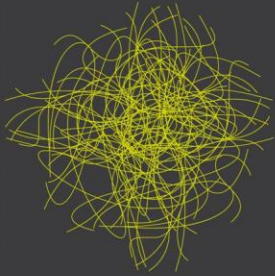


**Sources of
Tension in
Afghanistan
and Pakistan**

A Regional
Perspective



QUARTERLY MONITORING BRIEF

Report No. 3

July 9–September 30, 2013



Regional organizations and fora are gaining renewed momentum.



Afghanistan's mining sector is lagging behind despite showing great promise earlier.



Indian-Pakistani rivalry is still claiming lives in Afghanistan .

Afghanistan: Monitoring the Key Regional Powers

Malaiz Daud



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**CIDOB Sources of Tension in Afghanistan & Pakistan: A Regional Perspective (STAP RP)
Quarterly Reports on “Monitoring the Key Regional Powers”**

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this series of quarterly monitoring reports (2013) is to monitor and track the actions, public statements of five key STAP RP regional actors (India, Iran, Russia, China, Saudi Arabia) on Afghanistan; the development of, and their participation in relevant international and regional discussion meetings, including the Istanbul Process, Heart of Asia, RECCA, SCO; the five key regional actors’ economic decisions and agreements, including, but not limited to, the energy and infrastructure sectors, which have implications for the identified sources of tension in Afghanistan with regional implications (see CIDOB STAP RP Mapping Document at www.cidobafpakproject.com).

The Sources of Tension (SoTs) identified in the Mapping Document are used as reference points to determine relevance and are specifically monitored in Section 1.

The content includes short summaries by topic and by country, on actions taken, public statements made, regional meetings held and how these develop as mechanisms for dialogue, and the participation of the key regional powers in relevant regional and international events, as well as in subgroups of international fora, such as the Heart of Asia. Economic activity and investments by the key regional powers in Afghanistan are also monitored, together with progress on, and shifting alliances in planned or actual economic projects. A short subsection on commentary from the media (in English) is included in each section.

Section 2 focuses on the key regional powers. Section 3 looks at regional dynamics and cross-cutting issues; and conclusions on the events of the past quarter are presented in Section 4. Section 5 presents publications by think tanks and research institutions in the region.

1. THE CONTEXT

Governance

- Afghan Judiciary and police are the most corrupt institutions according to the Transparency [International](#).
- Afghan government announces new incentives, policies to attract [investment](#).
- Several former ministers, amongst other, are considering running for the Afghan presidency in next year's [election](#).
- Afghanistan finally has an electoral [law](#). Elections were conducted based on a presidential decree in the past.
- Members of the newly established [Independent Election Commission](#) and [Electoral Complaints Commission](#) of Afghanistan are sworn in by President Hamid Karzai.
- After taking oath, the Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan conduct internal elections, in which a former minister is elected as the Chairman of the [Commission](#).
- A 14-party electoral alliance, derived mainly from the former anti-Taliban forces, is [formed](#).
- "Afghanistan's new, fully electronic Collateral Registry has been ranked first by the World Bank among other MENA nations for fulfilling all the requirements and meeting international [standards](#)".
- Religious minorities, Sikhs and Hindus, get a reserved seat in the lower house of Afghan [parliament](#).
- Release of names of 5000 people killed during the early communist era prompts calls for [justice](#).

Peace and Reconciliation

- Taliban's demand for a 60% share in any future setup, convening a Loya Jirga to amend the Afghan constitution and US's demand for Taliban to renounce violence perpetuate a deadlock in the informal peace talks held between the two [sides](#) after the formal process took off to a rocky start.
- Pakistan and Afghanistan agree to relocate Taliban's Doha Office in an effort to jumpstart [negotiations](#).
- Pakistan frees former Taliban no. 2, a key demand of Kabul, to help spur the Afghan peace [talks](#).

Transition

- Transition Czar, Dr. Ashraf Ghani, resigns to run for the presidency in the next year's [election](#).

