “made it clear to me to continue my diplomatic efforts. Those diplomatic efforts will continue until the first bomb drops.”¹¹

- **US won’t go to war without ROK: Says South Korea’s Defense Minister**

On October 12, 2017 South Korean Defense Minister Song Moo-young said that the United States will never go to war against North Korea without South Korea’s consent. He made the comment during a National Assembly audit of the defense ministry. During the audit Minister Song also reaffirmed President Moon Jae-in’s pledge to take back wartime operational control (OPCON) of South Korean forces from the U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) as soon as possible.¹²

- **Japanese Election Forecast: Abe’s ruling coalition poised to win over 300 seats**

⁹ Poland, UK to sign defence partnership deal: Polish defence minister, Radio Poland, October 13, 2017, <http://www.thenews.pl/1/10/Artykul/330305,Poland-UK-to-sign-defence-partnership-deal-Polish-defence-minister>
¹⁰ ¹⁰ “Remarks by President Trump Before Marine One Departure”, The White House, October 13, 2017, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/10/13/remarks-president-trump-marine-one-departure>

¹¹ “Trump wants diplomatic solution to North Korea crisis: Tillerson”, The Korea Times, October 16, 2017, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2017/10/103_237710.html (Accessed on October 16, 2017)

¹² “US won’t go to war without ROK: minister”, Korea Times, October 12, 2017, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2017/10/103_237566.html (Accessed on October 16, 2017)

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's ruling coalition is poised to win more than 300 of the 465 seats in the House of Representatives election on October 22, Jiji Press forecasts. Abe's Liberal Democratic Party and its partner, Komeito, may take as many as 310 seats altogether, which would give the coalition the two-thirds majority, needed to propose constitutional amendments. Abe has vowed to step down if the ruling coalition fails to secure a simple majority of at least 233 seats. The LDP alone is likely to win close to 280 seats, compared with the 290 it held before official campaigning began on Tuesday, meaning it will remain by far the largest force in the Lower House.¹³

Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike's new political party, Kibo no To is expected to slightly top its pre-election share of 57 seats, while the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan (CDP), launched earlier this month by former Chief Cabinet Secretary Yukio Edano, is expected to win two- to three-times its 15 current seats.¹⁴

(ASEAN, Malaysia, Cambodia, Indonesia, Phillipines)

- **Trilateral Air Patrol launched over the Sulu Sea**

Malaysia, Philippines, and Indonesia launched a joint air patrol on October 12, 2017, in Kuala Lumpur to monitor and respond to suspicious activity in the Sulu Sea. The trilateral air patrols launched by the three ASEAN States includes maritime patrols and intelligence sharing aimed at plugging porous borders around the Sulu Sea where militant groups aligned with the IS are active. According to Malaysia's Defence Minister Hishammuddin Hussein the tri-national efforts were necessary given the terrorist movement and activities by terrorist organisations over the Sulu Sea, which is being used as a base for their operations. According to Philippines Secretary of National Defence, Delfin Lorenzana; the effort of this trilateral Air patrol can prevent extremists' movements in the region as it would allow for better surveillance. The air patrol will rotate monthly among the three countries.¹⁵ Indonesia's Defence minister Rya Mizard Ryacuda, who was also present at the launching of this initiative stated that he would propose an

¹³ "Abe's ruling coalition poised to win over 300 seats: election forecast", The Japan Times, October 15, 2017, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/10/15/national/politics-diplomacy/abes-ruling-coalition-poised-win-300-lower-house-seats-forecast/#.WeRBK2hL-M8> (Accessed on October 16, 2017)

¹⁴ Kibo no To's poor election forecasts trigger alarm as LDP and CDP seek to harness momentum, The Japan Times, October 13, 2017, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/10/13/national/politics-diplomacy/kibo-no-tos-poor-election-forecasts-trigger-alarm-ldp-cdp-seek-harness-momentum/#.WeRT52hL-M9> (Accessed on October 16, 2017)

¹⁵ Sumisha Naidu, "First Joint Air Patrols over Sulu Sea Launched by Malaysia, Philippines, and Indonesia", *Channel News Asia*, October 12, 2017, <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/first-joint-air-patrols-over-sulu-sea-launched-by-malaysia-9304708>, accessed on October 13, 2017.

“Our Eyes” initiative at the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting in the Philippines this month. The proposal would be a broad intelligence sharing initiative among members of the ASEAN states in order to deal with the rising threat of radical Islamist militants.¹⁶

- **PM Chan-o-cha Announces Thailand’s Elections for November 2018**

Thailand’s PM Prayut Chan-o-cha speaking after a joint meeting of the cabinet and the National Council for Peace and Order on October 10, 2017, said that he will announce the exact date for the election in June next year with the target being November 2018. Further, he also stated that the regime will now consider easing political restrictions so that parties can resume their political activities in compliance with the new law. With the final two organic bills – one on the election of MPs and the other on the Senate – being tabled in the National Legislative Assembly (NLA) next month, the way is paved for a poll late next year.¹⁷ NLA Vice-Chairman Surachai Liangboon lertchai assured that the law-making assembly would finish its scrutiny of all ten bills, and not just the four bills which are a pre-requisites for holding elections, by June next year. The vice-chairman also added that the election plan announced by PM Chan-o-cha was in compliance with the regime’s road map..¹⁸

- **Vietnam launches indigenously built Corvettes Naval Vessel**

Two Molniya-class guided missile ships, built by Ba Son Shipbuilding Company under the General Department of Military Industry were launched at the base of the 2nd Regional Command of the Vietnam People’s Navy. Vietnam held a ceremony on 10 October to launch two domestically-made guided missile corvettes. Each ship cost about US \$ 13.7 million and would be added into the fleet of Brigade 167. According to Rear Admiral Hoang Hong Ha, deputy commander of the Vietnam People’s Navy the two vessels will help strengthen the country’s ability to manage and defend its maritime sovereignty, and raise the strength of its naval force.¹⁹

¹⁶“Indonesia Eyes New ASEAN intelligence sharing to track militants”, *ABS CBN News*, October 13, 2017, <http://news.abs-cbn.com/overseas/10/13/17/indonesia-eyes-new-asean-intelligence-sharing-to-track-militants>, accessed on October 13, 2017.

¹⁷“PM targets November 2018 poll”, *Bangkok Post*, October 11, 2017, <https://www.bangkokpost.com/news/politics/1340215/pm-targets-november-2018-poll>, accessed on October 11, 2017.

¹⁸Aekarach Sattaburuth, “All Organic laws face June finish”, *Bangkok Post*, October 12, 2017, <https://www.bangkokpost.com/news/politics/1340927/all-organic-laws-face-june-finish>, accessed on October 12, 2017.

¹⁹“Vietnam Launches third pair of locally-made guided missile corvettes”, *Tuoi Tre News*, October 10, 2017, <http://tuoitrenews.vn/news/politics/20171010/vietnam-launches-third-pair-of-locallymade-guided-missile-corvettes/41974.html>, accessed on October 11, 2017.

- **16th ASEAN-China Transport Ministers Meeting**

The 16th ASEAN and China Transport Ministers Meeting was held on October 12, 2017, in Singapore. The Ministers supported the consensus reached in the Joint Communiqué of the Leaders Roundtable of the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation held on 14-15 May 2017, in Beijing. Commitment were laid out towards enhancing transport connectivity between and among ASEAN Member States and China, which would include the promotion of practical cooperation on roads, railways, ports, maritime and inland water transport, and aviation.²⁰

North America

Canada

- **Trudeau promotes rights of workers, women at NAFTA talks in Mexico**

Justin Trudeau issued a progressive call to arms, urging lawmakers in Mexico's most populous city to embrace and promote the rights of workers and women as an antidote to the creeping threat of isolationism that imperils trade and economic growth around the world. His speech to the Mexican Senate capped a four-day trip that began in Washington, D.C., largely revolving around the ongoing talks to rewrite the decades-old North American Free Trade Agreement and bring it into the modern era. Ensuring it is a deal that benefits all segments of society is essential, the prime minister said. At the NAFTA talks, Canada has introduced a proposal aimed at compelling Mexico to pay workers higher wages and do away with so-called "yellow" unions that represent employers rather than employees. But Trudeau said Canada does have Mexico's support when it comes to introducing a gender chapter into the trade pact.²¹

- **Canada, Mexico Say They Won't Walk Away From NAFTA Over U.S. Ideas**

The leaders of Canada and Mexico said they're not walking away from NAFTA talks in the wake of the latest aggressive proposal from the U.S. Both Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto said the proposal — a sunset clause on any new North American Free Trade Agreement — remains just that, an idea. Negotiations for a revamped NAFTA are now in their fourth round and the U.S. sunset clause idea is the latest in a series of moves that

²⁰"Joint Ministerial Statement: The Sixteenth ASEAN and China Transport Ministers Meeting (16th ATM+China)" *ASEAN*, October 12, 2017, http://asean.org/storage/2017/10/16th-ATM-China-JMS_Final.pdf, accessed on October 16, 2017.

