



THE ATLANTIC COUNCIL OF CANADA



IN FOCUS TRANSATLANTIC NEWS DIGEST

July 29, 2011, Issue #54

IN THIS ISSUE:

- NATO-Russia Relations: Stalled in Sochi
- The Libyan Challenge to Global Energy Security
- South Sudan: Learning to take baby Steps
- Regional Actors Raise Alarm about Spread of Looted Libyan Weapons
- Mumbai Bomb Blasts Threaten to De-Stabilize Regional and International Security

EDITOR:

Jonathan Preece

Jonathan.Preece@atlantic-council.ca

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NATO-Russia Relations: Stalled in Sochi

By: Ryerson Neal

The Russia-NATO Council met earlier this month in the resort town of Sochi, in southern Russia. Established in 2002, the Council meets sporadically to foster cooperation between Russia and NATO. The Sochi gathering comes on the heels of an earlier meeting in June. That conference was largely overshadowed by Robert Gates' controversial speech and likely lacked a comfortable negotiating atmosphere for NATO representatives. Undoubtedly, there were higher hopes for the Sochi summit, which not only featured the usual NATO Permanent Representatives, but also a visit from Russian President Medvedev. While the meeting was replete with the requisite diplomatic goodwill, this could not hide continued friction on major problems in the relationship, notably cooperative missile defence and NATO operations in Libya.

Reports from the meeting were adorned with upbeat statements about cooperation in anti-terrorism and counter-narcotics initiatives, but reflected less progress when it came to the kind of big-ticket items that could forge a deeper "strategic" partnership. The core of such a partnership would be collaboration on European missile defence, an idea often talked about since last November's Summit meeting in Lisbon. Yet any hope that the Sochi meeting might mark a step forward on this file appears to have been misplaced. Beyond a reiteration of differences, little tangible progress was visible.

Above all, the meeting did not appear to assuage Russian fears that a NATO missile shield might nullify Russia's nuclear strike capability – or as the Russians euphemistically put it, "create risks for strategic stability." NATO insists that the system's purpose would be to defend Europe and would not be directed against Russia. For NATO leadership, this non-aggressive intent is already guaranteed by the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation, and Security signed in 1997.

Nonetheless, the Russians are reportedly searching for further guarantees. As for the actual substance of any future collaboration, it remains amorphous. The Russians appear keen on a "sectoral" approach which would see participants responsible for protecting specified portions of European airspace. The concept has gained little traction with NATO members who claim that leaving alliance defence in the hands of a non-member would be incompatible with their treaty responsibilities. In the end, all NATO Secretary-General Rasmussen could offer was that cooperation would involve some sort of "synergy between two systems." Possible ideas include a jointly-run centre for early warning data sharing and response collaboration.

Despite signs to the contrary, Secretary-General Rasmussen downplayed claims that talks had failed. As he said, "We never said we would agree on missile defence overnight, or even in a few months." Certainly few would have expected rapid movement on such a major project, but after nearly eight months since the idea's official launch at Lisbon, expectations for progress are intensifying. Rasmussen's post-conference address to naval cadets in St. Petersburg featured a testier tone and what seemed almost like an ultimatum. He reminded his audience that a missile defence system was necessary to NATO and would be installed regardless of Russian sentiment. The Russians were much plainer in their assessment, with Foreign Minister Lavrov noting that "... the latest developments did not make us happy... ."

It appears discussions will be put in the deep freeze at least until the next planned summit meeting in early 2012. Of course, there might be a political motivation for a lull in negotiations. Both Russian and American presidential elections are scheduled for 2012 and candidates may wish to postpone any "courageous" political moves that could leave them open to accusations of weakness. This might be especially true in Russia, where presidential contenders will not wish to appear too accommodating to the West.

The summit's second major issue of contention was NATO's continued operations in Libya. Although delegates apparently discussed the problem, this only served to sharpen the rift between Russia and NATO over implementation of the Security Council's resolution. The Russians are still insisting on strict conformity to the resolution, believing that NATO bombing goes well beyond the maintenance of a no-fly zone. The Secretary-General made the usual defence, noting the grave humanitarian consequences that would have resulted from inaction. Whatever the nature of the disagreement, such sparring may ultimately be short-lived. With anti-Gaddafi forces now only 100 km from Tripoli, the debate may shortly become an historical one.

Further Reading: [Foreign Minister Lavrov's Remarks](#), [Secretary-General's St. Petersburg Speech](#), [Sergei Lavrov's post-conference radio interview](#), [Andrei Fedyashin's analysis of Sochi summit](#), [Official NATO summary of conference](#)

The Libyan Challenge to Global Energy security

By: Dan Cunningham

On July 7th, a senior diplomat from the Chinese Foreign Ministry was sent as a representative to Benghazi to create ties with Libya's National Transitional Council (NTC). This was the second meeting between Chinese officials and Libyan rebels in less than a month. These discussions could represent a new trend in China's diplomatic approaches to the region. China has traditionally favoured a policy of non-interference in foreign conflicts. In the past, this position has led China into relations with regimes that have been charged with human rights violations and condemned by the international community. Recent meetings between the NTC and Chinese officials have led some to conclude that China is pursuing a new form of foreign policy. Others, however, argue that this is nothing new as China is merely following its strategic economic interests.