Security

- President Hamed Karzai tells Gen. Martin Dempsey his government is ready to sign the Bilateral Security Agreement with the US provided that it ensures security and peace in [Afghanistan](#).
- "UNAMA report shows sharp rise in casualties among Afghan civilians in first half of 2013", with 74 percent of them attributed to the actions of [Taliban](#).
- Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs issues a statement, condemning a coordinated attack on the Indian Consulate in the eastern city of [Jalalabad](#).
- Female Afghan MP is released after three weeks in Taliban captivity in exchange with militant [prisoners](#).

Development

- First Afghan woman governor wins the prestigious Magsaysay [Award](#).
- Cultivation of soya bean has soared in Afghanistan recently to the point that there is a soya bean processing plant established in Mazar, which can serve five thousand [farmers](#).
- Based on an agreement signed between the Afghan and UAE's Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Emirates Airlines will launch flights to [Kabul](#).
- First Afghan pharmaceuticals chain starts [operating](#).
- Afghanistan's football team wins its first international trophy, the South Asian Football Federation Cup, sparking scenes of jubilation across the country and a visit by UEFA's President, Michel [Platini](#).

Afghanistan-Pakistan Tensions

- Despite heightened tensions, Pakistani Prime Minister's Advisor on Foreign Affairs and National Security remains steadfast to visit [Kabul](#).
- AfPak tensions spell over to the cyber world as Pakistani hackers respond after Afghan hackers succeed in hacking a number of websites of Pakistani government, including those of Ministries of Defense and [Interior](#).
- Afghan President finally [accepts](#) invitation of the new Pakistani Prime Minister to visit Pakistan after a senior Pakistani official travels to Kabul to convince the Afghan President his 20th trip will be [result-oriented](#).
- Shelling from Afghanistan results in wounding of a woman and two children in the town of Angoora Adda, Pakistan [claims](#).

2. REGIONAL POWERS



1. INDIA	Who	The Source
1.1. Actions		
- July 13, 2013 Afghan farmers receive training in mushroom cultivation in India .	Indian Embassy Kabul	Official Facebook Page
- August 13, 2013 Officials from Afghanistan, India and USA to meet in New York in September 2013 for trilateral talks to discuss the situation in Afghanistan .	Jawaid Hameem Kakar	Pajhwok Afghan News
- August 23, 2013 Indian Prime Minister discusses security issues and trade links with the Afghan Vice President in Delhi .	Mohammad Hassan Khitab	Pajhwok Afghan News
- August 24, 2013 Afghan Minister of Foreign Affairs and Indian Secretary of External Affairs meet in Kabul to discuss issues of mutual interest .	Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Official Facebook Page
1.2. Agreements (Negotiated/Signed)		
- July 18, 2013 India to provide USD 100 million over the next four years for development of “border provinces” – those provinces that are bordering Pakistan .		8 Sobh
- July 29, 2013 The cabinet of Afghan government endorses a memorandum of understanding with the Indian government for capacity building of public sector employees .	Council of Ministers Secretariat	Official Facebook Page
- September 9, 2013 Afghan Minister of Energy and Water signs a contract with Gammon India, the first Indian company with an ISO 9001 certificate, to extend electricity to two northern districts .	Zabihullah Jhanmal	Tolonews
1.3. Public Statements		
- July 18, 2013 Indian Ambassador to Kabul stresses upon expansion of trade between Kabul and Delhi .	Zabihullah Jhanmal	Tolonews
- July 18, 2013 Indian Ambassador to Kabul declares support to development of Iran’s Chahbahar port in collaboration with Iran to connect to Afghanistan .	Zabihullah Jhanmal	Tolonews
- August 6, 2013 Indian’s Kabul Ambassador praises Afghan security forces for foiling an attack on the Indian Consulate in the eastern city of Jalalabad during his visit to the city.	Indian Embassy, Kabul	Official Facebook Page
- August 14, 2013 Indian Consul-General in the western city of Herat vows India will complete construction of the Salma Dam within a year .		Tolonews