²¹ Stephanie Levitz, "Trudeau promotes rights of workers, women at NAFTA talks in Mexico," <https://www.thestar.com/news/world/2017/10/13/trudeau-promotes-rights-of-workers-women-at-nafta-talks-in-mexico.html>, Accessed on 16 October 2017.

have frustrated Canadian and Mexican negotiators. More challenges lie ahead — rules for auto parts could come as early as Friday. An original suggestion from the U.S. that American and regional content levels be beefed up has already drawn condemnation. Trudeau and Pena Nieto talked with their aides and then their foreign affairs and trade teams for close to two hours Thursday afternoon. Trudeau's visit is his first official trip to Mexico and follows Pena Nieto's trip to Canada in June 2016. Efforts by Canada and Mexico to deepen their own bilateral connections, however, were on full display.²²

- **Trump and Trudeau hint at Canada-U.S. free trade deal if NAFTA fails**

For the first time, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is acknowledging that the North American Free Trade Agreement could be in trouble. Trudeau wrapped up his visit to Washington on Wednesday by saying that he continues to believe that renegotiating and renewing NAFTA is the best option for all three countries. However, he suggested — repeatedly — that the federal Liberal government is bracing for the worst. During his earlier visit to the White House, Trudeau listened intently as U.S. President Donald Trump hinted at the possibility of a free trade deal directly with Canada, should the ongoing talks collapse. But the U.S. president also said it's too early to give up on the negotiations, which resumed Wednesday in Alexandria, Va., with negotiators from Canada, the U.S. and Mexico.²³

- **National Defence looking at peacekeeping missions as summit looms**

Officials at National Defence have dusted off their briefing books and are back looking at where they could send Canadian peacekeepers as the clock ticks down to a major UN summit on the subject next month in Vancouver. The flurry of activity ends months of idling as military planners waited for some signs of interest from the Trudeau government, which first promised up to 600 troops and 150 police for peacekeeping last year. Sources tell The Canadian Press that defence officials are now back at it and that the Liberals hope to make a decision before the Nov. 14-15 peacekeeping summit in Vancouver, though it's not certain they will. The government has previously said it will not be rushed into a mission, but the UN expected last year when it agreed to let Canada host the meeting that Canadian troops would already be on the ground.²⁴

²² The Canadian Press, "Efforts by Canada and Mexico to deepen their own bilateral connections, however, were on full display," http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2017/10/13/canada-mexico-say-they-wont-walk-away-from-nafta-over-u-s-ideas_a_23242281/?utm_hp_ref=ca-politics, Accessed on 16 October 2017.

²³ Stephanie Levitz, "Trump and Trudeau hint at Canada-U.S. free trade deal if NAFTA fails," <http://www.torontosun.com/2017/10/11/trump-and-trudeau-hint-at-canada-us-free-trade-deal-if-nafta-fails>, Accessed on 16 October 2017.

²⁴ Lee Berthiaume, "National Defence looking at peacekeeping missions as summit looms," <https://globalnews.ca/news/3804563/national-defence-peacekeeping-missions-summit-looms/>," Accessed on 16 October 2017.

The United States

- **Trump juggernaut rolls on after White House generals avert disaster on Iran deal**

Donald Trump's unilateral decision to renege on the 2015 UN-approved nuclear deal with Iran was roundly condemned on Saturday by friends and foes alike. Britain joined France and Germany in declaring continued support for the agreement as written. Iran was backed by China and Russia in deploring Trump's move as unwarranted and dangerously destabilising. But what looks on the outside like a diplomatic disaster could have been much worse. Trump had been widely expected to withdraw from the deal completely, demand harsh sanctions, and take other steps to demonise Iran as the world's leading "terrorist state". The fact that Trump stepped back was the result of intense, high-level lobbying. Pressure was applied by senior White House officials, departmental chiefs and close allies such as Theresa May, who personally intervened by phone. The outcome: Trump's worst instincts on Iran were curbed, at least for now.²⁵

- **US, South Korea conduct joint Navy drills to counter North Korea threat**

South Korea and the United States began week-long joint Navy drills in the waters around the Korean peninsula on Monday (Oct 16), amid high tensions over North Korea's nuclear and missile programme. About 40 Navy ships from both countries, including the nuclear-powered USS Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier, are taking part in the exercises on the east and west coasts of the peninsula from Oct 16 to Oct 20, a spokesman for the South's defence ministry said. North Korea has called joint military exercises by the United States and South Korea as a "rehearsal for war". US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said that President Donald Trump had instructed him to continue diplomatic efforts to calm rising tensions with North Korea, saying "those diplomatic efforts will continue until the first bomb drops". Tensions on the Korean peninsula have risen sharply in recent weeks following a series of weapons tests by Pyongyang, including its sixth and most powerful nuclear test on Sept. 3 and two missile launches over Japan, and a war of words between the United States and North Korea.²⁶

- **North Korea diplomacy continues until first 'bomb drops': Rex Tillerson**

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said that diplomatic efforts aimed at resolving the North Korean crisis "will continue until the first bomb drops." That statement comes despite President Donald Trump's tweets a couple of weeks ago that his chief envoy was "wasting his time" trying to negotiate with "Little Rocket Man," a

²⁵Simon Tisdall, "Trump juggernaut rolls on after White House generals avert disaster on Iran deal," <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/oct/14/trump-iran-deal-lobbying>, Accessed on 16 October 2017.

²⁶----, "US, South Korea conduct joint Navy drills to counter North Korea threat," <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/us--south-korea-conduct-joint-navy-drills-to-counter-north-korea-threat-9314046>, Accessed on 16 October 2017.

mocking nickname Trump has given the nuclear-armed nation's leader Kim Jong Un. Recent mixed messaging from the top of the U.S. government has raised concerns about the potential for miscalculation amid the increasingly bellicose exchange of words by Trump and the North Korean leader. Trump told the U.N. General Assembly last month that if the U.S. is "forced to defend itself or its allies, we will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea." Trump also tweeted that Korea's leadership "won't be around much longer" if it continued its provocations, a declaration that led the North's foreign minister to assert that Trump had "declared war on our country." Tillerson acknowledged during a recent trip to Beijing that the Trump administration was keeping open direct channels of communications with North Korea and probing the North's willingness to talk.²⁷

Mexico

- **Leftist leader, relatives slain in southern Mexico**

A regional leftist leader was killed and burned along with his wife, 94-year-old mother-in-law and driver, officials in southern Mexico said. Guerrero state security official Roberto Alvarez Heredia said Sunday the deaths of 50-year-old Ranferi Hernandez Acevedo and those with him have been "totally confirmed." Hernandez Acevedo was a founding member of Mexico's main leftist party, Democratic Revolution, and had been the party's leader for the state. While serving as a state legislator, he fled into exile for a time after clashing with a governor.²⁸

- **Mexico warns that abandoning Nafta could end broader cooperation with US**

Mexico's foreign minister has warned that terminating Nafta could bring relations with the US to a breaking point, raising the prospect that bilateral cooperation against drug trafficking and illegal migration could be adversely affected by Donald Trump's bellicose trade rhetoric. The threat from the foreign minister, Luis Videgaray, came as Donald Trump once again threatened to tear up the three-country trade treaty between the US, Canada and Mexico ahead of a fourth round of Nafta negotiations. Analysts said that Mexico's apparent patience with Trump's rhetoric suggested it was trying to keep the treaty at any cost – and for understandable reasons: more than \$1m a minute in merchandise crosses the US-Mexico border. Videgaray also described several deal breakers being brought to the

²⁷ ----, "North Korea diplomacy continues until first 'bomb drops': Rex Tillerson" <http://indianexpress.com/article/world/north-korea-diplomacy-continues-until-first-bomb-drops-rex-tillerson-4892434/>, Accessed on 16 October 2017.

²⁸The AP, "Leftist leader, relatives slain in southern Mexico," <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/article179012921.html>, Accessed on 16 October 2017.

negotiating table, such as “administered trade, restrictions, tariffs, barriers, which perverts the kind of agreement that it is, and this doesn’t suit Mexico”.²⁹

- **Brazil Votes that Only Congress Can Remove One of Their Own**

After more than ten hours of discussions and discourses, Brazil’s Supreme Court decided that sitting lawmakers cannot be removed from office without the endorsement of the Brazilian Congress. The decision was received well by most lawmakers, who have been criticizing the highest court in the land for unilaterally deciding the fate of one of their own. “I think this decision is a respect for the Brazilian Constitution, more than just. Like the parliament, the Supreme Court has to respect the balance between the powers,” said Luciana Genro, Chamber representative and president of the PCdoB (Brazil’s Communist Party). With six votes for and five against, the Brazilian Justices decided to let the Legislative branch have the last word on its members. The deciding vote came from Chief Justice Carmen Lucia Rocha, who emphasized that the decision would not translate into impunity for lawmakers. Some lawmakers, however, fear that now Congressional representatives accused of breaking the law will close rank and help each other. “The measure of the Supreme I respect, but, regrettably, it contributes to impunity in Brazil,” stated Randolfe Rodrigues, leader of the Rede party in the Senate, noting that now those being investigated in the Lava Jato graft, for example, may count on the votes of their peers to keep them in office. According to official Supreme Court data, of a total of 594 congressmen, 237 are being investigated, 182 of those in the Lava Jato scandal.³⁰

- **Brazilian Congressional Report Calls for Rejection of Charges Against Temer** President of Brazil, Michel Temer, recorded a victory on October 10, 2017 as a report by the Chamber of Deputies recommended that the latest charges against the Brazilian leader for obstruction of justice be rejected by the Lower House. This is the second time charges against Temer are reviewed, and rejected, by the Chamber. Calling it ‘spurious allegations, without credibility’ House Representative Bonifacio de Andrada stated no just cause for the continuation of the criminal action against the President. Andrada was chosen to be the rapporteur in the committee created to review the latest charges presented by former top prosecutor, Rodrigo Janot, against the President and cabinet members Eliseu Padilha (Chief of Staff) and Moreira Franco (General Secretariat). Later this

²⁹ David Agren, “Mexico warns that abandoning Nafta could end broader cooperation with US,” <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/10/mexico-nafta-luis-videgaray-warning-trump>, Accessed on 16 October 2017.

