

Intelligence Digest | Middle East

11-17 November 2012

Afghanistan

More Taliban Prisoners May Be Released

New York Times, 17 November: Many of at least a dozen Afghan Taliban prisoners being released by Pakistan are significant figures, according to officials on all sides, and Afghan peace representatives were exultant on Saturday as they announced that more releases might follow.

nytimes.com/2012/11/18/world/asia/taliban-leaders-among-prisoners-freed-in-pakistan.html

Bomb Kills 17 Civilians In Afghanistan

New York Times, 16 November: A roadside bomb killed 17 civilians, most of them women and children, on Friday as they travelled to a wedding in western Afghanistan. It was the third time in less than 10 days that a bomb claimed the lives of civilians.

nytimes.com/2012/11/17/world/asia/bomb-kills-civilians-in-afghanistan.html?partner=rssnyt&emc=rss

Roadside Bomb Kills Afghan Wedding Guests

BBC, 16 November: A roadside bomb in western Afghanistan has killed 17 people who were travelling in a wedding party.

bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-20363244

Combined Force Arrests Insurgents In Search For Taliban Leader

Global Security, 16 November: A combined Afghan and coalition force in Afghanistan's Helmand province arrested several suspected insurgents today during a search for a Taliban leader who facilitates the transfer of weapons and is involved in ambush attacks targeting Afghan and coalition forces, military officials reported.

globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2012/11/mil-121116-afps01.htm

Oil Supply to NATO to Resume Before December: Report

Global Security, 15 November: Oil supply for the US-led NATO forces in Afghanistan is expected to resume through Pakistan's land routes by the end of this month following a year-long break and a test run conducted last week, a media report said on Thursday.

globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2012/11/mil-121115-irna01.htm



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U.S., Afghanistan to Begin Talks on Post-Withdrawal Security

LA Times, 15 November: In talks that are likely to be confrontational, the United States and Afghanistan are scheduled to begin negotiations Thursday on a new security arrangement after U.S. combat troops withdraw from the war-torn country by the end of 2014.

articles.latimes.com/2012/nov/15/world/la-fg-us-afghan-talks-20121115

Death Penalty Sought For US Soldier in Afghan Massacre Case

BBC, 14 November: A US soldier accused of killing 16 civilians - nine of them children - in southern Afghanistan in March should face the death penalty, military prosecutors say.

bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-20321090

Afghanistan Halts Helmand Police Fuel Supplies After Major Theft

Guardian, 13 November: Senior Afghan officials are said to have discovered large-scale theft of fuel in Helmand and halted all deliveries to police in the province, compromising the ability of the force to operate in one of the Taliban's major strongholds.

guardian.co.uk/world/2012/nov/13/afghanistan-helmand-police-fuel-theft

Insurgent Rockets Hit 3 Kabul Targets

New York Times, 13 November: Insurgents fired four rockets into the capital early on Tuesday, hitting a taxi, the grounds of a television studio and the international airport, the Afghan police and other officials said.

nytimes.com/2012/11/14/world/asia/afghanistan-insurgents.html?ref=asia

Reconciliation: Pakistan-Afghan Peace Delegates Kicks Off Key Talks

Express Tribune, 13 November: A high-level Afghan delegation exchanged "key proposals" with Pakistan on Monday in the latest push by the two neighbours to seek a peaceful end to the decade-long conflict and advance the process of reconciliation with the Taliban.

tribune.com.pk/story/464832/reconciliation-afghan-peace-delegates-kicks-off-key-talks/

Afghan Warlord's Call to Arms Rattles Officials

New York Times, 12 November: One of the most powerful mujahedeen commanders in Afghanistan, Ismail Khan, is calling on his followers to reorganize and defend the country against the Taliban as Western militaries withdraw, in a public demonstration of faltering confidence in the national government and the Western-built Afghan National Army.

nytimes.com/2012/11/13/world/asia/ismail-khan-powerful-afghan-stokes-concern-in-kabul.html?ref=asia

UK Soldier Killed in Afghanistan 'Insider Attack'

BBC, 12 November: A British soldier has been shot dead by an individual wearing an Afghan army uniform, the Ministry of Defence said.

bbc.co.uk/news/uk-20290934

Bahrain

Bahrain Guard Forces Deploy Against Unrest

World Bulletin, 11 November: A government statement said the Guard — a force separate from the regular military — will be patrolling "strategic locations" that have been scenes of arson attacks and clashes.

worldbulletin.net/?aType=haber&ArticleID=98436

Iran

Iran Delays Planned Start-Up of Arak Nuclear Reactor

Reuters, 17 November: Iran has postponed until 2014 the planned start-up of a research reactor which Western experts say could potentially offer the Islamic Republic a second route to produce material for a nuclear bomb, a U.N. report showed.

reuters.com/article/2012/11/17/us-nuclear-iran-reactor-idUSBRE8AG05C20121117

Iran's First Nuclear Plant May Have Suffered New Setback

Reuters, 16 November: Iran unloaded nuclear fuel from its first atomic power plant last month, a United Nations report said on Friday, a few months after the Russian builder said the long-postponed reactor was operating at full capacity.

reuters.com/article/2012/11/16/us-iran-nuclear-bushehr-idUSBRE8AF18920121116

Iran Says Arrests Foreign-Linked Bomb Plotters

Al-Arabiya, 16 November: Iran's Intelligence Ministry has arrested people planning bomb attacks with the support of Western and Israeli spy agencies in the oil-producing province of Khuzestan, state television reported on Friday.

english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/11/16/249962.html

Iran Could Ramp Up Uranium Enrichment Within Days, Diplomats Say

NTI, 16 November: Iran would need only a few days to double the number of centrifuges producing higher-enriched uranium at a facility hardened against attack, an informed envoy told the Associated Press on Thursday.