<p>- August 21, 2013 Indian Vice President says India remains committed to implementing the Strategic Partnership Agreement with Afghanistan.</p>	Sujoy Dhar	Pajhwok Afghan News
<p>- August 24, 2013 "Afghanistan is of utmost importance to India", India's Secretary of External Affairs tells President Hamid Karzai.</p>	Afghan President's Office	Official Facebook Page
<p>- September 7, 2013 Indian politicians across the board condemn the killing of the author of "Escape from Taliban" by insurgents in Paktika province of Afghanistan.</p>	F. Wire	Firstpost
<p>- September 9, 2013 Indian Ambassador to Kabul congratulates the Afghan football team on beating India to win the South Asian Football Federation Championship.</p>		8 Sobh Daily
1.4. Track II Diplomacy		
<p>- July 21, 2013 Indian and Afghanistan film industries collaborate for the first time to produce a movie in Dari language.</p>	Pratul Sharma	The Sunday Standard
1.5. Media Commentary		
<p>- September 2, 2013 Endgame Afghanistan: A new Pakistani militant outfit Ansar Al Aseer vows to wage war in Kashmir and other Indian cities</p>	Qaswar Abbas	India Today



2. IRAN	Who	The Source
2.1. Actions		
<p>- August 25 2013 Iranian Government gives Afghans illegally residing in Iran 15 days to leave the country.</p>		BBC Pashto
<p>- September 15 2013 Iran's Chahbahar port is used for the "first direct" shipment of twenty containers of dry fruits by the Afghan businessmen to India, to the pleasure of Iranian authorities.</p>		Wadsam
<p>- September 19 2013 Iran's project to replace the centuries-old door of one of the holiest shrines in Afghanistan that houses Prophet Mohammad's clothing stirs controversy.</p>	Bashir Ahmad Naadem	Pajhwok News
<p>- September 20 2013 Iran's Minister of Foreign Affairs meets Afghan envoy to the UN General Assembly.</p>	Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran	Official Facebook Page
<p>- September 24, 2013 Outgoing Iranian Ambassador to Afghanistan meets President Hamed Karzai to bid farewell, pays gratitude to Afghans and the Afghan government.</p>	Afghan President's Office	Official Facebook Page
2.2. Agreements (Negotiated/Signed)		
<p>- July 14, 2013 Iran and Afghanistan agree to convene third political consultative meeting between the deputy ministers of foreign affairs of the two countries in Kabul.</p>	Afghanistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Official Facebook Page
<p>- July 14, 2013 A joint Iranian-Afghan commission to resolve the issue of Afghan prisoners in Iran will be formed, as agreed during the trip of Afghan Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs to Iran.</p>	Afghanistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Official Facebook Page
<p>- August 5, 2013 Afghanistan and Iran sign Strategic Cooperation Agreement.</p>		PRESSTV
<p>- August 12, 2013 Afghan cabinet ratifies a memorandum of understanding with Islamic Republic of Iran in relations to water and urban waste management.</p>	Council of Ministers Secretariat	Official Facebook Page
<p>- August 12, 2013 Afghan cabinet redirects a joint declaration between the Afghan and Iranian governments on "brotherly and friendly cultural relations" via its Foreign Ministry.</p>	Council of Ministers Secretariat	Official Facebook Page
<p>- September 4, 2013 Iran agrees to renew the visas of six hundred thousand Afghan refugees for another year, claims Minister of Repatriation of Afghanistan after his visit to Iran.</p>		Pajhwok Afghan News
2.3. Public Statements		
<p>- July 10, 2013 Iranian Embassy in Kabul strongly protests against the "provocative and inflammatory" articles of 8 Sobh daily against the Islamic Republic.</p>		Islamic Republic News

<p>- July 14, 2013 Iran expresses strong support for “an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned” reconciliation process in a series of meetings between numerous Iranian officials and Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister.</p> <p>- August 5, 2013 Describing bilateral relations “deep and friendly”, Iran’s Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council says security, stability, progress and welfare of Afghans is in the interest and desire of Iran.</p>	Afghanistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Agency Official Facebook Page Press TV
2.4. Media Commentary		
<p>- July 24, 2013 Iran’s Consolidation of Position in Afghanistan.</p>	Francis Mathew	Gulf News