³⁰ Lise Alves, “Brazil Votes that Only Congress can Remove One of Their Own,” October 12, 2017, <http://riotimesonline.com/brazil-news/rio-politics/brazil-votes-that-only-congress-can-remove-their-own/>, Accessed on October 16, 2017.

month the entire Chamber is expected to vote on whether or not to accept the accusations. If the charges are accepted, President Temer will be suspended for up to 180 days while the Senate, presided by the Supreme Court, hears the evidence against the President. During the hour-and-a-half long reading of his recommendation Andrada criticized the Prosecutors' Office stating that it 'extrapolated its attribution' by accusing the President, top government officials and political parties of forming a criminal organization. According to Andrada, to accept the charges against Temer 'would represent a crisis of high proportions for the Brazilian people and for the development of institutions, all due to a complaint clearly dubious', he said.³¹

Venezuela

- **Venezuelans View Russia as an 'Elder Cousin Ready to Lend a Helping Hand'**
Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro has come to Moscow for talks with President Putin. "The results of the meeting of the two leaders is a clear continuation of the policy of Hugo Chavez, who suggested treating Russia and the BRICS as its close allies. While he was the country's Foreign Minister, Maduro shared this stance and continues to share it now, while holding the post of President," said Jordán Rodríguez about the meeting, which was hosted by Moscow on Wednesday, October 4, 2017. Political analyst Basem Tajeldine, meanwhile, said that the ties between the two countries go far beyond the military sphere, where Russia has gained considerable strength. Jordán Rodríguez and Basem Tajeldine pointed out that both Venezuela and Russia are currently under sanctions imposed by the US, and it only facilitates the rapprochement between Caracas and Moscow, who share similar views on global politics. Jordán Rodríguez called the meeting a key encounter which comes at a time when the Trump administration is bashing Venezuela. It sends not only a message to Washington but demonstrates a clear opportunity for the further expansion of cooperation between the two countries. According to the journalist, an alliance between Russia and Venezuela is a "formula of friendship" which is able to stand against military confrontation.³²
- **European Union Moves Closer to Issuing Sanctions against Venezuela's Maduro Regime**

³¹ Lise Alves, "Brazilian Congressional Report Calls for Rejection of Charges Against Temer," October 11, 2017, <http://riotimesonline.com/brazil-news/rio-politics/brazilian-congressional-report-calls-for-rejection-of-charges-against-temer/>, Accessed on October 16, 2017.

³² "Venezuelans View Russia as an Elder Cousin Ready to Lend a Helping Hand," October 10, 2017, <http://todayvenezuela.com/2017/10/10/venezuelans-view-russia-as-an-elder-cousin-ready-to-lend-a-helping-hand/>, Accessed on October 16, 2017.

The possibility of the European Union issuing sanctions against the Maduro regime in Venezuela became much more likely in the last week of October 2017, as officials agreed to discuss ways to respond to the country's constant human rights violations. According to the source, the EU wants to wait to see how the regional elections in Venezuela play out next Sunday, October 15, 2017. AFP explained that a working group composed of representatives of the 28 EU member countries will detail "the scope" of sanctions at a meeting scheduled for October 17. On September 26, Spanish President Mariano Rajoy announced, alongside US President Donald Trump, that both of their countries would be leading a push to have Venezuela sanctioned by the EU. The week prior, on September 13, the European Parliament also urged member countries to sanction Maduro officials. With a majority of 526 votes, the European Parliament plenary urged member countries to impose selective sanctions on those responsible for human rights violations in Venezuela. The body supported the International Criminal Court's investigations into the "numerous crimes and acts of repression perpetrated by the Venezuelan regime" and called on the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Policy, Federica Mogherini, and the European Council to explore strict measures.³³

- **IMF forecasts Venezuela's inflation to reach 2,300% next year and unemployment 30%**

Venezuela's triple-digit annual inflation rate is set to jump to more than 2,300% in 2018, the highest estimate for any country tracked by the International Monetary Fund. An intensifying political crisis that's spiraled since 2014 has weighed heavily on economic activity. Gross domestic product is expected to contract 6% in 2018, after shrinking an estimated 12% in 2017, IMF said in its latest World Economic Outlook report. While Venezuela's central bank stopped publishing inflation data in December 2015, the IMF argues the country's consumer prices are estimated to leap 2,349.3% in 2018. As oil production declines and uncertainty increases, unemployment is forecast to increase to about 30% in 2018, also the highest and followed by South Africa's 28% and Greece's 21%. The Bolivarian Republic has stopped making public most of its key economic statistics, leaving economists scant data to crunch. Before Venezuela's new legislative super body took over the functions of the country's only remaining opposition-run institution this year, the sidelined National Assembly had started publishing its own inflation index due to the lack of official data.³⁴

³³Sabrina Martin, "European Union Moves Closer to Issuing Sanctions against Venezuela's Maduro Regime," October 12, 2017, <https://panampost.com/sabrina-martin/2017/10/12/members-of-the-european-union-agree-to-move-forward-with-sanctions-against-the-nicolas-maduro-regime/>, Accessed on October 16, 2017.

³⁴"IMF forecasts Venezuela's inflation to reach 2,300% next year and unemployment 30%," October 12, 2017, <http://en.mercopress.com/2017/10/12/imf-forecasts-venezuela-s-inflation-to-reach-2.300-next-year-and-unemployment-30>, Accessed on October 16, 2017.

Cuba

- **Russia Strengthens Ties to Cuba as Trump Distances US from Castro Dictatorship**

The United States struggles to improve its relationship with Cuba amid continuing controversy over alleged “sonic attacks” on 22 diplomats in Havana, Russia and several Caribbean islands are accelerating better relations with Raúl Castro’s regime, some officials said. After Donald Trump took office earlier in 2017, Russia and many Caribbean countries reportedly increased their efforts to reach out to officials on the island, knowing that Trump and his administration would pull back some of former President Barack Obama’s attempts to open up relations. So far this year, the Cuban ambassador in Moscow and the Vice Chancellor Sergey Ryabkov have met at least five times, according to the Russian Foreign Ministry, and the Cuban ambassador has been present at other meetings between Cuban officials and Russian diplomats. Just a week before Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez held a meeting with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, Rodriguez met in private with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov. The meetings between Russia and Cuba have generated a greater Russian economic presence on the island, increasing shipments of oil and support for military renovations.³⁵

Russia

- **Russia, US and the Iran Nuclear Deal**

Russia on 9 October warned that there would be “negative consequences” if U.S. President Donald Trump fails to uphold the landmark Iran nuclear deal negotiated by his predecessor.³⁶ Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov told TASS on 15 October that Russia called on the US not to meddle with something that is functioning adequately. He commented on US State Secretary Rex Tillerson’s statement on possible amendments or a secondary agreement on the Iranian nuclear program. Russia calls on the United States to implement the existing agreements on the Iranian nuclear program instead of seeking to amend the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Russian senior diplomat Sergei Ryabkov said Russia plans to stress in its contacts with Iran in the near future that it is important to keep the nuclear deal intact.³⁷

³⁵ “Russia Strengthens Ties to Cuba as Trump Distances US from Castro Dictatorship,” October 13, 2017, <https://panampost.com/karina-martin/2017/10/13/russia-strengthens-ties-to-cuba/>, Accessed on October 16, 2017.

³⁶ “‘Negative consequences’ if Trump quits Iran deal: Russia”, *The Hindu*, October 9, 2017. <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/negative-consequences-if-trump-quits-iran-deal-russia/article19829143.ece> Accessed on October 16, 2017.

³⁷ “Moscow calls on Washington ‘not to fix what if not broke’ in Iran nuclear deal”, TASS, October 16, 2017. <http://tass.com/politics/970826> Accessed on October 16, 2017.

- **Russia and Turkey**

A representative of the Chamber of Shipping of Turkey told TASS on 13 October that Turkey will not accept any ships arriving from the ports of the Crimea. The new prohibition concerns the ships under any flag.³⁸ Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, when meeting his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Kiev on 10 October, offered Turkey to join the "group of friends for the de-occupation of the Crimea." Erdogan responded that Turkey still supports the territorial integrity of Ukraine and will not recognize Crimea's reunification with Russia. "We have not recognized and will not recognize the illegal annexation of the Crimea," Turkish President Erdogan stated. The relationship between Russia and Turkey has been quite volatile lately. Despite regular declarations from Putin and Erdogan about the need to strengthen and expand the Russian-Turkish cooperation, Ankara has unexpectedly set new rules to import agricultural products from Russia to Turkey. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu stated on October 9 that Ankara may rethink the contract for the purchase of S-400 anti-aircraft missile system from Russia. According to the minister, the contract will materialize only if Russia opens joint production of these complexes in Turkey.³⁹ If Russia does not agree then Turkey could seek a deal to acquire a missile defense system with another country.⁴⁰ On 10 October, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said that NATO ally Turkey is not seeking to antagonize the U.S.-led alliance by purchasing Russian S-400 surface-to-air missiles and is in talks with France and Italy to buy similar weapons. Ankara's decision to buy the Russian system has been seen in some Western capitals as a snub to the alliance, given tensions with Moscow over Ukraine and Syria, while the deal raised concern because the weapons cannot be integrated into NATO defense. But Stoltenberg said it was a sovereign decision and that he had talked it through with Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan. Stoltenberg said Ankara was ready to brief its allies in the U.S.-led 29-member bloc on the reasons behind its decision to buy the S-400 system. Erdogan has blamed NATO countries for failing to propose a viable alternative to the long-range Russian missiles, but Stoltenberg said Erdogan was now talking to Paris and Rome for similar systems, a move the alliance chief welcomed. Stoltenberg did not give more details but said Turkey was familiar with the so-called SAMP-T missiles developed

³⁸"Turkey refuses to accept all ships arriving from Russia's Crimea", *Pravda. Ru*, October 13, 2017. http://www.pravdareport.com/news/world/asia/turkey/13-10-2017/138920-turkey_russia_crimea-0/ Accessed on October 16, 2017.