nti.org/gsn/article/iran-could-quickly-ramp-uranium-work-diplomats/

Iran Ready to Double Uranium Enrichment at Fordo - IAEA

BBC, 16 November: Iran is ready to double the output at its underground uranium enrichment facility, the UN nuclear watchdog says.

bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20368030

Iran Unveils New Missiles And Artillery

World Bulletin, 13 November: The three domestically-built missile and artillery systems would be a significant boost to Iran's military defences, said Farzad Esmaili, head of Iran's air defence headquarters.

worldbulletin.net/?aType=haber&ArticleID=98573

'Three Arrested' Over Death of Iranian Blogger Beheshti

BBC, 13 November: Three people are reported to have been arrested in connection with the death in police custody of Iranian blogger Sattar Beheshti, state media say.

bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20309893

Threat-Focused Iran Launches "Biggest Ever" Air Drills

Reuters, 12 November: Iran launched military drills across half the country on Monday, warning it would act against aggressors less than a week after Washington accused Iranian warplanes of firing on a U.S. drone.

reuters.com/article/2012/11/12/us-iran-military-idUSBRE8AB05K20121112

Iran Hopes of Deal on IAEA Visit to Parchin

World Bulletin, 12 November: Iran expressed hope on Monday that a planned meeting with the U.N. nuclear watchdog next month would lead to a "framework of cooperation".

worldbulletin.net/?aType=haber&ArticleID=98494

Middle East Nuclear Talks Said Doubtful Despite Iran

Reuters, 11 November: Plans for an international conference in December to discuss banning weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East look in doubt even though Iran has said it would attend, Western diplomats say.

reuters.com/article/2012/11/11/uk-nuclear-middleeast-idUKBRE8AA0AL20121111

Iraq

Car Bomb Kills Seven Foreign Shi'ite Pilgrims In Iraq

Reuters, 17 November: At least seven Shi'ite Muslim pilgrims from Iran and Pakistan were killed in Iraq on Saturday when a car bomb went off by a restaurant in a city north of the capital, police and hospital sources said.

reuters.com/article/2012/11/17/us-iraq-violence-idUSBRE8AG08120121117

Iraq Releases Suspected Hezbollah Operative Ali Mussa Daquq

Reuters, 16 November: Iraqi authorities on Friday released suspected Hezbollah operative Ali Mussa Daquq who was accused of killing American troops, his lawyer said, adding he had made his way to Lebanon.

reuters.com/article/2012/11/16/iraq-daquq-release-idUSL5E8MGA8320121116

Iraqi Forces Clash With Kurdish Troops, One Dead

Reuters, 16 November: One person died in clashes between Iraqi forces and troops guarding an office of a Kurdish political party on Friday, deepening tension between the oil-rich region and the central government in Baghdad.

reuters.com/article/2012/11/16/us-iraq-kurds-clash-idUSBRE8AF0ZZ20121116

Wave Of Bombings Kills At Least 12 People Across Iraq

New York Times, 14 November: Insurgents unleashed a new wave of bombings across Iraq early Wednesday targeting security forces and civilians, and killing 17 people and wounding dozens more in the latest challenge to government efforts to promote a sense of stability, police and health officials said.

nytimes.com/aponline/2012/11/14/world/middleeast/ap-ml-iraq.html?ref=middleeast

Iraq Bombings Kill 17 On Eve Of Muharram And Ashura

BBC, 14 November: At least 17 people have been killed and dozens wounded in bombings across Iraq, on the eve of the Islamic new year and the holy month of Muharram.

bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20322400

Iraq Executes 10 Prisoners For Terrorism

CNN, 11 November: Iraqi authorities executed 10 prisoners Sunday for terrorism convictions, the Ministry of Justice announced. The prisoners -- nine Iraqis and one Egyptian -- were put to death in the latest of several executions carried out by Iraqi authorities in recent months, despite a United Nations call for restraint.

edition.cnn.com/2012/11/11/world/meast/iraq-executions/index.html?iref=allsearch

Israel

Arabs Expected To Back Truce Efforts For Gaza

World Bulletin, 17 November: Arab foreign ministers will consider a draft statement that calls for the Arab League chief to lead a delegation to Gaza and voices support for Egypt's efforts to negotiate a truce.

worldbulletin.net/?aType=haber&ArticleID=98800

Gaza Crisis: Fresh Fire Exchanged As Violence Continues

BBC, 17 November: The Israeli army and militants in Gaza are continuing to trade fire, with the round of violence that has followed Israel's killing of Hamas's military chief showing no sign of abating.

bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20378425

Egypt To Hold Talks With Qatar, Turkey, Hamas Over Gaza

World Bulletin, 17 November: Egypt's president will hold four-way talks with the Qatari emir, the prime minister of Turkey and Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal in Cairo.

worldbulletin.net/?aType=haber&ArticleID=98793

UN Chief Urges End To "Dangerous Escalation" In Gaza

World Bulletin, 17 November: Ban Ki-moon called on Israel and Hamas to "stop this dangerous escalation" in the Gaza Strip to avoid further bloodshed.

worldbulletin.net/?aType=haber&ArticleID=98776

Israel Deploys New Iron Dome Interceptor Near Tel Aviv

World Bulletin, 17 November: The Israeli military rushed a fifth Iron Dome anti-missile battery into service on Saturday and deployed it in the Tel Aviv area.

worldbulletin.net/?aType=haber&ArticleID=98780

Gaza Rockets 'Very Significant Development': Hezbollah

Al-Arabiya, 17 November: Palestinian militants firing long-range rockets from Gaza into Israel represents a "very significant development" in the conflict with the Jewish state, Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah has said.

english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/11/16/249964.html

Israel Authorises More Reservists After Rockets Target Cities

Reuters, 16 November: Israel's cabinet authorized the mobilization of up to 75,000 reservists late on Friday, preparing the ground for a possible Gaza invasion after Palestinians fired a rocket toward Jerusalem for the first time in decades.

reuters.com/article/2012/11/16/us-palestinians-israel-hamas-idUSBRE8AD0WP20121116

Hamas Tells Sudan It Will Avenge Israeli Bombing Of Arms Plant

Reuters, 16 November: The exiled leader of Hamas told Sudan on Friday his Palestinian group would take revenge on Israel for the deadly bombing of an arms factory in Khartoum.