3. CHINA	Who	The Source
3.1. Actions		
<p>- August 6, 2013 China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosts a meeting of representatives of China, Afghanistan and Pakistan "to explore possible areas of cooperation".</p>	Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies	Official Facebook Page
<p>- September 2, 2013 China's president visits Central Asia amid concerns of militant extremism as a blowback of the withdrawal of the international military forces from Afghanistan.</p>	Christopher Bodeen	Bloomberg Businessweek News
<p>- September 10, 2013 "The second Joint China-US Training Program for Afghanistan Diplomats starts its US leg in Washington D.C.".</p>	Xinhua	Global Times
<p>- September 10, 2013 China and the US will launch joint training programs for Afghan nurses and agriculture experts.</p>	Xinhua	Global Times
<p>- September 23, 2013 Chinese envoy to the UN General Assembly, Luo Zhaohui, co-chairs the Istanbul Process Senior Officials Meeting in New York.</p>	Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Official Facebook Page
<p>- September 25, 2013 Governor of China's Shanxi Province meets Afghan President prior to the Euro-Asia Economic Forum meeting.</p>	Afghan Presidential Office	Official Facebook Page
<p>- September 25, 2013 China's Deputy Prime Minister holds a meeting with President Hamed Karzai.</p>	Afghan Presidential Office	Official Youtube Channel
<p>- September 25, 2013 China promises to provide training in hydraulic engineering, higher education opportunities and increase Chinese language classes in Kabul University.</p>	Afghan Presidential Office	Official Facebook Page
3.2. Agreements (Negotiated/Signed)		
<p>- July 24, 2013 Afghan Post and the Post Services of China sign a Cooperation Agreement.</p>	Afghan Deputy Comm. and IT Minister	Official Facebook Page
<p>- September 27, 2013 China and Afghanistan sign a memorandum of understanding for establishing economic and technical cooperation.</p>	Afghan Presidential Office	Official Facebook Page
<p>- September 27, 2013 China and Afghanistan sign a memorandum of understanding for exchange of prisoners.</p>	Afghan Presidential Office	Official Facebook Page
<p>- September 27, 2013 China's Xian University and Kabul University sign a memorandum of understanding for establishing cooperation.</p>	Afghan Presidential Office	Official Facebook Page
3.3. Public Statements		

<p>- July 24, 2013 In his farewell meeting with President Karzai, the Chinese Ambassador says his country wishes to see an independent, sovereign, peaceful and stable Afghanistan.</p>	Afghan Presidential Office	Official Youtube Channel
<p>- August 10, 2013 Chinese Embassy in Kabul asks the Afghan government to ensure safety and security of its citizens after three Chinese citizens are found dead in an apartment in Kabul.</p>		Pajhwok Afghan News
<p>- August 26, 2013 Chinese investors of the biggest Afghan copper field demand review of their deal, putting the deal at risk.</p>	Jessica Donati	Reuters
<p>- September 10, 2013 "China stands ready to work with the international community including the US to continue providing assistance to Afghanistan", Chinese Foreign Minister.</p>	Xinhua	Global Times
<p>- September 25, 2013 Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs commends the Afghan government for "historic achievements and reconstruction" in the post-Taliban era.</p>	Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Official Website
<p>- September 27, 2013 China supports Afghanistan's strategic relations with the countries of the region and the rest of the world, says Chinese President.</p>	Afghan Presidential Office	Official Facebook Page
3.4. Track II Diplomacy		
<p>- July 21, 2013 Chinese Ambassador to Kabul joins a dinner at the Afghan Institute of Strategic Studies.</p>	Afghan Institute of Strategic Studies	Official Facebook Page
<p>- August 7, 2013 China Institute of International Studies holds China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Track Two Dialogue.</p>		China Institute of International Studies
3.5. Media Commentary		
<p>- September 8, 2013 Gawadar, China and Baloch apprehensions.</p>	Sanaullah Baloch	The Express Tribune
<p>- September 20, 2013 Afghanistan's plan to jumpstart economy with Chinese mining investment under threat</p>	Lynne O'Donnel	South China Morning Post