³⁹"Turkey suddenly backpedals on its alliance with Russia", *Pravda. Ru*, October 10, 2017. http://www.pravdareport.com/world/asia/turkey/10-10-2017/138870-turkey_russia_relationship-0/ Accessed on October 16, 2017.

⁴⁰"Turkey could look elsewhere if Russia won't share missile technology: minister", *Reuters*, October 9, 2017. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-defence/turkey-could-look-elsewhere-if-russia-wont-share-missile-technology-minister-idUSKBN1CE1MP?il=0> Accessed on October 16, 2017.

because Italy had stationed them in Turkey as part of NATO efforts to help protect Ankara from rocket attacks. Such weapons are designed to protect battlefields and strategic sites such as airports and sea ports against airborne threats, including cruise missiles and aircraft.⁴¹

Meanwhile, on 12 October Turkey sent special forces and commandos over the border into Syria, the start of a joint mission with Russia and Iran whose stated goal is to monitor a cease-fire agreement and pacify a stronghold for Islamic militants -- but one that also has major implications for the region's Kurds.⁴²

- **Russia and NATO**

On 9 October, NATO launched a new multinational force in Romania to counter Russia along its eastern flank and to check a growing Russian presence in the Black Sea following the Kremlin's 2014 seizure of Crimea. "Our purpose is peace, not war. We are not a threat for Russia. But we need dialogue from a strong position of defense and discouragement," Romanian President Klaus Iohannis told the NATO Parliamentary Assembly of alliance lawmakers. At the base, as military bands played, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said "We are sending a very clear message: NATO is here, NATO is strong and NATO is united." Russia accuses NATO of trying to encircle it and threatening stability in Eastern Europe, which NATO denies. Around the Black Sea, Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey are NATO members while Georgia and Ukraine aspire to join. The NATO force aims to develop its presence in the Black Sea region, rich in oil and gas, without escalating tensions as it seeks to counter Russia's own plans to create what military analysts say is a "buffer zone".⁴³

At the end of a four-day NATO parliamentary assembly in the Romanian capital, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said that the alliance does not want a

⁴¹Robin Emmot, "No angst over Turkey's air defense deal with Russia, says NATO chief", *Reuters*, October 16, 2017. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-nato-turkey/no-angst-over-turkeys-air-defense-deal-with-russia-says-nato-chief-idUSKBN1CF1CF> Accessed on October 16, 2017.

⁴²Selcan Hacaoglu, "Erdogan Announces Start of Syria Mission Planned With Putin", *Bloomberg*, October 13, 2017. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-10-13/turkish-troops-enter-syria-in-joint-mission-with-russia-iran> Accessed on October 16, 2017.

⁴³Robin Emmot, "NATO launches Black Sea force as latest counter to Russia", *Reuters*, October 9, 2017. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-nato/nato-launches-black-sea-force-as-latest-counter-to-russia-idUSKBN1CE0MJ> Accessed on October 16, 2017.

"new Cold War" with Russia, despite members' concerns about the Russian military buildup close to NATO's border. "We are concerned by (Russia's) lack of transparency when it comes to military exercises," he said.⁴⁴

- **Russia and It's Economy**

The Bank of Russia is working with the Prosecutor General's Office to close external websites that give the opportunity to acquire crypto-currency, said First Deputy Chairman of the Central Bank Sergey Shvetsov. According to Shvetsov, the regulator receives a "sufficiently large number of signals from the financial market", which indicate the interest in the crypto currency by market participants. According to Shvetsov, these tools do not allow the regulator to protect investors. He also noted that crypto-currencies have ambiguous economic nature; they do not have a legal description.⁴⁵ On 9 October, the right to legally exchange the crypto currency for roubles and other fiat money should be left only for banks and payment systems, says State Duma deputy Martin Shakkum. This will identify the owners of crypto currency. According to Martin Shakkuma, it is necessary to legalize the activities for obtaining crypto currency by means of computers, that is, mining, which is not outlawed.⁴⁶ On 16 October, Russian President Vladimir Putin has officially stated that Russia will issue its own 'CryptoRuble' at a closed door meeting in Moscow, according to local news sources. The news broke through Minister of Communications Nikolay Nikiforov. According to the official, the state issued cryptocurrency cannot be mined and will be issued and controlled and maintained only by the authorities. The CryptoRubles can be exchanged for regular Rubles at any time, though if the holder is unable to explain where the CryptoRubles came from, a 13 percent tax will be levied. The same tax will be applied to any earned difference between the price of the purchase of the token and the price of the sale. While the announcement means that Russia will enter the cryptocurrency world, it is in no way an affirmation or legalization of Bitcoin or any other decentralized cryptocurrency. On the contrary, Putin quite recently called for a complete ban on

⁴⁴Alison Mutler, "NATO chief: 'We don't want a new Cold War' with Russia", *Chicago Tribune*, October 9, 2017. <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/ct-nato-russia-cold-war-20171009-story.html> Accessed on October 16, 2017.

⁴⁵"The Bank of Russia advocated the closure of external sites for the purchase of crypto currency", *RBC*, October 10, 2017. <http://www.rbc.ru/rbcfreenews/59dc7b979a7947a06d9c459a> Accessed on October 16, 2017.

⁴⁶"State Duma deputy proposed to change bitcoins to rubles only in banks", *RBC*, October 9, 2017. http://www.rbc.ru/technology_and_media/09/10/2017/59db89ee9a794715330f30ab?from=materials_on_subject Accessed on October 16, 2017.

all cryptocurrencies within Russia.⁴⁷ On 10 October, Putin had warned against the rise of cryptocurrencies, saying they are often issued by anonymous sources and could be used for money laundering and the financing of terrorism.⁴⁸

- **Meet on Afghanistan in Moscow**

On 12 October, India was invited to a Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) contact group meeting on Afghanistan for the first time to address the war-ravaged country's security situation as well as its economic potential; the countries' representatives are gathering in Moscow. The meeting comes close on the heels of the US-backed Indo-Afghan trade and investment show in the Indian capital. New Delhi has been playing a pivotal role in Afghanistan's reconstruction efforts and its role in the region as a whole has come to be better-acknowledged after it took a firm stand against China in the Doklam crisis.⁴⁹

South Asia

Afghanistan

- **UN Report Shows Increase In Civilian Casualties Due To Airstrikes**

A report by the United Nations indicates that 8,019 civilians including women and children were killed and wounded in the Afghan conflict in the first nine months of this year. The report also says anti-government armed groups are responsible for the 64 percent of the casualties while the Afghan government affiliated forces are responsible for 20 percent of the civilian deaths. The report shows that civilian casualties in airstrikes have increased by 50 percent during the past nine months. According to the report, 2,640 civilians were killed and 5,379 others were wounded as a result of violence, conflicts and airstrikes. Reports indicate that the foreign

⁴⁷John Buck, "BREAKING: Russia Issuing 'CryptoRuble'", *The Coin Telegraph*, October 16, 2017. <https://cointelegraph.com/news/breaking-russia-issuing-cryptoruble> Accessed on October 16, 2017.

⁴⁸"Putin: Cryptocurrencies bear serious risks, including financing of terrorism", *RT*, October 10, 2017. <https://www.rt.com/news/406269-cryptocurrency-risks-terrorism-putin/> Accessed on October 16, 2017.

⁴⁹"India Meets SCO Partners in Moscow to Discuss Afghanistan", *Sputnik*, October 12, 2017. <https://sputniknews.com/world/201710121058160061-india-sco-afghanistan/> Accessed on October 16, 2017.

forces dropped at least 800 bombs on Daesh and Taliban targets only in September.⁵⁰

- **Serious Concerns Raised Over Taliban Leader's Visit To Helmand**

Kandahar's police chief General Abdul Raziq said that Taliban leader Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada visited Helmand couple of weeks ago where he met with Taliban members. Raziq said that the visit had been at the request of Pakistan's intelligence services, ISI. According to him, the Taliban leader visited Mosa Qala in Helmand after entering the country from Pakistan through Baluchistan. According to Raziq, the reason for his visit was to discuss their plans for resistance against increased airstrikes and to agree to a ceasefire with Daesh in the country. They said that Haibatullah's visit to Helmand was a cause for serious concern and Afghan government should answer to how the Taliban leader managed to safely travel to Musa Qala district.⁵¹

- **Iranian Economy Minister Meets Counterparts from India, Afghanistan**

Iranian Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance Masoud Karbasian in separate meetings with his Afghan and Indian counterparts reviewed issues of mutual interest with them. The meetings were held on the sidelines of the 2017 Annual joint meeting of the World Bank Group and International Monetary Fund (IMF). In his meeting with Indian Minister of Finance Arun Jaitley, Karbasian expressed Iran's readiness to host joint commission meeting in early 2018. In the meeting between Karbasian and Afghan Minister of Finance Eklil Ahmad Hakimi, both sides underscored the strategic importance of the region and also the role of two countries in removing some economic barriers. Karbasian stressed on organizing trade exchanges and customs cooperation.⁵²

- **10-Nation Kabul Meet Mulls Joint Anti-Drugs Strategy**

Representatives from 10 countries who met in Kabul on October 9, 2017, to devise a joint regional strategy at combating narcotics. A two-day conference hosted by the Ministry of Counter Narcotics in Kabul is being attended by representatives from Afghanistan, Iran, China, Russia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Afghan

⁵⁰ Karim Amini, "UN Report Shows Increase In Civilian Casualties Due To Airstrikes", *Tolonews*, 13 October 2017. <http://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/un-report-shows-increase-civilian-casualties-due-airstrikes> accessed on 16 October 2017.