[reuters.com/article/2012/11/16/us-palestinians-israel-sudan-idUSBRE8AF13L20121116](https://www.reuters.com/article/2012/11/16/us-palestinians-israel-sudan-idUSBRE8AF13L20121116)

Thousands Protest In Egypt Against Israeli Attacks On Gaza

Reuters, 16 November: Thousands of people protested in Egyptian cities on Friday against Israeli air strikes on Gaza and Egypt's president pledged to support the Palestinian enclave's population in the face of "blatant aggression".

[reuters.com/article/2012/11/16/palestinians-israel-egypt-idUSL5E8MGCQF20121116](https://www.reuters.com/article/2012/11/16/palestinians-israel-egypt-idUSL5E8MGCQF20121116)

Hezbollah Says Arabs Have Political Means To Stop Israel Attacks

World Bulletin, 16 November: The leader of Lebanon's powerful group called on countries with ties to the United States and the West to pressure them to help stop the air strikes.

worldbulletin.net/?aType=haber&ArticleID=98718

Israel Destroys Hamas Prime Minister's Office

New York Times, 16 November: Israel retaliated for Palestinian rocket attacks on Tel Aviv and Jerusalem with five airstrikes before dawn on Saturday on the Gaza City offices of Ismail Haniya, the prime minister of Hamas — the militant Islamist group that governs Gaza.

nytimes.com/2012/11/17/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-assault.html?ref=middleeast&_r=0

Israel Takes Steps Pointing To Ground Incursion Into Gaza Strip

CBS News, 16 November: Israel seemed to be preparing to step up its military operation against Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip on Friday, as air raid sirens wailed in Tel Aviv and, for the first time, in Jerusalem.

cbsnews.com/8301-202_162-57550876/israel-takes-steps-pointing-to-ground-incursion-into-gaza-strip/

Egyptian PM Arrives In Gaza As Rocket Attacks And Air Strikes Continue

Guardian, 16 November: Egypt's Prime Minister, Hisham Kandil, has arrived in Gaza, as Israel and Palestinian militants continue to exchange fire. Egypt is pushing ahead in efforts to mediate a truce between Israel and Hamas, and Kandil said Cairo would "spare no effort" to achieve a ceasefire.

guardian.co.uk/world/2012/nov/16/israel-steps-up-gaza-offensive

IDF Tracked Rockets From Iran To Hamas

Al-Monitor, 16 November: The IDF releases details of the smuggling operation for the Farj-5 missiles from Iran to Gaza.

al-monitor.com/pulse/security/01/11/extensive-hunt-down-and-eliminat.html

Turkey Condemns Israeli Airstrikes On Gaza Strip

Jerusalem Post, 16 November: Turkey PM calls Gaza operation "a pre-election stunt". US asks Turkey and Egypt to encourage Hamas to cease rocket fire into Israel.

jpost.com/MiddleEast/Article.aspx?id=292189

Gaza Crisis Likely To Alter Course Of Israeli Elections

Al-Monitor, 15 November: The impact of this conflict on the fast-approaching Israeli elections.

al-monitor.com/pulse/politics/2012/11/security-and-electoral-victory.html

Israel Warships, Fighter Jets Pound Gaza For Second Day

Al-Arabiya, 15 November: Israeli airstrike, naval gunboats and tanks carried on through dawn in southern Gaza Strip on Thursday morning killing three Palestinians and leaving many injured after targeting the head of military wing of Hamas in a missile strike the previous night.

english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/11/15/249731.html

Israel-Gaza Crisis: Cameron Speaks To Netanyahu - Hamas "Bears The Principal Responsibility" For The Violence.

BBC, 15 November: David Cameron has told Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu that Hamas "bears the principal responsibility" for the violence in southern Israel and Gaza.

bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-20338088

Three Israelis Killed By Gaza Rocket As Violence Escalates

BBC, 15 November: Three people have been killed as rockets fired from Gaza struck southern Israel, amid escalating violence.

bbc.co.uk/news/world-20336811

Qassam Members Killed In Israeli Airstrike East Of Jabaliya

Ma'an News, 15 November: Israeli airstrikes on Thursday killed two Hamas militants in the northern Gaza Strip, bringing the Palestinian death toll to 13 in less than 24 hours.

hours.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=537768

Rockets Hit Near Tel Aviv As Gaza Death Toll Rises

Reuters, 15 November: Two rockets fired from the Gaza Strip targeted Tel Aviv on Thursday in the first attack on Israel's commercial capital in 20 years, raising the stakes in a showdown between Israel and the Palestinians that is moving towards all-out war.

reuters.com/article/2012/11/15/us-palestinians-israel-hamas-idUSBRE8AD0WP20121115

Israeli Air Strike Kills Hamas Military Chief Jabari

BBC, 14 November: The head of the military wing of the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas has been killed during Israeli air and naval strikes in the Gaza Strip.

bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20328579

Abbas Appeals To Israeli Public

Brookings, 14 November: President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority made headlines last week. In an interview with Israel's Channel 2 News, Abbas seemed to relinquish the demand for a right of return of refugees of 1948 to their former homes inside Israel, while reaffirming his commitment to non-violence.