4. RUSSIA	Who	The Source
4.1. Actions		
<p>- September 3, 2013 The Joint Afghan-Russian Economic Commission meets in Kabul, pledges increased cooperation. Russia's Deputy Minister for Energy leads the Russian delegation.</p>	Meer Agha Nasrat Samimi	Pajhwok Afghan News
<p>- September 13, 2013 It has been revealed that Russia is training Afghan military specialists, a sensitive matter given the ill-fated military cooperation in the past that resulted in a war.</p>	Kremlin	Official Website
<p>- September 25, 2013 Three brand new Russian Mi-17 helicopters are delivered to the Afghan Air Force.</p>	Staff Sgt. Torri Ingalsbe	DVIDS
4.2. Agreements (Negotiated/Signed)		
<p>- September 3, 2013 Russia and Afghanistan renew The Air Service Agreement which was first signed in 1956 to facilitate starting of flights between Kabul and Moscow.</p>	Meer Agha Nasrat Samimi	Pajhwok Afghan News
4.3. Public Statements		
<p>- August 18, 2013 Vladimir Putin attaches great importance to strengthening of friendly ties with Afghanistan and vows help in a message to President Hamed Karzai on the eve of Afghanistan's Independence Day.</p>	Afghan President's Office	Official Website
<p>- September 9, 2013 Russian Ambassador to Kabul criticizes performance of NATO in Afghanistan and warns against adverse consequences of abandoning Afghanistan once again.</p>	Karim Amini	Tolonews
<p>- September 13, 2013 Russian president rues decrease in economic transactions and pledges continuous support in military arena to Afghanistan in a meeting with his Afghan counterpart.</p>	Kremlin	Official Website
<p>- September 13, 2013 Russia wants to see peace and stability in Afghanistan so that the terrorists can no longer continue their activities and are not a threat to the countries of the region, Russian President.</p>	Afghan President's Office	Official Facebook Page
<p>- September 20, 2013 Russian Ambassador to Kabul says his country is not against presence of international forces in Afghanistan but there is a need for clarity and "UNSC's blessing".</p>		Tolonews
<p>- September 23, 2013 Russian Ambassador to Kabul says his country is willing to help equip the Afghan security forces.</p>	Hafeezullah Marouf	BBC Pashto
4.4. Media Commentary		
<p>- August 27, 2013 Afghanistan, the graveyard of imperial ambition</p>	Sergei Vasilenkov	Pravda.ru

5. SAUDI ARABIA

Who

The Source

5.1. Actions

- **September 5, 2013**

Saudi Arabia sends food relief to impoverished Afghan families in the month holy month of Ramazan, month of [fasting](#).

SBWire

- **September 24, 2013**

Islamic scholars from around the world attend a conference in Kabul, present a plan to the Afghan President of inviting all sides to the conflict to Makkah, Saudi Arabia, where a peace agreement could be drawn and [signed](#).

Afghan
President's
OfficeOfficial
Youtube
Channel- **September 25, 2013**

Saudi and Afghan Ministers of Foreign Affairs meet in New York to discuss bilateral relations, the former stresses upon his country's continued support to [Afghanistan](#).

Afghan
Ministry of
Foreign
AffairsOfficial
Website

5.2. Public Statements

- **August 22, 2013**

King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia in a telephone call with President Hamed Karzai expresses hope for positive result of the upcoming trip of the latter to [Pakistan](#).

Afghan
President's
OfficeOfficial
Website

5.3. Media Commentary

- **September 9, 2013**

Flagging Doha peace talks being shifted to Saudi [Arabia](#)

Liaqat Toor

Pakistan
Observer- **September 11, 2013**

The domestic and international legacy of [9/11](#)

Majid
Rafizadeh

Al Arabiya

- **September 28, 2013**

Arabs wary of Iran-U.S. [rapprochement](#)

Eyad Abu
Shakra

Al Arabiya

3. REGIONAL DYNAMICS AND CROSSCUTTING ISSUES

July 10, 2013: Omirtai Bitimov, the Kazakh Ambassador to Afghanistan, says his country is interested to invest in upgrading Afghanistan's infrastructure to boost bilateral trade ([Link](#)).

July 10, 2013: The Steering Committee of the gas pipeline project, Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI), holds its 17th meeting in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan ([Link](#)).

July 18, 2013: Regional heavyweights such as India, Turkey and Iran, in addition to Afghanistan and Pakistan, are vying to become full members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) ([Link](#)).

August 14, 2013: A six-member delegation of Azeri investors conducts an exploratory visit to Afghanistan to assess investment opportunities, particularly in the mining ([Link](#)).

September 10, 2013: Second technical meeting of the Infrastructure CBM of "Heart of Asia" participant countries is held in Ashgabat ([Link](#)).

