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AFGHAN ARMY RESTRUCTURED IN HELMAND

Afghan army units in Helmand province are undergoing large-scale restructuring and leadership changes intended to reduce "incompetence, corruption and ineffectiveness." Helmand province, bordering Pakistan's Baluchistan province in the South, has been the source of some of the fiercest Taliban resistance and a high concentration of Afghan opium and poppy fields, generating some \$3 billion per year for the Taliban. Over a three-month span in mid-late 2015 Afghan forces in the province suffered nearly 1,000 casualties, prompting the restructuring. (*Military Times* January 25, 2016)

INDIAN WARSHIPS VISITS SRI LANKA

India's largest warship, the aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya, visited the Sri Lankan capital of Colombo as part of its maiden overseas visit. The warship's visit to India's island-neighbor comes on the heels of a visit by three Chinese warships to Colombo between January 17-21. India was vocally opposed when Chinese submarines surfaced in Sri Lanka for the first time in late 2014. A new government elected in Colombo last year initially promised to stop hosting Chinese warships, before walking back the pledge. Several days later, the Japanese Defense Ministry held a Maritime Security Dialogue with its counterparts in Sri Lanka. (*The New Indian Express* January 22, 2016)

FIRST-EVER RUSSIA-PAKISTAN MILITARY EXERCISES

As part of seven planned military exercises in 2016, Russia has announced that it will conduct joint military exercises with Pakistan for the first time ever. The location of the exercise was not disclosed, but it was stated that it would occur on mountainous terrain. (*PressTV* January 23, 2016)

14 BANGLADESHIS DETAINED

Following Singapore's deportation of 26 Bangladeshi nationals for "supporting armed jihadist ideology," police in Bangladesh have reported that all 26 were arrested upon arrival home, and 14 continue to be detained. Those released are under surveillance. The men were linked to jihadist group Ansarullah Bangla Team, which has been blamed on attacks of secular bloggers and writers. (*BBC News* January 22, 2016)

ETHNIC PROTESTS IN NEPAL CONTINUE

A constitutional amendment that received the endorsement of two-thirds of Nepal's Parliament and addressed two key issues of the disenfranchised Madhesi ethnic minority was rejected by the Madhesis as "incomplete." The amendment addressed proportionate representation and parliamentary seating, but not Madhesi concerns "over redrawing federal boundaries." Madhesi party leaders boycotted the vote over the dispute, stating protests would continue until the issue of federal boundaries was addressed. The protests have damaged Nepal-India relations, with the former charging the latter with supporting the Madhesi opposition movement. (*DNA India*, January 24, 2016)