brookings.edu/research/opinions/2012/11/14-abbas-palestine-israel-sachs?rssid=LatestFromBrookings&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+BrookingsRSS%2Ftopfeeds%2FLatestFromBrookings+%28Latest+From+Brookings%29

Israel Threatens To Overthrow Abbas Over Palestinian Statehood Bid

Guardian, 14 November: Israel should topple the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, if he presses ahead with a request for recognition of the state of Palestine by the United Nations general assembly in two weeks' time, the hard-line foreign minister, Avigdor Lieberman, has urged.

guardian.co.uk/world/2012/nov/14/israeli-minister-threatens-abbas-un

Israel And Palestinians Put Lid On Gaza, For Now

Reuters, 13 November: Israel and the Palestinians stepped back from the brink of a new war in the Gaza Strip on Tuesday, sending signals to each other via Egypt that they would hold their fire unless attacked, after five days of mounting violence.

reuters.com/article/2012/11/13/us-palestinians-israel-violence-idUSBRE8AC09620121113

Palestinian UN Observer State Bid On 29 November

BBC, 12 November: The Palestinian Authority will present its bid for Palestine to become a UN "non-member observer state" on 29 November, President Mahmoud Abbas says.

bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20299149

Nine Gaza Rockets Hit Israel

IOL News, 12 November: Gaza militants on Monday fired nine rockets at southern Israel, one of which exploded next to a house, police said, shattering an overnight calm even as Cairo sought to broker an end to 24 hours of bloodshed.

iol.co.za/news/world/nine-gaza-rockets-hit-israel-1.1421822#.UKD3oeOe-e0

Jordan

Jordanian Protesters Call For "Downfall Of The Regime"

Reuters, 16 November: Thousands of demonstrators chanted the Arab Spring slogan "the people want the downfall of the regime" in Jordan on Friday, although a day billed as the culmination of three days of occasionally violent protests passed off largely in peace.

reuters.com/article/2012/11/16/us-jordan-protest-idUSBRE8AF0LK20121116

Muslim Brotherhood Weighs Options In Jordanian Protests

Al-Monitor, 16 November: The Muslim Brotherhood is planning its response to economic austerity measures.

al-monitor.com/pulse/politics/2012/11/muslim-brotherhood-cautious-to-join-economic-protests-in-jordan.html

Analysis: Jordan's King Pinched By Absence Of Gulf Aid

Reuters, 16 November: With protesters baying for his overthrow, Jordan's King Abdullah might be wondering why his fellow-dynasts in Gulf Arab states are not providing the cash that could calm the trouble.

reuters.com/article/2012/11/16/us-jordan-protests-gulf-idUSBRE8AF0ZI20121116

Jordan Police Kill 'Gunman' Amid Fuel Price Unrest

BBC, 15 November: Jordanian police say they have shot dead a gunman attacking a police station in the north of the country on the second day of nationwide unrest.

bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20335287

Jordan Protesters Take To Streets Over Fuel Price Rises

BBC, 14 November: Protests have been held in several Jordanian cities against increases in fuel price, following the lifting of government subsidies.

bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20321086

Jordan Sentences Ex-Spy Chief To 13 Years In Jail On Graft Charges

World Bulletin, 11 November: Jordan's former spy chief, once of the country's most feared officials, was sentenced on Sunday to 13 years in prison on graft charges in the first high-profile case from an anti-corruption crackdown driven by popular protests.

worldbulletin.net/?aType=haber&ArticleID=98413

Kuwait

Kuwait Voting Row Mushrooms Into Broader Debate Over Power

Reuters, 14 November: What started as a dispute over voting rules in Kuwait has mushroomed into a debate about the balance of power between the emir and parliament, with implications for other Gulf dynasties facing reform pressure since the Arab Spring.

reuters.com/article/2012/11/14/kuwait-election-politics-idUSL5E8MC4BP20121114

Thousands Of Kuwaitis Protest Against Voting Changes

World Bulletin, 12 November: Made up of Islamist, tribal and liberal lawmakers, as well as youth groups, the opposition says the new voting rules are an attempt to skew the parliamentary election in favour of pro-government candidates.

worldbulletin.net/?aType=haber&ArticleID=98454

Lebanon

Three Killed In Sunni-Shi'ite Clash In South Lebanon

Ahram, 12 November: In a fresh wave of violence that hit Lebanon, three people were killed and seven injured in fighting between followers of a Sunni Salafist leader and supporters of the Lebanese Shi'ite movement Hezbollah in the city of Sidon.

english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/57844/World/Region/Three-killed-in-SunniShiite-clash-in-south-Lebanon.aspx

Oman

Nothing significant to report.

Pakistan

US Govt: Pakistan Didn't Know Whereabouts Of Osama Bin Laden

Dawn, 17 November: An official US assessment of Osama bin Laden's presence in Abbottabad has concluded that Pakistan did not know the whereabouts of Al Qaeda leader before the US raid.

dawn.com/2012/11/17/pakistan-didnt-know-whereabouts-of-osama-us/

Pakistan Racing To Develop Armed Drones But Lacks Key Technology; China Offers Help

Washington Post, 17 November: Pakistan is secretly racing to develop its own armed drones, frustrated with U.S. refusals to provide the aircraft, but is struggling in its initial tests with a lack of precision munitions and advanced targeting technology.

washingtonpost.com/business/pakistan-racing-to-develop-armed-drones-but-lacks-key-technology-china-offers-help/2012/11/17/e2f293e6-30eb-11e2-af17-67abba0676e2_story.html