September 13, 2013: A workshop on "Explosives' Precursor and their transportation routes is held in the framework of the Counter Terrorism CBM of the 'Heart of Asia'- Istanbul Process in Abu Dhabi" ([Link](#)).

September 14, 2013: India is on the verge of importing uranium from Uzbekistan ([Link](#)).

September 17, 2013: Representatives from Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan, the Intergovernmental Council of Casa-1000, meet in Islamabad to discuss ways of transmitting electricity from Central Asia to South Asia ([Link](#)).

September 19, 2013: Meeting of the "International Contact Group" for Afghanistan and Pakistan, a consortium of 50 countries, is held in New York ([Link](#)).

September 20, 2013: Tajik security agencies claim to have foiled a terrorist attack in Dushanbe by a group of six people, whose leader is believed to have received training in Pakistan ([Link](#)).

September 23, 2013: Senior Officials of the Istanbul Process meet in New York ([Link](#)).

September 24, 2013: Islamic scholars from Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Indonesia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and the US gather in "Islam and Peace" Conference in Kabul, stress on end to war ([Link](#)).

September 27, 2013: President Hamid Karzai meets with the envoys of the member countries of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation ([Link](#)).

4. SUMMARY OF TRENDS FOR THE QUARTER

Afghanistan-US future relation still in a limbo: Uncertainty over future of US-Afghan relations has kept neighboring countries and countries in broader region guessing about their future course of action. However, it has not stopped them from getting involved overtly or covertly Afghanistan's affairs. Russia's Kabul Ambassador's recent remarks and Iranian diplomats – who are suspected to be spies by Kabul insiders – getting involved in the electoral alliances jockeying is a testament that the countries of the region are as much involved in the internal politics of Afghanistan as they are in the regional and international arrangements in relations to Afghanistan. The Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) is now said to be [only weeks away](#). Such optimism though has appeared and faded several times before. President Karzai is the real trump card here and he has just recently threatened to [forgo](#) it altogether. His decision may stem from either a sense of [vengeance against what he perceives America's betrayal in the 2009 election](#) or a fear of his legacy – for any Afghan ruler to agree to presence of foreign troops on Afghan soil is a momentous decision – or a combination of both. The bottom-line is that the region is awaiting as much as the Afghan people the outcome of the negotiations. In any case, waning presence and interest of the US and its allies has given regional structures and institutions renewed impetus. The level of [interest shown in the membership of SCO](#) is indicative of its perceived importance. Afghanistan is equally keen on being adequately and effectively represented on international and particularly regional fora which brings to attention the increasingly active role of the Kabul diplomatic arm.

Invigorated Afghan Diplomacy: From what has come forth in the last year – this quarter was no exception, Kabul's diplomats have not just explored every venue possible to rally support around the Afghan state-building project, they have done it with a good degree of effectiveness. Almost in every meeting, there is praise on the part of Afghanistan's international allies for these diplomats. Their act has been ably supported by individuals and groups outside the government. The breadth of the legion of Afghans partaking in international debates has grown considerably, given in the past, it was mainly the Pakistanis who told the world about Afghanistan. Lastly, it is not only [the highest echelon](#) of the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs that has taken it upon themselves to shape the world view of their country, [diplomats from almost all levels](#) seem engaged.

Never-abating regional activity: Third quarter of 2013 saw, like the previous two quarters, a lot of regional activity in the forms of meetings, visits, statements, agreements. The trend is expected to continue well into the fourth quarter and all the way to the end of 2014 when all international combat forces have been removed from Afghanistan.

Major Developments: [Telephonic conversation](#) between the presidents of the USA and Iran, [meeting of their foreign ministers](#) on the sidelines of the UNGA and [public condemnation](#) by the new Iranian government of Holocaust as a "crime" is a break from Iran under Hassan Rouhani's predecessor. This – and the expected thaw in US-Iran should it materialize – will certainly have a profound impact on Iran-Afghanistan relations with regional implications. A [Jordanian type of deal for subsidized oil with the Ba'athist Iraq](#) despite UN sanctions between Iran and Afghanistan will immensely benefit Afghanistan. Iran has anyway [benefited indirectly](#) from US dollars poured into Afghanistan as indicated by Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). Afghanistan is also desperate to boost its exports and [Pakistan clearly is an impediment](#). The second best option available is obviously Chahbahar.