⁵¹ Abdullah Achakzai, "Serious Concerns Raised Over Taliban Leader's Visit To Helmand", *Tolonews*, 09 October 2017. <http://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/serious-concerns-raised-over-taliban-leaders-visit-helmand> accessed on 10 October 2017.

⁵² "Iranian Economy Minister Meets Counterparts from India, Afghanistan", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, 16 October 2017. http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=19185 accessed on 16 October 2017.

counter-narcotics minister Salamat Azimi told the meeting that a draft regional cooperation strategy against drugs had been prepared by his ministry and would be discussed at the two-day conference.⁵³

- **SCO Resumes Afghanistan Contact Group Meeting**

After a seven-year pause, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) resumed its Afghanistan Contact Group meeting, which was hosted by Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on October 11, 2017. The meeting was attended by the SCO member-states at the deputy foreign ministerial level. As SCO observer-state, the Afghan delegation was led by Deputy Foreign Minister Hekmat Khalil Karzai.

In their last summit in Astana, Kazakhstan, in June, SCO member-states decided to re-launch the Afghanistan Contact Group meetings as a consultative process to support Afghanistan in the fight against terrorism, drugs, and criminality, as well as helping the country with its sustainable development process within the SCO's economic cooperation framework.⁵⁴

- **IECC Chief Warns To Resign If 'Interferences' Continue**

Abdul Aziz Aryaee, head of the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission (IECC), warned that he will step down from his post within the next month if 'the interferences' in the electoral body are not stopped. "Those who were involved in electoral fraud in the past are still present in the (election) commission. How can we move forward in their presence?" Aryaee asked.⁵⁵

- **Afghanistan to Sign Transport Agreement With Central Asian States**

The Afghan Ministry of Transport announced on October 14, 2017, that an agreement was under consideration with the Central Asian States to resolve transport related issues on regional level. Addressing a press conference in Mazar-i-Sharif, Transport Ministry spokesperson Hekmatullah Qawanj said an agreement with Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Iran and Pakistan would soon be inked to help Afghanistan find new linkages and road.⁵⁶

- **Oman to Host Quadrilateral Meeting**

⁵³ "10-Nation Kabul Meet Mulls Joint Anti-Drugs Strategy", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, October 10, 2017, http://outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=19133 (accessed on October 16, 2017)

⁵⁴ "SCO Resumes Afghanistan Contact Group Meeting", *Tolo News*, October 11, 2017, <http://www.tolonews.com/index.php/afghanistan/sco-resumes-afghanistan-contact-group-meeting-after-7-years> (accessed on October 16, 2017)

⁵⁵ Massoud Ansar, "IECC Chief Warns To Resign If 'Interferences' Continue", *Tolo News*, October 12, 2017, <http://www.tolonews.com/index.php/afghanistan/iecc-chief-warns-resign-if-%E2%80%98interferences%E2%80%99-continue> (accessed on October 16, 2017)

⁵⁶ "Afghanistan to sign transport agreement with Central Asian States", *Wadsa*, October 15, 2017, <http://wadsam.com/afghan-business-news/afghanistan-sign-transport-agreement-central-asian-states-232/> (accessed on October 16, 2017)

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) said on October 15, 2017, that the sixth Quadrilateral Meeting between Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and the United States will be held in Oman on Monday (16th October). According to the foreign ministry, deputy foreign ministers of the four countries will attend the meeting and will hold talks on implementing commitments, especially Pakistan's promises, regarding fighting terrorism.

Foreign ministry spokesman Shekib Mustaghni said in addition to discussions on commitments, the delegates will also share ideas on counter-terrorism efforts.⁵⁷

नेपाल

रा प्र पा ने देउबा सरकार को समर्थन देने की बात कही:

कमल थापा के नेतृत्व वाली राष्ट्रीय प्रजातंत्र पार्टी ने वर्तमान देउबा सरकार को समर्थन देने का प्रस्ताव रखा है थापा का . वाम दलों के चुनावी गठबंधन बनाने के बाद थापा ने देउबा से मिलकर बात की . कहना है कि अभी जो माओवादी केंद्र के पास गृह मंत्रालय है वह उन्हें दिया जाये⁵⁸

वाम दल निर्वाचन क्षेत्र बांटने की तैयारी में:

अक् 3टूबर को तीनों वाम दलों एमाले माओवादी और नया शक्ति के चुनावी गठबंधन के बाद अभी ये , दोनों बड़े वाम दलों एमाले और . दल आपस में निर्वाचन क्षेत्रों को बांटने की जद्दोजहद में लगे हुए है 60 माओवादी ने: .के अनुपात में सीटों को बांटने की राय बनार्यी है 40⁵⁹

चुनाव टालने का इरादा नहीं:नेपाली कांग्रेस :

वाम दलों के चुनावी गठबंधन के बाद यह आंकलन लगाया जा रहा था कि वर्तमान सरकार आगामी चुनावों को टाल सकती है नवम्बर और 26 लेकिन नेपाली कांग्रेस के नेताओं ने यह स्पष्ट कर दिया कि . दिसंबर को होने वाले चुनावों को आगे के लिए नहीं 7ं टाला जायेगा और इन्हें निर्धारित समय पर करवाया जायेगा.⁶⁰

देउबा ने रा प्र पा से आठ मंत्री शामिल किये:

⁵⁷ Anisa Shaheed, "Oman To Host Quadrilateral Meeting ", *Tolo News*, October 15, 2017, <http://www.tolonews.com/index.php/afghanistan/oman-host-quadrilateral-meeting-monday> (accessed on October 16, 2017)

⁵⁸ "RPP decides to extend support to Deuba govt", *The Kathmandu Post*, 10 October 2017, <http://epaper.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2017-10-10/1>

⁵⁹ Sanjeev Giri, "Left forces struggle to get things right", *The Kathmandu Post*, 11 October 2017, <http://epaper.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2017-10-11/1>

⁶⁰ "No plans to postpone the polls, says NC leaders", *The Kathmandu Post*, 12 October 2017, <http://epaper.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2017-10-12/1>

संसद के भंग होने से ठीक पूर्व शेर बहादुर देउबा ने अपनी सरकार में राष्ट्रीय प्रजातंत्र पार्टी के मंत्रियों को शामिल कर लिया है जिसे वाम दलों ने एक एतिहास .िक गलती बताया है.⁶¹

Pakistan

- **Bajwa and the Pakistan Economy** - Chief of the Army Staff Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa in a one day conference organised by the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) and Inter-Services Public Relations in Karachi stated that the Pakistani economy is showing mixed indicators on October 11th. He further said “Growth has picked up but the debts are sky high. [The situation regarding] infrastructure and energy have improved considerably but the current account balance is not in our favour.” He stressed on widening the tax base, bringing in fiscal discipline and ensuring continuity of economic policies.⁶² Federal Interior and Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal on October 13th requested the Pakistani Army to refrain from making comments on the national economy.⁶³ Deflecting criticism from the government for commenting on the state of the economy, the military’s chief spokesperson on October 14th stressed that the economy was inextricably linked to security matters, adding that a weak economy could adversely affect the country’s safety and security.⁶⁴
- **Enforced Disappearances in Pakistan** - A parliamentary committee on October 11th observed that the Commission on Enforced Disappearances has failed to fix responsibility on individuals and organisations involved in enforced disappearances. It observed that the Commission on Enforced Disappearances claims to have traced over 2,000 missing persons (most of them were found as dead bodies) during the last six years though there is no word on whether it also recorded the statement of even one of these victims. The committee met after a requisition was made by senators Farhatullah Babar, Nisar Mohammad and Mohammad Mohsin Khan Leghari for the progress made by the commission in regards to inquiring into enforced disappearances. Senator Babar added that even foreign nationals have recently disappeared, referring to the Turkish family which

⁶¹ Anil Giri, "Deuba inducts eight ministers from RPP", The Kathmandu Post, 14 October 2017, <http://epaper.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2017-10-14/1>

⁶² Khurram Husain, “Army chief says economy showing mixed indicators”, *Dawn*, October 12, 2017, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1363192/army-chief-says-economy-showing-mixed-indicators> (accessed on October 16, 2017)

⁶³ Anwar Iqbal, “Ahsan urges army spokesman not to comment on economy”, *Dawn*, October 14, 2017, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1363753> (accessed on October 16, 2017)

⁶⁴ Anwar Iqbal & Iftikhar A. Khan, “Military says security linked to economy”, *Dawn*, October 15, 2017, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1363937> (accessed on October 16, 2017)

recently went missing.⁶⁵ It was later known that the kidnapped family of Mesut Kacmaz have been detained by Pakistani law enforcement agency and on October 14th they were forcibly deported to Turkey.⁶⁶

