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INDO-US MILITARY TIES DEEPEN

Military ties between the US and India continue to grow deeper under the Modi administration, with an uptick in joint military and training exercises. US Pacific Command Commander Admiral Harry B Harris stated at a Congressional hearing that USPACOM that the U.S. "intends to add momentum" to the defense relationship with India. Indian and US troops participated in over 60 joint military exchanges in 2015, the most between any two countries. (April 15, 2016, NDTV)

FRANCE, INDIA FINALIZE AIRCRAFT DEAL

After years of on-again-off-again negotiations, the sale of 36 French Rafale aircraft to India has been finalized. The deal, worth \$8.86 billion, was initially intended to include the sale of 126 aircraft before India substantially downsized its order. India may now be on the market for more multi-role fighters, including potentially U.S.-made jets. Included in the Rafale deal will be "two types of missiles and bombs," as well as support for pilot training and base facilities. (April 15, 2016, Firstpost)

PAK "CERTAIN" CHINA WILL BLOCK INDIA FROM NSG

According to a senior Pakistani ex-diplomat, Zamir Akram, China will continue to block all future attempts by India to enter the Nuclear Supplier's Group. Akram says that China "is committed to ensuring" that India and Pakistan gain entrance to the NSG at the same time, and that allowing India to join the NSG without Pakistan would negatively affect Pakistan and China's nuclear cooperation. The U.S. has been supporting India's entry to the international nuclear regulatory body since the U.S.-India nuclear deal was operationalized in 2008. Akram's statement is the second this year indicating that China will continue to block India's bid, with retired Lt Gen Khalid Kidwai making a similar case at a conference last month. (April 14, 2016, *The Economic Times*)

ATTACK ON CIA CAMP FUNDED BY PAK?

A recently declassified cable from 2010 has revealed that Pakistan funded the attack on a CIA camp on the Afghan border that resulted in the deaths of seven Americans and three others. The funding for the attack was provided by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence, which has a history of sponsoring terrorist organizations. The release of this cable is likely to increase tensions between the US and Pakistan. (April 14, 2016, *The Times of India*)

SRI LANKA TO SECURE MALACCA STRAITS

The Sri Lankan Navy has plans to "initiate a broader maritime security program" that will provide security from the Maldives to the Straits of Malacca to Singapore. The Navy will deploy several ships to increase regional security and prevent illegal activities. Also announced: three Sri Lankan ships will train in the Maldives and Indonesia, and that the Sri Lankan Navy will acquire four more vessels for "deep sea monitoring." (April 16, 2016, *Colombo Page*)

FIGHTING CONTINUES IN KUNDUZ

After announcing its spring offensive, the Taliban has attempted to recapture Kunduz, prompting heavy fighting between the insurgents and the Afghan military. The Taliban targeted checkpoints in order to weaken city defenses, but were not successful in capturing the city. Reports vary, but over thirty militants have been killed in the fighting, with more wounded. Last year, the Taliban successfully captured and held Kunduz for two weeks (the first time since 2001 it had seized a provincial capital), and the Afghan government has assured Kunduz residents that the episode would not be repeated. Although fighting continued in the winter months, the increase in temperature means that there will likely be an increase in insurgent attacks. (April 17, 2016, Reuters)