Arrested 'TTP Militant' Warns Of Muharram Attacks

Express Tribune, 17 November: Four suicide bombers are ready to carry out attacks at Muharram processions in Karachi, a suspected militant has told intelligence officials during interrogation.
tribune.com.pk/story/467428/arrested-ttp-militant-warns-of-muharram-attacks/

Musharraf Calls For India, Pakistan To 'Bury The Hatchet'

Dawn, 17 November: Former Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf said on Saturday that India and Pakistan need to "bury the hatchet" and settle their differences to reduce poverty and ease tensions in the region.
dawn.com/2012/11/17/musharraf-calls-for-india-pakistan-to-bury-the-hatchet/

Terror Plot Foiled As Police Arrest Two In Gujrat

Dawn, 16 November: Police foiled a terrorist plot arresting a father and son duo from Gujrat, Dawn News reported on Friday.
dawn.com/2012/11/16/terror-plot-foiled-as-police-arrest-two-in-gujrat/

Pakistani Soldier Muhammed Hussain Is Executed For Murder

BBC, 15 November: A Pakistani soldier sentenced to death four years ago has become the first man to be executed in the country for almost four years, officials say.
bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-20337183

Mobile Phone Services Suspended In Karachi And Quetta

Dawn, 15 November: Pakistani authorities suspended cell phone service in Karachi and Quetta between 10 AM and 6 PM local time in an effort to prevent sectarian attacks against Shi'a Muslims at the start of their holy month of Muharram.
dawn.com/2012/11/16/mobile-phone-services-suspended-in-karachi-and-quetta/

Pakistan Agrees Afghan Taliban Releases In Islamabad Talks

BBC, 14 November: Pakistan has agreed to free several jailed Afghan Taliban officials during talks in Islamabad with Afghan peace negotiators, officials say.
bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-20322042

Pakistan Arrests 'Militants' After Karachi Violence

AFP, 13 November: Police in Karachi have arrested four suspected militants they said were planning a wave of sectarian attacks in the city, following a bloody three days in which around 40 people were killed.
google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5j9HrMF-tyTCdu4WMQIYuxC0cJneQ?docId=CNG.98b5583b4a0a3f56e5f2f84bd43d037a.3f1

2 Killed, 10 Injured In Quetta Blast

Express Tribune, 13 November: At least two people were killed and 10 others, including three FC personnel, were injured when a blast took place in the Almo Chowk area of Quetta on Tuesday.
tribune.com.pk/story/464983/1-killed-5-injured-in-quetta-blast/

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia Probes Attacks On Police In Shiite Region

Daily Star, 17 November: Saudi Arabia's police force said Saturday it is investigating a series of attacks against members of the force in the Shiite-majority district of Qatif.

dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Nov-17/195360-saudi-arabia-probes-attacks-on-police-in-shiite-region.ashx

Syria

Syrian Rebels 'Capture Airport'

BBC, 17 November: Syrian rebels say they have captured an airport near the border with Iraq. The airport of Hamdan in Deir al-Zour province, near the town of Albu Kamal, had been converted by government forces for military use.

bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20380557

Syria Opposition Bloc Recognized by Ankara

Turkish Weekly, 16 November: Turkey recognizes the Syrian National Coalition (SNC) as the legitimate representative of the Syrian people, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu announced yesterday, calling on the international community to follow suit.

turkishweekly.net/news/144834/syria-opposition-bloc-recognized-by-ankara.html

Securing Syrian Chemical Sites May Require 75,000 Troops: U.S. Military

NTI, 16 November: The U.S. Defence Department has informed the White House it could take more than 75,000 military personnel to secure Syria's chemical arsenal, the New York Times reported on Thursday.

nti.org/gsn/article/securing-syrian-chemical-sites-may-require-75000-troops-us-military/

UK Foreign Secretary Signals Recognition Of New Syrian Rebel Grouping

Daily Telegraph, 16 November: William Hague signalled that Britain is prepared to formally recognise a new Syrian opposition grouping, as he hailed an "encouraging turning point" in fight against Bashar al-Assad.

telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/9683189/William-Hague-signals-recognition-of-new-Syrian-rebel-grouping.html

France To Push For Arming Syria's Opposition Coalition

BBC, 15 November: France's foreign minister has said he will discuss supplying arms to the Syrian opposition coalition with European partners.

bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20340664

Turkish Jets Patrol Southern Border With Syria

Reuters, 15 November: Turkey sent fighter jets to its south-eastern frontier with Syria for a second day on Thursday, a Reuters witness said, following an air assault this week by Syrian warplanes on the rebel-held border town of Ras al-Ain.

reuters.com/article/2012/11/15/us-syria-crisis-turkey-jets-idUSBRE8AE0T520121115

SNC Plans To Base In Cairo

World Bulletin, 14 November: Syrian National Coalition (SNC) member, told that Cairo was decided to be the permanent headquarters of the Syrian National Coalition for Opposition and Revolutionary Forces.
worldbulletin.net/?aType=haber&ArticleID=98631

U.S. Stops Short Of Recognizing Syrian Opposition Body

Reuters, 14 November: The United States declined to follow France in fully recognizing a fledgling Syrian opposition coalition on Wednesday, saying the body must prove its worth, after its predecessor was dogged by feuding and accusations of Islamist domination.
reuters.com/article/2012/11/14/us-syria-crisis-idUSBRE88J0X720121114

Turkey Warns Syria On Border Violation

Daily Star, 14 November: Turkey on Wednesday warned that its military would retaliate if any Syrian aircraft violate its airspace amid a third day of air strikes by Syrian forces against rebels who overran a town along the border with Turkey.
dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Nov-14/195022-turkey-warns-syria-on-border-violation.ashx#axzz2CCdZL2wj