- **US Pakistan and Terrorism** – Pakistani Security forces, with the support of US intelligence, freed an American woman, her Canadian husband and their three children from terrorists’ captivity on October 11th. They were kidnapped by terrorists in Afghanistan in 2012. They were recovered when terrorists were shifting across to Pakistan from Afghanistan, in Nawe Kali, a remote area about 15 kilometres southwest of Kohat town in Pakistan.⁶⁷ It can be noted here that the postponed visit of an interagency US delegation led by deputy assistant to the president and National Security Council senior director for South Asia, Lisa Curtis along with Ambassador Alice Wells and other senior officials from the Departments of State and Defence took place on October 12th as the delegation met Foreign Secretary Tehmina Janjua and Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa. They agreed to continue bilateral engagement at all levels and reinvigorate relationship to achieve the common objective of defeating terrorism.⁶⁸
- **Pakistan Iran Border Meeting** - A meeting of the Pak-Iran Joint Border Commission was held in Gwadar on October 15th in between the Pakistan and Iranian delegation led by Balochistan Chief Secretary Aurangzeb Haq (Pakistan side) and Deputy Governor of Sistan-Baluchestan province Ali Asghar Mir Shikari (Iran side). They vowed not to allow use of their soil for terrorism and decided to improve the security situation at the border and take concrete steps for curbing smuggling and illegal border-crossing.⁶⁹

Indian Ocean Region

- **SA Agulash II for IIOE-2**
As part of South Africa's contribution to the Second International Indian Ocean Expedition (IIOE-2), a programme under the UN Intergovernmental

⁶⁵ Jamal Shahid, “‘Commission has failed to fix responsibility for missing persons’, *Dawn*, October 12, 2017, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1363269/commission-has-failed-to-fix-responsibility-for-missing-persons> (accessed on October 16, 2017)

⁶⁶ Imran Gabol, “‘Missing’ Turkish teacher, wife deported”, *Dawn*, October 16, 2017, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1364099/missing-turkish-teacher-wife-deported> (accessed on October 16, 2017)

⁶⁷ Zulfiqar Ali, “US-Canadian couple, three children freed from terrorist custody in Kohat”, *Dawn*, October 12, 2017, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1363483/us-canadian-couple-three-children-freed-from-terrorist-custody-in-kohat> (accessed on October 16, 2017)

⁶⁸ Iftikhar A. Khan, “US sends high-level delegation in move to repair relations”, *Dawn*, October 13, 2017, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1363481> (accessed on October 16, 2017)

⁶⁹ “Pakistan, Iran vow not to allow use of their soil for terrorism”, *Dawn*, October 16, 2017, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1364130/pakistan-iran-vow-not-to-allow-use-of-their-soil-for-terrorism> (accessed on October 16, 2017)

Oceanographic Commission, the *SA Agulhas II* will reach Durban port on 18 October, 2017 and further cruise up to Tanzania coast.⁷⁰ According to a media report, scientists from South Africa, Mozambique, Kenya, Nigeria and Egypt will be on board to carry out oceanographic and atmospheric research in the Indian Ocean water.⁷¹ Researchers from India, Italy and Belgium will also join the cruise.⁷² Environmental Affairs Minister Edna Molewa said that the expedition would bring several benefits.⁷³ He said, "The gathering of basic long-term data and information will place developing countries of the Indian Ocean in a better position to conserve the integrity of their ocean and to find ways in unlocking their respective potential ocean's economy to improve the livelihoods of their citizens."⁷⁴

"The Second International Indian Ocean Expedition (IIOE-2) is a major global scientific program which will engage the international scientific community in collaborative oceanographic and atmospheric research from coastal environments to the deep sea over the period 2015-2020, revealing new information on the Indian Ocean (i.e. its currents, its influence upon the climate, its marine ecosystems) which is fundamental for future sustainable development and expansion of the Indian Ocean's blue economy."⁷⁵

- **Foreign Secretary visit to Seychelles**

Foreign Secretary Dr S Jaishankar visited Seychelles during the second week of October 2017. During the visit, the Foreign Secretary met with Seychelles President, the Vice-President, the Leader of Opposition and members of the Cabinet.⁷⁶ According to Official Spokesperson of Ministry of External Affairs, the visit was a scheduled visit and "the focus was on bilateral development cooperation and maritime cooperation."⁷⁷ Although media reported the visit as an attempt "to smooth out differences over the development of infrastructure on Assumption Island."⁷⁸

⁷⁰ SA Agulhas II embarks on African-led research cruise, 13 October 2017, <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/sci-tech/2017-10-13-sa-agulhas-ii-embarks-on-african-led-research-cruise/> (accessed on 15 October 2017)

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ SA Agulhas II Headed Into Indian Ocean on a Research Expedition, <http://ewn.co.za/2017/10/14/sa-agulhas-ii-headed-into-indian-ocean-on-a-research-expedition> (accessed on 15 October 2017)

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ 2nd International Indian Ocean Expedition, <http://www.iioe-2.incois.gov.in/> (accessed on 16 October 2017)

⁷⁶ FS Seychelles visit focus was on developmental, maritime cooperation: MEA, 12 October, 2017 <https://news.webindia123.com/news/Articles/India/20171012/3201224.html> (accessed on 16 October 2017)

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ S Jaishankar in Seychelles: As China shadow looms, India must quickly iron out disputes over Assumption Island, <http://www.firstpost.com/india/s-jaishankar-in-seychelles-as-china-shadow-looms-india-must-quickly-iron-out-disputes-over-assumption-island-4134995.html>, (accessed on 16 October 2017)

- **South Africa takes over Chairmanship of Indian Ocean Rim Association**

South Africa has taken over the chairmanship of the Indian Ocean Rim Association Council (IORA) for next two years. This month (14-18 October, 2017) South Africa is hosting 17th Indian Ocean Rim Association Council of Ministers' Meetings under the theme "IORA – uniting the peoples of Africa, Asia, Australasia, and the Middle East through enhanced co-operation for peace, stability and sustainable development” in Durban.⁷⁹

- **Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman commissioned INS Kiltan**

On 16 October 2017, Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman commissioned the indigenously-built anti-submarine warfare stealth corvette INS Kiltan at the Eastern Naval Command in Visakhapatnam.⁸⁰ The induction of INS Kiltan, newest anti-submarine warfare stealth corvette in Indian Navy, will boost "the force's capability to detect and target hostile vessels and to provide protection to Indian warships."⁸¹

West Asia

Israel

- **Hamas and Fatah proposed reconciliation** – As per Hamas linked website Palinfo, both the rival factions have signed a reconciliation agreement on October 12th that might seem to end a 10 year long rivalry and conflict between the two. The agreement stated that they will assist the National Reconciliation Government (the Palestinian Authority) to fully exercise its functions and carry out its responsibilities in Gaza as it does in the West Bank. They would also assist to take over all crossings of the Gaza Strip, the PA staff would be managing these crossings. They also agreed to rebuild the security system in Gaza Strip after necessary deliberations. They also asked that all Palestinian factions that signed the agreement on “Palestinian National Accord” on May 4, 2011 should meet on November 14, 2017 to deliberate on all aspects of reconciliation mentioned in the agreement. The deal was signed by the leader of the Fatah delegation Azzam al-Ahmad and Hamas deputy politburo chief Salah al-Arouri. The Egyptians, who

⁷⁹ International Relations and Cooperation, 19 September 2017, <http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/2017/iora0919.htm> (accessed on 16 October 2017)

⁸⁰ Nirmala Sitharaman commissions warship INS Kiltan in Indian Navy, <http://www.livemint.com/Politics/gmruo9Lbz3CCeKryaDlaKM/Nirmala-Sitharaman-commissions-warship-INS-Kiltan-in-Indian.html> (accessed on 16 October 2017)

⁸¹ Navy set to induct newest anti-submarine warfare corvette: Eight things to know, <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/navy-set-to-induct-newest-anti-submarine-warfare-corvette-eight-things-to-know/story-KIF9k6g2oZp369zogndZWM.html> (accessed on 16 October 2017).

facilitated the talks in Cairo, released a press statement after the agreement was signed.⁸²

- **US, Israel and UNESCO** – On October 12, 2017, US took the decision of withdrawing from UNESCO, in view of the mounting arrears of UNESCO, the need for fundamental reform in the organization, and continuing anti-Israel bias at UNESCO.⁸³ In a statement announcing its own withdrawal after a few hours of the US announcement, Israel called the US administration's decision "courageous and moral", and accused UNESCO of becoming a "theatre of the absurd". The withdrawal will take effect on 31 December 2018.⁸⁴
- **Alibaba and Israeli R&D** - Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba is launching a global research project with ambitious goals – and an Israeli research hub. The Alibaba Group announced on October 11th about the creation of a global “Academy” dedicated to innovation and technological collaboration. The program – which Alibaba says will see \$15 billion in R&D investment over the next three years – includes the creation of seven research laboratories worldwide, including one in Tel Aviv. The Academy will be called DAMO, standing for Discovery, Adventure, Momentum and Outlook.⁸⁵
- **Turkish army expands deployment in Syria**⁸⁶

The Turkish military has been expanding its deployment in northwest Syria with the goal of encircling militants of the People’s Protection Units (YPG) in Idlib province, as part of a deal to reduce clashes.

