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CHINA SENDS SPECIAL ENVOY TO SRI LANKA TO MEND TIES

China has sent a special envoy to Sri Lanka in an attempt to strengthen ties with the new administration in Colombo. After the former, Beijing-friendly administration was ousted from power, Chinese investments in the country stalled, including the controversial \$1.4 billion Colombo Port City project. The previous administration provided China with 70% of new infrastructure contracts, fueling criticism from the current administration of impropriety and corruption. (*South China Morning Post* October 8, 2015)

ISLAMIC STATE GROUP TRAINING RUSSIAN-BORN FIGHTERS IN AFGHANISTAN

A Russian diplomat says the Islamic State is training Russian fighters at a base in Afghanistan, fueling concerns of a growing Islamic State presence in Russian territory. ISIS members have also been caught attempting to attain nuclear materials from Russian gang members. The spread of ISIS throughout the Middle East and in Afghanistan, has caused civilians to flee their homes and further destabilize the region. Russia claims it is trying to degrade ISIS' foothold in Syria by launching airstrikes yet the US claims the airstrikes are instead aimed at moderate, U.S.-backed rebel groups. (*International Business Times* October 8, 2015)

MODI PUSHES 'OBSOLETE' PLANE ON RELUCTANT MILITARY

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has rejected the military's request to purchase new foreign fighter aircraft, hoping to instead boost the country's domestic aviation and defense industries. With India currently the largest defense import market, this decision serves as a blow to foreign military companies. On a trip to France earlier this year, Prime Minister Modi promised to purchase 36 French Dassault Rafale aircraft (down from an initial deal for over 100 aircraft) but said 44 new jets requested by the Indian Air Force would have to be supplied by the domestic Tejas Light Combat Aircraft. (Channel News Asia October 7, 2015)

US GEN. IN AFGHANISTAN: AFGHAN SEC. FORCES 'COULD POTENTIALLY COLLAPSE'

In light of a Taliban offensive in Kunduz and recent advances by militant groups elsewhere, the Commander of US Forces in Afghanistan, General John F. Campbell, testified in front of the US Senate Armed Forces Committee. He stated that the U.S. does not have the capacity to prevent part of the country from falling into the hands of militants and expressed doubts about the sustainability of Afghan forces without U.S. presence and funding. He also warned against reducing U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan too quickly, particularly in Badakhshan, which has seen increased militant activity and violence in recent weeks causing the U.S. Embassy to advise American citizens living in Afghanistan to leave the country. (*The Diplomat* October 7, 2015; *The Express Tribune* October 7th, 2015)

PAKISTAN DENIES CHINA PROVIDED ARMED DRONES

The Pakistan Air Force claims that domestic engineers developed its armed drones program without help from China. The claim comes in the aftermath of Pakistan's deployment of a high-tech armed Burraq drone that targeted several high profile militants in North Waziristan. Due to the difficulty of developing armed drone systems and the similarity of the drone to a Chinese counterpart, many analysts believe Pakistan received Chinese assistance in developing drone technology. The Pakistan Air Force claims this is a step towards promoting Pakistan as a legitimate partner in counter-terrorism and could help replace the covert U.S. drone strike program operating in the country. (*The Express Tribune* October 7, 2015)