



## South Asia Security Monitor: 391

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### INDO-RUSSIAN DEFENSE DEAL IN TROUBLE

India's largest defense deal with Russia, a \$25 billion co-production partnership to make fifth generation fighter aircraft (FGFA), is facing major hurdles after the Indian Air Force expressed its dissatisfaction with the current arrangement. At least fifteen objections to the project were flagged by Air Force Headquarters, including unreliable engines, poor stealth features, and sub-par radar. Delhi has already invested over \$225 million in the project, bearing 50% of the cost. Yet the Indian Air Force says Moscow has not given them access to developed prototypes or shared critical information. In recent years Indian military officers and defense officials have grown increasingly vocal in their criticism of defense cooperation with Russia. (April 24, 2016, *The New Indian Express*)

### INDIA IS RECRUITER KILLED IN DRONE STRIKE

Sources claim that Mohammad Shafi Armar, the chief recruiter for Islamic State in India, has been killed in a drone strike in Syria. Shafi was allegedly close with IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, and had recruited at least 30 men for the India branch of the terrorist group. Thus far, the Islamic State developed only a marginal presence in India. (April 25, 2016, *Times of India*)

### PAK DEFENSE MINISTER TO VISIT RUSSIA

Pakistani Defense Minister Khawaja Asif is scheduled to visit Russia as part of an international security conference at the end of April. Asif plans to discuss "bilateral military technical cooperation" with Russian officials during his visit, according to the Pakistani Ambassador to Russia. Pakistan and Russia, longtime rivals during the Cold War, have over the past three years begun to slowly deepen their defense engagement as India and the U.S. have drawn closer. (April 19, 2016, *Business Standard*)

### GHANI THREATENS UNSC ACTION OVER PAK-TALIBAN LINKS

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani has issued a statement saying that he will register a complaint with the United Nations Security Council should Pakistan not take action against the Taliban operating within its borders. Ghani, like President Karzai before him, has alternated between carrots and sticks in his Pakistan policy. He has repeatedly extended olive branches to Islamabad in an attempt to facilitate peace talks with the Taliban, but has been repeatedly frustrated by ongoing Taliban offensives, and Pakistan's seeming unwillingness to crack down on the group or force them to the negotiating table. (April 25, 2016, *The New York Times*)

### AIR FORCE DRONE STRIKES NOW OUTNUMBER MANNED STRIKES

Data from the U.S. Air Force shows that drone strikes in Afghanistan have begun to outnumber attacks by manned aircraft for the first time. In the first quarter of 2016, 61% of Air Force attacks in Afghanistan were performed by drones, compared to 5% in 2011. While drone strikes decreased in early 2015, by the end of the year they were on the rise again. While the CIA has long used drones to target terrorists in Pakistan's tribal areas, the U.S. air force was slower to adopt them for armed missions. This rise in drone use is also likely connected to the plan to reduce the number of US troops in Afghanistan. (April 20, 2016, *The Guardian*)