Turkey is building a barrier against the YPG’s ambition to unite its forces in the isolated Afrin region, north of Idlib, with the rest of its positions in Jendaris in the Barakat Mountains. The military has deployed tanks and Stinger missiles, backed by receptors and a hi-tech computer system, in Idlib. Armed drones are also reportedly conducting surveillance flights. A convoy of Turkish troops entered

⁸² Dov Lieber, “Translation of leaked Hamas-Fatah agreement”, *The Times of Israel*, October 15, 2017, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/translation-of-leaked-hamas-fatah-agreement/> (accessed on October 16, 2017); Adam Rasgon, “Leaked: The six clauses of the Fatah-Hamas deal”, *The Jerusalem Post*, October 14, 2017, <http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Leaked-the-six-clauses-of-the-Fatah-Hamas-rapprochement-deal-507401> (accessed on October 16, 2017)

⁸³ “The United States Withdraws From UNESCO”, Press Statement, *U.S. Department of State*, October 12, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/t/pa/prs/ps/2017/10/274748.htm> (accessed on October 16, 2017)

⁸⁴ Peter Beaumont, “Unesco: Israel joins US in quitting UN heritage agency over 'anti-Israel bias'”, *The Guardian*, October 12, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/12/us-withdraw-unesco-december-united-nations> (accessed on October 16, 2017); “US and Israel withdraw from UNESCO”, *Al Jazeera*, October 13, 2017, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/10/withdraws-unesco-171012133838151.html> (accessed on October 16, 2017)

⁸⁵ “Alibaba announces multibillion dollar research project with Israeli R&D center”, *The Times of Israel*, October 15, 2017, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/alibaba-announces-multibillion-dollar-research-project-with-israeli-rd-center/> (accessed on October 16, 2017)

⁸⁶ *Hurriyet Daily News*, 16 October 2017 <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-army-expands-deployment-in-syrias-northwest-120895>

Syria near the Bab al-Hawa border crossing on October 12. It was the first such deployment since last year, when Ankara launched a major ground and air offensive to clear YPG and Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) militants from its last stretch of border with Turkey.

At least four convoys carrying scores of armored vehicles and equipment have been stationed in several locations in the first phase of a deployment that is expected to deepen inside rebel-held Idlib, opposition sources said. The goal is ultimately to create a contiguous stretch that goes from Bab al-Hawa all the way to Jarablus city, west of Euphrates River and as far south as the city of al-Bab, widening a pocket of the northern border under the control of Turkey-backed rebels.

- **Erdoğan to visit Poland to boost trade ties⁸⁷**

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's upcoming visit to Poland will boost trade and investment between the two countries, business leaders from both countries have said. "Poland is the most important trading partner for Turkey in Central Europe, with bilateral trade reaching nearly \$6 billion last year," Kemal Gülerüz, President of the Turkish-Poland Business Council of the Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEİK), told Anadolu Agency. The trade volume has more than doubled over the last 10 years, shooting up from \$2.49 billion in 2006 to nearly \$6 billion in 2016, according to Economy Ministry data. Bilateral trade is in favour of Poland, with Turkey's exports to Poland standing at \$1.9 billion while its imports from the country at more than \$2.1 billion in January-September 2017, according to official data. Polish exports to Turkey hit a high of \$3.24 billion last year, up from \$1.43 billion in 2006, while Turkish exports stood at \$2.65 billion, up from \$1.06 billion in 2006. The Polish-Turkish Business Forum, to be held on October 17, 2017, during Erdogan's visit to Warsaw, will help increase trade and investment relations between the two countries.

- **Bollywood star Khan donates money won in quiz show to refugees in Turkey⁸⁸**

Bollywood star Aamir Khan has donated the money he won in a quiz show in Turkey to refugees in the country. Khan participated in "Who Wants to be a Billionaire?" hosted by popular Turkish actor Murat Yıldırım on October 14, 2017. "I am not competing here for myself. I am here to help," he said during the

⁸⁷ *Hurriyet Daily News*, 14 October 2017 <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/erdogan-to-visit-poland-to-boost-trade-ties-120852>

⁸⁸ *Hurriyet Daily News*, 14 October 2017 <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/bollywood-star-khan-donates-money-won-in-quiz-show-to-refugees-in-turkey-120874>

competition, saying he would donate any money he won to charities in Turkey. He managed to reach the question worth 125,000 Turkish Liras but quit the contest as he did not know the answer to the question. He therefore settled for 60,000 liras, which he said he would donate to charities in Turkey working for refugees.

- **PKK existence in Kirkuk declaration of war, Baghdad tells KRG⁸⁹**

The Iraqi central government accused Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) authorities in northern Iraq of bringing PKK to Kirkuk, saying that the involvement of the terrorist group is “declaration of war.” In a statement published after a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi and attended by top military and security commanders, the government reiterated once again that it wants KRG-held Kirkuk and other disputed areas under its authority and that it will seek to impose its authority over those areas.

Iraq cannot remain silent to two major KRG Kurdish political parties -- the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and the PUK -- moving to bring PKK terrorists into Kirkuk, it said. “This is a declaration of war against other [non-Kurdish] Iraqis and legal security forces,” it added. The council also cited other grounds for criticizing the KRG's military move. Meanwhile, an aide to the KRG President Barzani denied the accusations, saying that the PKK has no presence in Kirkuk.

- **Turkey determined to maintain EU membership goals, Deputy PM says⁹⁰**

Turkey is determined to keep up with its efforts to obtain full membership in the European Union, Deputy Prime Minister Bekir Bozdağ said in France Sunday ahead of a two-day meeting between leaders of the bloc, which will focus on discussing EU's relations with Turkey on October 19, 2017. Speaking at the ceremony, Bozdağ said that Turkey has been struggling to join the bloc since over half a decade.

“Are there any other countries that have waited at EU's door? No.” Bozdağ said, as he criticized the bloc for “changing rules of the game” ever since. The deputy PM, who is also the spokesperson for the government, highlighted Turkey's determination once again by noting that the country has not given up its efforts to join EU. “We are determined to maintain this process regardless of all obstacles” Bozdağ said, adding, “We do not have any intentions to withdraw our bid.”

⁸⁹ *Daily Sabah*, 16 October 2017, <https://www.dailysabah.com/war-on-terror/2017/10/15/pkk-existence-in-kirkuk-declaration-of-war-baghdad-tells-krq>

⁹⁰ *Daily Sabah*, 16 October 2017, <https://www.dailysabah.com/eu-affairs/2017/10/15/turkey-determined-to-maintain-eu-membership-goals-deputy-pm-says>

Terrorism and Counter Terrorism

Pakistan

	Date	Place	Incident	Killed	Injured
	October 19	FATA	Three soldiers were killed and seven others were injured in an attack on a vehicle of the Frontier Corps in Razmak sub-division of North Waziristan Agency. ⁹¹	3	7
	October 12	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	A local journalist, identified as Haroon Khan, was shot dead outside his house in Swabi town. He was a correspondent with Waqt News TV and was affiliated with Akhbar-e-Khaiber. ⁹²	1	0
	October 13	Balochistan	A Policeman, identified as constable Ali Muhammad, was killed and three others, including a child, were injured when unidentified armed assailants opened fire on a police patrolling party on Faqeer Muhammad road in Quetta. ⁹³	1	3
	October 14	Karachi	Karachi has been named amongst the least safe of 60 major cities of the world by the 2017 <i>Safe Cities Index</i> report released by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU). "The 2017 Safe Cities Index retains	Report	

⁹¹ Pazir Gul, Three soldiers martyred in North Waziristan attack, *Dawn*, October 10, 2017,

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1362837/three-soldiers-martyred-in-north-waziristan-attack>, accessed on October 16, 2017

⁹² Journalist gunned down in Swabi, *Dawn*, October 13, 2017, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1363473/journalist-gunned-down-in-swabi>, accessed on October 16, 2017

⁹³ Syed Ali Shah, Policeman killed, 3 others injured in Quetta firing, *Dawn*, October 13, 2017,

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1363561/policeman-killed-3-others-injured-in-quetta-firing>, accessed on October 16, 2017

			the four categories of security from the 2015 version — digital, health, infrastructure and physical,” said the EIU in its executive summary of the report. The report specifically mentioned Karachi for being rated last. ⁹⁴		
	October 15	FATA	<p>At least four Frontier Corps (FC) personnel were killed and three others were injured in an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) blast in the Kharlachi area of Kurram Agency. Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) claimed responsibility for the attack.</p> <p>An Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) statement said that the troops targeted by the blast “were part of a search party for handlers of the rescued foreigners”, Caitlan Coleman and Joshua Boyle, who were recovered in Kohat on October 11, 2017.⁹⁵</p>	4	3

Afghanistan

	Date	Place	Incident	Killed	Injured
	October 10	Paktika	The dead body of a tribal leader, identified as Malik Nazar Gul, was found in Khair Kot district of Paktika province. Taliban had	1	0

⁹⁴ Karachi least safe in 60 world cities: report, *Dawn*, October 14, 2017, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1363601/karachi-least-safe-in-60-world-cities-report>, accessed on October 16, 2107

⁹⁵ Ali Akbar, 4 FC personnel martyred in Kurram Agency blast, *Dawn*, October 15, 2017, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1363985/4-fc-personnel-martyred-in-kurram-agency-blast>, accessed on October 16, 2017

			killed him over cooperation with the government. ⁹⁶		
	October 11	Balkh	Unidentified armed assailants opened fire at the Balkh governor's spokesman Munir Ahmad Farhad in the provincial capital Mazar-e-Sharif. Farhad sustained injuries. ⁹⁷	0	1
	October 13	Nangarhar	At least three people were killed in an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) explosion in Laglori Khor area of Haska Mina District in Nangarhar province. No outfit claimed responsibility for the attack. ⁹⁸	3	0
	October 15	Kabul	Kabul Police foiled a terrorist attack by seizing an explosives-packed vehicle in Mirwais Maidan area in west Kabul. Brigadier General Mohammad Salim Almas, crime branch chief, said, "The vehicle was to be used in a suicide attack in Kabul." The attack was planned by Mulla Anas, who is associated with the Haqqani Network. ⁹⁹	Terror attack foiled	
	October 15	Helmand	At least 25 Taliban militants were killed and 11 others were injured during counter-terrorism operations in Lashkargah city, Nad-e-Ali, and Kajaki districts of Helmand province. ¹⁰⁰	25	11

