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RUSSIAN TROOPS COULD BE DEPLOYED TO AFGHAN BORDER

Fearful of growing instability in Afghanistan, Russia and several former Soviet Republics in Central Asia agreed to form a joint task force that would be deployed to Russia's borders with South and Central Asia. Until 2005 Russia was responsible for securing the Tajik-Afghan border, providing a buffer between Islamist militants to the south and Russia and its satellite states to the north. (*Business Insider* October 16, 2015)

PAKISTAN, RUSSIA SIGN GAS PIPELINE AGREEMENT

Pakistan and Russia have signed an agreement to allow RT Global Resources, a partially state-owned Russian company, to build a 1,100 kilometer liquefied natural gas (LNG) pipeline in Pakistan. The \$2 billion pipeline will connect Lahore and Karachi. The deal signifies Russia's growing interest in Pakistan as India, Russia's long-time ally in the region, continues developing closer ties with the West, and the U.S. in particular. (The *China Post* October 17, 2015)

INDIA BACKS PHILIPPINES ON SOUTH CHINA SEA ROW

India has announced its support for the Philippines decision to use the Permanent Court of Arbitration to peacefully contest China's claims to the disputed waters of the South China Sea. While India has avoided direct involvement in the issue, it has repeatedly called for "Freedom of Navigation" in the South China Sea and has run afoul of Beijing for exploring for energy off Vietnam's coast in waters claimed by China. (*Times of India* October 15, 2015)

SRI LANKA WILL WELCOME SHIPS FROM ALL COUNTRIES

The Sri Lankan government has announced that it will allow foreign submarines into its waters. Sri Lanka raised major objections in India over the last year when it twice hosted Chinese submarines at its ports. Sri Lanka says it will now keep India and other surrounding states informed on submarines entering its waters. (*Zee News India* October 18, 2015)