



South Asia Security Monitor: No. 370

June 15, 2015

Related Categories: South Asia; Southeast Asia

FINALLY, A CONSTITUTIONAL DEAL IN NEPAL

In a long-awaited political reconciliation deal, four major Nepalese political parties have signed a deal to reform Nepal's constitution that decentralizes the country into 8 provinces. The new constitution will be ready for parliamentary approval in July. Although the deal marks significant progress, the provincial borders have yet to be defined and ongoing negotiations could provoke internal disputes rather than promote national unity, especially if the Maoist United Communist Party of Nepal, a former armed rebel group turned political party, is dissatisfied with the talks. (Deutsche Welle— June 9, 2015)

ISIS AN TALIBAN SQUARE OFF IN AFGHANISTAN

The Islamic State has killed more than 10 Taliban members in the eastern province of Nangarhar. ISIS and the Taliban remain locked in a struggle for influence and followers in Afghanistan, as heads of both organizations declare themselves caliphs of the Muslim world. Though ISIS' footprint in South Asia pales in comparison to the indigenous Taliban movement, regional analysts are concerned that ISIS' effective propaganda campaigns could help draw disaffected militants to the terrorist group. (Deutsche Welle – June 9, 2015)

INDIA STRIKES MILITANTS ACROSS BORDER IN MYANMAR

In response to a cross-border ambush last week by Meitei militants, the Indian Army executed a 13-hour surgical operation along the Indo-Myanmar border between Nagaland and Manipur. The operation was conducted in consultation with the Myanmar government. The attack neutralized between 20 and 50 rebel militants belonging to the insurgent movements NSCN(K) (National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang) and KYKL (Kanglei Yawol Kunna Lup). Conducted by Indian Air Force choppers, drones, and Special Forces soldiers, the precision strikes marked the Modi government's first foray into the doctrine of preemption, a defensive strategy deployed against imminent threats to national security. (*Economic Times* – June 10, 2015)

CHINA MINING FOR RARE EARTHS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

In a newly ignited race to exploit the Indian Ocean floor's resources, China has unveiled Aquatic Dragon (Jiaolong), a project focused on uncovering minerals including copper, gold, manganese, and the 17 rare earth elements (REE). China, which monopolizes global REE production and trade, is relying on the seabed to fortify its hold on the market. Exploring the global oceanic commons requires a contract sanctioned by the ISA (International Seabed Authority), a body regulated by UNCLOS. China has three contracts while India has only one, a discrepancy further complicating a delicate Indo-China power balance. (*India Today* – June 4, 2015)

CARTER IN DELHI

Ash Carter and Manohar Parikkar have signed a 10-year defense cooperation pact outlining joint development of modern military capabilities including aircraft carrier technology, protective gear against biological and chemical warfare, and generators. The US has pledged \$1 million to each project. Agreements were drafted and signed in a mere five months, underscoring the importance of fortified maritime security to counterbalance China's regional hegemony and its growing influence in the Indian Ocean. The defense pact strengthens the US-India relationship and enhances US military clout in South Asia. (Reuters – June 3, 2015)