Syria Regime Bombards Rebels

The Australian, 14 November: Syria's regime has unleashed tanks and warplanes against rebels as battles rage, after France recognised the newly united political opposition and raised the prospect of arming its fighters.
theaustralian.com.au/news/breaking-news/syria-rages-coalition-calls-for-arms/story-fn3dxix6-1226516273243

Russia Urges Syrian Opposition Groups To Unite

Al-Arabiya, 14 November: Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov urged all Syrian opposition groups to unite and to set up a team to negotiate with the Syrian government after a meeting with his Arab counterparts in the Gulf on Wednesday.
english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/11/14/249612.html

N. Korea Attempted To Ship Missile Parts To Syria

World Bulletin, 14 November: North Korea tried to export ballistic missile parts to Syria in May in violation of sanctions, according to a classified UN report.
worldbulletin.net/?aType=haber&ArticleID=98615

Syria Orders More Airstrikes and Calls French Recognition of Rebels 'Immoral'

New York Times, 13 November: The Syrian authorities on Wednesday ordered airstrikes close to the tense Turkish border for the third consecutive day, and said a French decision to recognize and consider arming a newly formed coalition of Syrian government opponents was an "immoral" act "encouraging the destruction of Syria."
nytimes.com/2012/11/15/world/middleeast/syria-war-developments.html?ref=middleeast&_r=0

Syria: France Backs Anti-Assad Coalition

BBC, 13 November: France has become the first Western power to recognise Syria's opposition coalition as the sole legitimate representative of the Syrian people.
bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20319787

Syria Crisis: Arab League Welcomes New Opposition Bloc

BBC, 13 November: The Arab League has welcomed the formation of a new coalition of Syrian opposition forces, and has called on other opposition parties to join it.

bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20307668

Syria's Opposition Wins Western Backing, But What About Western Weapons?

Time, 13 November: Syria's new opposition leadership structure announced in Qatar could mark a turning point in the stalemated 20-month old rebellion against the Assad regime. But it could just as easily prove to be another chimerical Western attempt to stand up a friendly regime for an Arab country in transition.

world.time.com/2012/11/13/syrias-new-opposition-wins-western-backing-but-what-about-western-weapons/?iid=tsmodule

Residents Flee Air Strikes On Syria Border Town

Reuters, 13 November: A Syrian warplane struck homes in the town of Ras al-Ain on Tuesday within sight of the Turkish border, pursuing an aerial bombardment to force out rebels and drawing a new warning from Ankara.

reuters.com/article/2012/11/13/us-syria-crisis-turkey-jet-idUSBRE8AC08L20121113

NATO 'Will Defend Turkey' From Syria Attacks

Daily Telegraph, 12 November: NATO will defend alliance member Turkey, which struck back after mortar rounds fired from Syria landed inside its border, the alliance's Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said at a meeting in Prague on Monday.

telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/turkey/9672199/Nato-will-defend-Turkey-from-Syria-attacks.html

Syrian Opposition Elects First Leader

Reuters, 12 November: The new assembly unanimously elects Sheikh Ahmad Moaz al-Khatib, a well-respected figure amongst Syrians and former Imam of the historic Umayyad mosque in Damascus, as president.

reuters.com/article/2012/11/12/us-syria-crisis-idUSBRE88J0X720121112

Syria Opposition Moves to Unite

WSJ, 11 November: Syria's opposition formed a new political body designed to serve as a nerve centre for the split anti-government movement, in a breakthrough for activists and their foreign backers in their effort to oust President Bashar al-Assad.

online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324894104578112853313376048.html

Israel Fires At Syria After Stray Mortar Strikes Army Post

Washington Post, 11 November: The upheaval in Syria drew a military response from Israel on Sunday when its forces fired a guided antitank missile near a Syrian mortar battery after a stray shell from fighting between Syrian troops and rebels hit an Israeli army post in the Golan Heights, military officials said.

washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/israel-fires-at-syria-for-first-time-after-mortar-strikes-army-post/2012/11/11/dbf12fb0-2c15-11e2-a99d-5c4203af7b7a_story.html

UAE

UAE Toughens Law On Internet Dissent

World Bulletin, 13 November: The new law imposes jail terms for anyone who derides or caricatures the Gulf Arab country's rulers or state institutions on the web.

worldbulletin.net/?aType=haber&ArticleID=98551

UAE Islamists Lose Appeal Against Loss Of Citizenship

World Bulletin, 12 November: The seven are among more than 60 members of the Islamist grouping al-Islah detained this year and accused of belonging to the Muslim Brotherhood, which is banned in the UAE.

worldbulletin.net/?aType=haber&ArticleID=98507

Yemen

Growing Number of Internally Displaced Yemenis Returning To Their Homes - UN Refugee Agency

Global Security, 16 November 2012: The United Nations refugee agency today announced that it is seeing growing numbers of internally displaced people returning to their homes in southern Yemen – the first major fall in displacement there in 18 months.

globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2012/11/mil-121116-unnews03.htm

Suicide Bomber Kills 3 PRC Members

Critical Threats, 16 November: A suicide bomber targeted Popular Resistance Committees (PRC) forces in Abyan governorate on November 16. Local sources reported that the suicide bomber detonated an explosive device near a local government building in Zinjibar district. At least three PRC members were killed, several others were wounded.

criticalthreats.org/gulf-aden-security-review/gulf-aden-security-review-november-16-2012#_edn1

Yemen Suicide Bomber Kills Three in Abyan Militia Offices

Reuters, 16 November: A suicide bomber linked to al Qaeda killed himself and three others inside the headquarters of government-allied militias in the capital of southern Yemen's Abyan province on Friday, a security source and medical sources told Reuters.