⁹⁶ Taliban blamed as leader found dead in Paktika, *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, October 11, 2017,

<http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/assets/epaper/October%2011,%202017/Main%20Page.pdf>, accessed on October 16, 2017

⁹⁷ Gunmen Attack the Spokesman of

Balkh Governor in Mazar-E-Sharif, *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, October 12, 2017,

<http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/assets/epaper/October%2012,%202017/Main%20Page.pdf>, p. 2, accessed on October 16, 2017

⁹⁸ Afghanistan: Explosion kills three in Nangarhar, *The Siasat Daily*, October 14, 2017,

<https://www.siasat.com/news/afghanistan-explosion-kills-three-nangarhar-1242882/>, accessed on October 16, 2017

⁹⁹ Explosives-laden vehicle seized in Kabul: Police, *Pajhwok Afghan News*, October 15, 2017,

<https://www.pajhwok.com/en/2017/10/15/explosives-laden-vehicle-seized-kabul-police>, accessed on October 16, 2017

¹⁰⁰ Taliban suffer heavy casualties in latest operations in Helmand province, *Khaama Press*, October 15, 2017,

<http://www.khaama.com/taliban-suffer-heavy-casualties-in-latest-operations-in-helmand-province-03650>, accessed on October 16, 2017

Iraq

	Date	Place	Incident	Killed	Injured
	October 11	Hawija	A member of Hawija council urged joint troops to comb Hawija as well as villages of al-Dibs town that were liberated, warning that IS militants could be hiding at underground tunnels or remote regions in order to attack the troops again. ¹⁰¹	IS hiding in underground tunnels	
	October 13	Syrian border	The pro-government paramilitary troops repelled an IS attack, killing six militants on borders with Syria. "Al-Hashd al-Shaabi [Popular Mobilization Forces] repulsed an attack by IS in Tal Safuk region, on borders with Syria. Troops killed six militants and burned down a vehicle loaded with weapons," a statement by the PMFs media service said. ¹⁰²	6	0
	October 14	Mosul	Four IS militants were killed after being besieged inside a house in Qayyarah, south of Mosul. The four militants were attempting to plant seven bombs that were in their possession, to target security troops there. ¹⁰³	4	0
	October 15	Anbar	At least 15 Islamic State militants were killed in an airstrike that	15	NS

¹⁰¹ Nehal Mostafa, Islamic State could be hiding at underground tunnels in Hawija: Official, *Iraqi News*, October 11, 2017, <https://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/islamic-state-hiding-underground-tunnels-hawija-official/>, accessed on October 16, 2017

¹⁰² Nehal Mostafa, Paramilitary troops repel IS attack, kill six militants near Syrian borders, *Iraqi News*, October 13, 2017, <https://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/paramilitary-troops-repel-attack-kill-six-militants-near-syrian-borders/>, accessed on October 16, 2017

¹⁰³ Nehal Mostafa, Federal Police kill four IS militants hiding in house, south of Mosul, *Iraqi News*, October 14, 2017, <https://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/federal-police-kill-four-militants-hiding-house-south-mosul/>, accessed on October 16, 2017

			targeted one of the group's two holdouts in Anbar. "One of the IS leaders, called Khaled Ali Abdul Latif and known as Abul Walid, was killed in an airstrike by the US-led Coalition in Qaim, along with more than fifteen militants," according to an unnamed source. ¹⁰⁴		
	October 15	Baghdad	A civilian was killed, ten others, including three policemen, were wounded in two IED blasts near a market in al-Yusufiya region in Baghdad. ¹⁰⁵	1	10

Syria

	Date	Place	Incident	Injured
	October 10	Syria	Seven more members of Iraq's Yazidi minority were released over the past 24 hours from IS captivity in Syria. ¹⁰⁶	Yazidi families released
	October 12	Deir Ezzor	The Syrian army announced that its troops have cut off the supply lines of the IS group in Deir Ezzour. The Syrian army troops managed to recapture Halabiya area from the IS militants, and cut off their supply lines in the neighborhoods of the city. ¹⁰⁷	Syrian army cuts off supply lines

¹⁰⁴ Nehal Mostafa, At least 15 IS militants killed in Coalition airstrike, west of Anbar, *Iraqi News*, October 15, 2017, <https://www.iraqnews.com/iraq-war/least-15-militants-killed-coalition-airstrike-west-anbar/>, accessed on October 16, 2017

¹⁰⁵ Nehal Mostafa, Civilian killed, 10 wounded in two southern Baghdad bomb blasts, *Iraqi News*, October 15, 2017, <https://www.iraqnews.com/iraq-war/civilian-killed-10-wounded-two-southern-baghdad-bomb-blasts/>, accessed on October 16, 2017

¹⁰⁶ Mohamad Mostafa, Seven more Yazidis released from Islamic State captivity in 24 hours, *Iraqi News*, October 10, 2017, <https://www.iraqnews.com/features/seven-yazidis-released-islamic-state-captivity-24-hours/>, accessed on October 16, 2017

¹⁰⁷ Loaa Adel, Syrian army cuts off IS supply lines in Deir Ezzor, *Iraqi News*, October 14, 2017, <https://www.iraqnews.com/arab-world-news/syrian-army-cuts-off-supply-lines-deir-ezzor/>, accessed on October 16, 2017

	October 14	Hama	Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) recaptured the towns of Rahgan and Sarha in eastern Hama after clashes with the Islamic State. Sources informed that clashes broke out between the IS and HTS militia, along with artillery and missiles shelling, killing 15 IS militants and wounding several others. ¹⁰⁸		NS
	October 16	Deir Ezzor	<p>The Syrian Arab Army (SAA) had a very successful 48 hours over the weekend, liberating several areas that were previously occupied by the so-called ISIS in the Deir Ezzor Governorate.</p> <p>To begin, the SAA's elite Tiger Forces liberated the strategic it Al-Mayadeen, which has served as the IS's de facto capital for several months. Following the liberation of Al-Mayadeen, the S A captured several towns under IS's control near the provincial capital, including Al-Salahiyah and Al-Husseiniyeh.¹⁰⁹</p>	SAA Deir Ezzor operations	

International Economic Issues

- **AIIB, ADB approves \$100 million loan for India's power sector**

On October 2, 2017, China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and multilateral funding agency Asian Development Bank (ADB) approved a \$100-million loan for India to improve power transmission network and expand the use of solar and wind energy. The loan, approved by the Board of Directors of the

¹⁰⁸ Loaa Adel, HTS recaptures Islamic State-held areas in eastern Hama, *Iraqi News*, October 14, 2017, <https://www.iraqinews.com/arab-world-news/hts-recaptures-islamic-state-held-areas-eastern-hama/>, accessed on October 16, 2017

¹⁰⁹ Leith Fadel, Latest battle update from Deir Ezzor: map, *Al Masdar News*, October 16, 2017, <https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/latest-battle-update-deir-ezzor-map-5/>, accessed on October 16, 2017

Beijing-headquartered AIIB involves co-financing of USD 50 million from the ADB.¹¹⁰

- **India signs €300 million Finance Contract with EIB for financing Bangalore Metro Rail Project Phase II- Line R6.**

On October 5, 2017, Government of India and European Investment Bank (EIB) signed the Finance Contract for lending of €300 million for Bangalore Metro Rail Project Phase II Line R6. Bangalore Metro Rail Project Phase II is to be jointly financed by the EIB (€500 million) and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) (€300 million).¹¹¹

- **14th India-EU Summit held in New Delhi**

The 14th annual Summit between India and the European Union (EU) was held in New Delhi on October 6, 2017. The leaders reviewed the wide-ranging cooperation under the India-EU Strategic Partnership and recognised the deepening of trade cooperation, enhancing investment flows in both directions and broadening dialogue and engagement on global and regional issues, including climate change, as well as migration and the refugee crisis, and resolved to further strengthen their bilateral and multilateral cooperation in these areas. The leaders commended the strong engagement of the European Investment Bank (EIB) in India in a wide range of key sectors, in particular in the field of climate action and renewable energy. The EU leaders welcomed India's efforts to promote economic and social development and expressed EU's continued interest in participating in India's flagship initiatives such as "Make in India", "Digital India", "Skill India", "Smart City", "Clean India," and "Start-Up India".

The Leaders expressed their shared commitment to strengthening the Economic Partnership and efforts to re-engage actively towards timely re-launching of negotiations for a comprehensive and mutually beneficial India-EU Broad Based Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA). The Leaders welcomed the establishment of an Investment Facilitation Mechanism (IFM) for EU investments in India as a means to improve the business climate as well as the South Asian Regional Representative Office of the European Investment Bank (EIB) in India

¹¹⁰ "AIIB, ADB approves \$100 million loan for India's power sector", *The Economic Times*, October 2, 2017,

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/power/aiib-ADB-approves-100-million-loan-for-indias-power-sector/articleshow/60914742.cms> (accessed on October 9, 2017)

¹¹¹ Press Information Bureau, Government of India, "India signs €300 million Finance Contract with European Investment Bank (EIB) for financing Bangalore Metro Rail Project Phase II- Line R6", <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx> (accessed on October 9, 2017)

and noted that its investments, especially in urban mobility and renewable energy projects, will support India-EU collaboration on the Climate Agenda.¹¹²

¹¹² Press Information Bureau, Government of India, "India – EU Joint Statement during 14th India-EU Summit, New Delhi (October 06, 2017) ",<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx> (accessed on October 8, 2017)