



South Asia Security Monitor: No. 371

June 29, 2015

Related Categories: Afghanistan

PAKISTAN DISCLOSES SECRET TALIBAN TALKS

According to Pakistani National Security Advisor Sartaj Aziz, Pakistan has been facilitating secret peace talks between Afghan envoys and Taliban representatives in an effort to quell conflict. The meetings have been held in Urumqi, a city in northwest China, and have included Masoom Stanekzai, the Afghan Defense Minister. The talks were widely reported on in prior months, but they it was unclear at how senior the participants were. (Voice of America - June 22, 2015)

VIETNAM ASSIGNS FIRST AMBASSADOR TO BHUTAN

On June 19 Ton Sinh Thanh became the first Vietnamese Ambassador to Bhutan. In the meetings between Thanh and Bhutan government officials, leaders expressed mutual desires to continue strengthening economic relationships. Cooperative ventures include agricultural development, tourism promotion, and increased support at regional and international levels. Bhutan, which has long been ruled a virtual protectorate of India, must pass major foreign policy decisions through Delhi. Indo-Vietnam ties have been historically warm, and in recent years appear to be growing even warmer. (Vietnam Net - June 22, 2015)

BHUTAN IS INDIAN ARMY'S NEXT PRIORITY

On June 18, top security officials from India and Bhutan met to discuss the second attempt at Operation All Out, a forced removal of at least 100 National Democratic Front (NDFB) of Bodoland militants camped in the forests along the Indo-Bhutan border. The original Operation All Out was conducted in 2003 and took aim at base camps for NDFB and another militant group, ULFA. The NDFB's top commanders and its general secretary are stationed in Bhutan, but the insurgency has a significant presence in Myanmar. The NDFB was involved in a attack in Manipur, in India's northeast, that killed 18 Indian army soldiers. (One India - June 17, 2015)

TALIBAN ATTACKS KABUL PARLIAMENT BUILDING

The Afghan parliament building in Kabul was attacked on June 22. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid claimed responsibility for the attack, which witnessed four explosions and gunfire, citing the presence of Afghanistan's new defense minister Masoom Stanekzaia as motive. A suicide bomber and several gunmen participated in the attack. Security forces were able to kill six of the Taliban gunmen. 18 civilians were wounded. (International Business Times - June 22, 2015)

MYANMAR RETURNS MIGRANTS TO BANGLADESH

Myanmar returned a second batch of Bangladeshi citizens to Bangladesh after rescuing them from a boat in the Bay of Bengal on May 21. On June 8, Myanmar sent a further 150 Bangladeshis back to their country. To either flee persecution or seek better economic advantages, Bangladeshis and Muslim Rohingyas have begun sailing to southeast Asian nations. (Reuters - June 19, 2015)