uk.reuters.com/article/2012/11/16/uk-yemen-qaeda-idUKBRE8AF0XN20121116

Five Ansar Al-Sharia Suspects Arrested In Aden

Yemen News Agency, 15 November: Security forces raided a house and arrested five Ansar al Sharia militants in Dar Saad district of Aden governorate on November 15. Security forces seized weapons, laptops, cell phones, and a vehicle following the raid. One Ansar al Sharia militant was wounded in the raid and several others were able to escape. Local sources reported that security forces are pursuing the escapees.

sabanews.net/en/news287897.htm

Yemen Set to Launch Dialogue Amid Country's Divisions

Al-Monitor, 15 November: Yemeni President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi on discusses developments in Yemen with Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations and his Personal Envoy to Yemen Jamal bin Omar. They also discussed the ongoing arrangements for the National Dialogue Conference, which was scheduled by presidential decree to begin that evening.

al-monitor.com/pulse/politics/2012/11/yemen-relaunches-national-dialogue-amid-division.html

Yemen's Main Oil Pipeline Shut After Bombings

World Bulletin, 12 November: The SABA news agency said the pipeline was attacked in two spots in the Wadi Abidah region of western Yemen.

worldbulletin.net/?aType=haber&ArticleID=98443

Related issues

Abu Qatada Released From Prison

BBC, 13 November: Muslim cleric Abu Qatada has been freed on bail after a UK court ruled he might not get a fair trial if deported to Jordan to face terrorism charges.

bbc.co.uk/news/uk-20308585

Government 'Determined' To Deport Abu Qatada

BBC, 13 November: The UK Deputy Prime Minister has said the government is "absolutely determined" to deport Muslim cleric Abu Qatada to Jordan to face terrorism charges.

bbc.co.uk/news/uk-20307580

Opinion and Analysis

A Test for Obama's 'Light Footprint'

New York Times, 17 November: The eruptions in the Middle East have posed perhaps the severest, most direct test yet of the limits of President Obama's signature foreign policy innovation during his first term, what the White House hails as the "light footprint" strategy.

nytimes.com/2012/11/18/world/middle-east-challenges-obamas-light-footprint.html

Against a Ground Invasion of Gaza

The Atlantic, 17 November: A ground invasion of Gaza is a bad idea. The temptations are many -- Gaza is controlled by an anti-Semitic Muslim fundamentalist organization committed to Israel's destruction, and it obviously harbours many men who are actively plotting ways to kill Jews. But there is no military solution to Israel's political problem in Gaza, short of some sort of World War II-style Tokyo campaign, or Putin-style Chechnya campaign (or, for that matter, an Aleppo-style Assad campaign).

theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/11/against-a-ground-invasion-of-gaza/265383/

Stop Pretending The US Is An Uninvolved, Helpless Party In The Israeli Assault On Gaza

Guardian, 17 November: The Obama administration's unstinting financial, military and diplomatic support for Israel is a key enabling force in the conflict.

guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/nov/17/israel-gaza-us-policy

Iran Analysis: Assessing the Latest Nuclear Report --- Is There an "Imminent Threat"?

Enduring America, 17 November: An assessment of the recently released report on UN nuclear inspections in Iran.

enduringamerica.com/home/2012/11/17/iran-analysis-assessing-the-latest-nuclear-report-is-there-a.html

Analysis of IAEA Iran Safeguards Report

ISIS, 16 November: Another analysis of the UN report, this time by the Institute for Science and International Security.

isis-online.org/uploads/isis-reports/documents/ISIS_Analysis_IAEA_safeguards_Report_November_16_2012-final.pdf

Who Started the Israel-Gaza Conflict?

The Atlantic, 16 November: An analysis on the causes of this escalation in the Israel-Palestine conflict.

theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/11/who-started-the-israel-gaza-conflict/265374/

In Shifting Sands of Middle East, Who Will Lead?

CFR, 15 November: Leadership in the Middle East is up for grabs as the Syrian war intensifies, the Arab Spring changes regional power dynamics, and Israel's airstrikes and Hamas rockets again roil Gaza. Last year, Turkey was the assumed role model for the region. But it has fallen down on the job.

cfr.org/middle-east/shifting-sands-middle-east-lead/p29490

Jordan's Arab Spring

Brookings, 15 November: The Arab awakening is stalking its next victim, King Abdullah II of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, a key American ally. President Obama and his national-security team have another critical challenge.

brookings.edu/research/opinions/2012/11/15-jordan-arab-spring-riedel?rssid=LatestFromBrookings&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+BrookingsRSS%2Ftopfeeds%2FLatestFromBrookings+%28Latest+From+Brookings%29

The End Of The Two-State Illusion: Gaza's Silver Lining?

Al-Jazeera, 15 November: It is deja vu all over again of the worst kind. Israel's latest assault on Gaza will kill dozens and perhaps hundreds of civilians in a hail of hellfire from the ground, sky and even sea. Hamas will fire hundreds of rockets, likely killing a few Israeli civilians and terrorising tens of thousands of residents of the south of the country, but otherwise achieving little beyond helping to justify even more Israeli carnage in Gaza and who knows how many new housing units in the West Bank.

aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/11/20121115114058876781.html

Iran's agenda in the Gaza offensive

Stratfor, 15 November: To begin to make sense of the escalating conflict in Gaza, we need to go back to the night of Oct. 23 in Khartoum. Around 11 p.m. that night, the Yarmouk weapons facility in the Sudanese capital was attacked, presumably by the Israeli air force. There were indications that Iran had been using this facility to stockpile and possibly assemble weapons, including anti-aircraft missiles, guided anti-tank missiles and long-range Fajr-5 rockets capable of reaching Tel Aviv and Jerusalem from Gaza.

