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PAK EYES MORE U.S. F-16S

Reports indicate that, should Pakistan successfully purchase 8 F-16s from the United States, it will pursue a further deal to purchase 10 more. Pakistan is also looking to purchase military aircraft from Russia and France, partly to hedge against the risks of a U.S. refusal. The sale of the initial F-16s has already faced significant opposition in Congress. The Pakistan Air Force plans to retire 190 planes by 2020, and is looking to replace them as quickly as possible to maintain a fleet of "350 to 400 aircraft." (March 15, 2016, *The Indian Express*)

HACKERS TARGETING INDIAN DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT

Noted cyber-security firm FireEye has released a report on cyber-attacks faced by the Indian government over the past several years. It concludes that India's defense establishment was targeted with phishing emails that contained malware attachments, and the program has been operating since 2013. The report also said that both Indian and Pakistani establishments were targeted, although it did not identify where the attacks were coming from, nor how many were successful. (March 17, 2016, *The Times of India*)

INDIA SIGNS 28 DEFENSE CONTRACTS

The Indian Ministry of Defense has signed 28 defense contracts, worth a total of \$9.44 billion. 18 of these contracts are with Indian vendors, while the remaining 10 are with foreign companies. However, there have been no contracts signed for the purchase of advanced fighter planes for 2015-16. Oft-stalled talks with France to purchase 36 Rafale fighters remain stalled, despite an initial contract being signed years ago for 126 fighters before it was subsequently downsized. (March 16, 2016, *DNAIndia*)

PAK SEEKS STRONGER TIES WITH SRI LANKA

Pakistan is looking to "enhance" its relationship with Sri Lanka in the arena defense cooperation. Pakistan's minister of defense production recently met with the Sri Lankan Ambassador to Pakistan amid speculation that the Sri Lankan air force is interested in the joint China-Pakistan JF-17 Thunder fighter jets. [Editor's Note: Sri Lanka recently signaled it was less keen on purchasing the fighters after India slipped Colombo an unsigned diplomatic note suggesting Sri Lanka needed no additional fighters for its protection.] (March 16, 2016, *IHS Jane's 360*)

BORDER FORCES TO BE WITHDRAWN FROM LOC?

The Pakistani government is considering removing Border Security Forces from the disputed Line of Control in Kashmir and re-positioning them along the International Border with India in Punjab and Jammu. This decision is being considered in the light of an attack on India's Pathankot airbase earlier this year. Senior commanders in the Border Security Forces reportedly oppose the proposal, as it will "take away vital exposure of the personnel" that have been stationed along the LoC. [Editor's Note: the Pakistani-based assailants responsible for the Pathankot airbase attack crossed the international border in the Punjab, not the Line of Control in Kashmir] (March 15, 2016, *DNAIndia*)