Remarks by President Karzai just last week stating that China is ["quietly backing peace process in Afghanistan"](#), are interpreted by observers to imply China is working behind the scene to convince Pakistan to play a more constructive role in Afghanistan. If true, this would be a major breakthrough as

China has significant sway over Pakistan. This comes at a time when there is a slight dip in the expectation of getting China invest heavily in Afghanistan. The Chinese company contracted for extracting copper from Aynak Mine has already reneged on its commitments, demanding amendment to the original contract. [President Karzai's snubbing the UNGA](#) in favor of attending the Euro-Asia Economic Forum in China last week is a sign that Afghanistan is weary of losing China as a stakeholder whose investment may also serve as a shield against Pakistani-supported militant groups in the long run.

Moving on to Russia, President Karzai's meeting with President Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of SCO meeting in Bishkek and the subsequent [press release](#) by the Kremlin soon became the main headline in the Afghan press and went spiral on social media. The Russians seem to have advertently highlighted President Karzai's comment regarding one of the potential contenders for the upcoming presidential election in Afghanistan being present in that meeting. The comment was largely perceived to have referred to Afghanistan's Minister of Foreign Affairs who has come out as the frontrunner in recent weeks as President Karzai's preferred choice. The comment also highlights importance the Afghan government, President Karzai in particular, is pinning to Russia.

Another attack against another Indian diplomatic mission in the eastern city of Jalalabad was the evidence of Pakistan's attempts at disrupting Indian support to the Afghan government. India's response was to send its External Affairs Secretary in the aftermath who also visited the site of the attack, giving a very strong signal of India's unwavering commitment to Afghanistan. This happened in the midst of continued [cross-border shelling](#) in the Kashmir sector of Line of Control between Pakistan and Indian forces. The spat was capped by an [uncharacteristically scathing attack](#) of the Indian Prime Minister in his UNGA speech against Pakistan, labeling it as a breeding ground for terrorism.

5. PUBLICATIONS FROM THE REGION

July, 2013: Raza, Shahzad. *New Assembly Faces Big Challenges*, Jinnah Institute. Available [here](#).

July 22, 2013: Mohan, C. Raja. *Finish what you started*, Observer Research Foundation. Available [here](#).

July 25, 2013: Chandran, D Suba. *Doha Dialogue, Obama's Zero Option and the Afghan Future*, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies. Available [here](#).

July 26, 2013: Lukyanov, Fyodor. *Uncertain World: Central Asia: An Indicator of Russian's Imperial Aspirations*, Russia in Global Affairs. Available [here](#).

July 27, 2013: Hamdam, Shafiq. *Freedom In Afghanistan Under Serious Risk*, Afghan Review. Available [here](#).

August 15, 2013: Nazer, Fahad. *Reforming at Their Own Pace*, Sada. Available [here](#).

September 4, 2013: Zongze, Ruan. *Winning the Next Decade: China's Multi-pivot Diplomacy*, China Institute of International Studies. Available [here](#).

September 12, 2013: Jahangeer, Haris. *Why there is so much corruption in Afghanistan?*, Integrity Watch Afghanistan. Available [here](#).

September 15, 2013: Khan, Muhammad Zaheer. *Peace Process and the Current Security Situation in FATA*, FATA Research Centre. Available [here](#).

September 17, 2013: Ruttig, Thomas. *On Your Marks! Alliances and actors before the 2014 presidential election*, Afghanistan Analyst Network. Available [here](#).

September 23, 2013: Iqbal, Khalid. *Afghanistan, Pakistan and Taliban*, Islamabad Policy Research Institute. Available [here](#).

September 26, 2013: Eide, Kai. *Will We Let the Afghan Reform-Process Down?*, Tolonews. Available [here](#).

September 27, 2013: Talebi, Shahla. *A Party with the Moon*, Iran Tribunal. Available [here](#).

September 28, 2013: Sharma, Raghav and Daud, Bilquees. *Dealing with the Past: Afghanistan's Arduous Path to the Future*, Khaama Press. Available [here](#).

September 28, 2013: Osman, Burhan. *Mursi in Kabul: Afghan Islamists scrutinise democracy in the wake of Egypt's coup*, Afghanistan Analyst Network. Available [here](#).