defenceviewpoints.co.uk/articles-and-analysis/irans-agenda-in-the-gaza-offensive

The Wisdom Will Lie In Knowing When To Stop

Times of Israel, 15 November: Israel's resort to force was unavoidable. But the success of Operation Pillar of Defence will depend on a clarity of goals and execution that were not apparent in Operation Cast Lead or the Second Lebanon War.

timesofisrael.com/the-wisdom-will-lie-in-knowing-when-to-stop/

Syrian Politics in Doha

RUSI, 14 November: The latest attempt to unite Syria's opposition, with US and Qatari support, has led to the creation of a new Syrian coalition. To succeed, they need the buy-in of as many Syrian stakeholders as possible, as well as a concrete mechanism for governing the country and bringing the civil war to an end.

rusi.org/analysis/commentary/ref:C50A36661DD761/#.UKgw1oa0Msc

ISAF Data Show Insurgent Attacks, Civilian Casualties Increased In September

Long War Journal, 14 November: On Oct. 23, NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) released updated figures on the violence in Afghanistan. The data cover the period through September 2012, and as in previous summaries, ISAF compares recent calendar months to the same months in prior years.

longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/11/natos_international.php

Operation Cast Lead 2.0

Foreign Policy, 14 November: Israel and Hamas are battling it out in the Gaza Strip in a conflict no one can win.

foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/11/14/operation_cast_lead_20

Iran and the Gulf Military Balance: Parts I & II: New Eighth Edition

CSIS, 14 November: The latest strategic assessment on the Iranian influence in the Middle East.

csis.org/publication/iran-and-gulf-military-balance-1

Aleppo's Deadly Stalemate: A Visit to Syria's Divided Metropolis

Time, 14 November: Life in Syria's largest city as the civil war drags on.

world.time.com/2012/11/14/aleppos-deadly-stalemate-a-visit-to-syrias-divided-metropolis/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+timeblogs%2Fmiddle_east+%28TIME%3A+The+Middle+East+Blog%29

Killing From the Sky Is No Way to Defeat Terrorists

Brooking, 13 November: It's clear the Obama administration needs to answer for failing to secure the U.S. Consulate in Benghazi, Libya, where four Americans died in a September terrorist attack. Yet the accountability debate is getting in the way of the more important discussion the Benghazi attack should provoke. That's a debate over whether the U.S. has the right counterterrorism strategy to start with.

brookings.edu/research/opinions/2012/11/13-drones-terrorism-nasr?rssid=terrorism&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Brookings+RSS%2Ftopics%2Fterrorism+%28Brookings+Topics++Terrorism%29

Zawahiri Calls on Muslims to Implement sharia

Long War Journal, 13 November: Al Qaeda has released a statement written by Ayman al Zawahiri this past summer in which the terror chieftain outlines several goals for Muslims to strive toward. While failing to mention the toll al Qaeda's attacks have taken on Muslim civilians, Zawahiri says that the Muslim Ummah faces the "most vicious Crusader campaign in its history," according to a translation provided by SITE Intelligence Group.

longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/11/al_qaeda_has_release.php

U.S.-Yemeni Terror Obsession Will Not Solve Yemen's Woes

Brookings, 13 November: Among the world leaders who congratulated President Barack Obama for winning a second term last week was the Yemeni president, Abdrabu Mansur Hadi. From the Yemeni leader's point of view, the most important aspect of Mr Obama's reelection is perhaps the issue of the continuation of a U.S.-Yemeni war on terrorism.

brookings.edu/research/opinions/2012/11/13-us-yemen-terrorism-sharqieh?rssid=terrorism&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+BrookingsRSS%2Ftopics%2Fterrorism+%28Brookings+Topics+++Terrorism%29

Why Not Jordan?

MERIP, 13 November: The November 13 withdrawal of fuel and electricity subsidies has sparked vigorous demonstrations in Jordan, prompting renewed speculation about whether the wave of Arab uprisings that began in late 2010 has finally arrived in the Hashemite Kingdom. Indeed, amidst the rush of scholarly attempts to explain why uprisings did or did not occur in various Arab countries in 2011, Jordan is proving a stubborn case. Jordan fits nearly all the criteria for an uprising, but sustained protest has yet to take root.

merip.org/why-not-jordan

Insurgency Encroaching on Central Afghanistan

Long War Journal, 12 November: As NATO forces continue to scale down combat operations in Afghanistan, New Zealand forces that have been stationed in the relatively stable central province of Bamyan since 2003 have quietly and permanently closed two of their forward operating bases in the troubled Do Abe district. The bases were deemed crucial bulwarks in the fight against Taliban insurgents who have increasingly threatened the security and stability of one of Afghanistan's most vulnerable regions, the Hazarajat of central Afghanistan -- which encompasses the highlands of Bamyan and Daikundi provinces, large tracts of Wardak province, and smaller segments of Parwan, Ghazni, Ghor, Sar-i-Pul, and northern Helmand provinces.

longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/11/insurgency_encroachi.php

US to overtake Saudi Arabia in oil exports

Daily Telegraph, 12 November: The US will overtake Saudi Arabia to become the world's top oil producer by 2017. The International Energy Agency (IEA) said in its world outlook for 2012 this morning that the US will be a net exporter of gas by 2020, entirely due to the shale and gas revolution in the country.

blogs.telegraph.co.uk/finance/ambroseevans-pritchard/100021244/us-to-overtake-saudi-arabia-in-oil-as-chinas-water-runs-dry/

Saudi's Proxy War Against Iran

Tablet, 12 **November**: Ethnic minorities, backed by neighbouring Arab countries, are ramping up assaults against the regime in Tehran.

tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/116349/saudis-proxy-war-against-iran

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