Against the backdrop of ongoing armed conflict in North Africa lies a related conflict over international competition for strategic resources. In recent years, the United States, the People's Republic of China, and the European Community have been seeking to enhance their energy security through investments in the region. In 2010, Chinese investment in Africa totaled \$127 billion. When civil unrest broke out in Libya, Chinese investment in the country stood at just under \$19 billion, most of which was directed at the petroleum industry. However the Libyan conflict has jeopardized Chinese ventures in Libya. In February, for example, over 30,000 Chinese workers were evacuated from CNPC and Sinopec oil production facilities in East and South Libya.

Indeed, the conflict in Libya has brought the country's oil production to a near standstill. The Libyan rebels have been unable to utilize what little oil production capacity is left as many oil fields are being harassed by North Sudanese militias who, according to some international observers, are in the pay of Gaddafi himself. As a result, bringing production back to pre-conflict levels seems unlikely as long as this conflict is drawn out. At the same time, however, a large number of actors have a vested interest in reviving Libya's oil industry.

Restoring Libyan oil production is, for example, a priority for both Italy and France, who relied on Libya for nearly 15% of their petroleum imports. In contrast, Libyan oil exports accounted for a mere 2% of the United States' domestic oil consumption. However, American leaders remain deeply concerned that decreases in the global oil supplies could impact domestic oil prices. This is an especially important consideration given that the United States continues to struggle with low economic growth. In June, at the recommendation of the International Energy Agency, a great number of states agreed to release emergency oil reserves in order to offset price instability.

The changing trend in Chinese foreign policy could also be explained by looking at developments in Sudan. In recent years, as part of China's "going out" strategy, China has taken advantage of American and European reluctance to invest in high risk ventures in unstable African states. China is no stranger to political instability in its investments, particularly in the energy sector. China's operations in Sudan had been viewed by market analysts as a high risk investment, coming at a time when the

international community was shunning investment in the region. The recent partition of the country, separating the North Sudanese from a large portion of their former oil reserves in the South, likely inform the considerations of the Chinese government with regard to Libya.

It is evident that China has suffered a setback in Libya, and it is unclear if and how Chinese oil companies will be compensated for their losses which are now estimated to be in excess of \$3 billion. Libya may prove to be one of the greatest challenges to Chinese regional energy security in the future, as the successor to the NTC will likely look to its supporters during the war for investment. NATO states and their allies seem poised to gain from this conflict. In the years leading up to the conflict, the Gaddafi regime had been applying pressure on American oil interests in Libya. The Libyan government had attempted to extort money from foreign oil companies; threatening to 'reconsider' Libyan diplomatic relationships with parent countries should there be resistance. The end of the civil war, and in particular the new governance under the successor to the NTC, is unlikely to pursue similar disincentives for foreign investment. Thus, future economic restructuring will likely have a positive influence on how European and American oil interests play out in the region. So, where the Chinese may have lost ground, it appears as though Europe and America are gaining. That said, the meetings between Chinese officials and the NTC have produced promises to protect Chinese businesses in Libya and to foster economic cooperation.

Further Readings: [Sudanese Rebels Cross Border to Southern Libya](#), [Impact of Reduced Global Oil Production](#), [China's Energy Security Goals, and Libyan Woes](#), [Economic Costs to China of the Libyan conflict](#), [Chinese Foreign Ministry Visits Libyan Rebels](#), [US Releases Oil Reserves as part of International Energy Agency Recommendations](#), [Chinese Investment in North Africa](#)

South Sudan: Learning to Take Baby Steps

By: David Hong

Following a nearly unanimous vote (98.5%) in favor of independence in January's referendum, South Sudan celebrated its first day as a country on 9 July. Salva Kiir was sworn in as the first President. The excitement continued as the United Nations welcomed South Sudan as the 193th member to the General Assembly and as the central bank released its own currency on 19 July on par in value with the Sudanese pound. UN membership gives South Sudan sovereign equality with other nations and at the same time enables it to join development assistance providing organizations like the World Bank and the IMF. Two decades of civil war and six years under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) has been a slow and tumultuous road for both Sudans. While the north and south have been engaged in peace talks since 2002, the end of the civil war did not bring calm to regions like Abyei, South Kordofan, and the Blue Nile. An estimated 170,000 people have fled their homes in the run-up to southern independence in Abyei and South Kordofan, BBC reports. There is mounting evidence that Khartoum is using indiscriminate force in South Kordofan. Al Jazeera reports show satellite images of mass graves, body bags and the widespread presence of Sudanese government forces in the city of Kadugli, the capital city of the South Kordofan state. [For more information on the violence in Abyei and South Kordofan and the history of conflicts, please refer to my article in InFocus #52 on the pre-independence issues of South Sudan.]

The Top Three Issues

The three most prominent post-cessation issues are the delineation of precise borders, citizenship or residency rights for southerners in the north and vice versa, and the division of oil revenues. According to John Campbell, an African Policy expert at the Council on Foreign Relations, 20% of north-south borders have still not been demarcated. Though 4200 Ethiopian peacekeepers deployed for Abyei on 15 July, both Sudanese governments still unwaveringly claim the region for themselves. The agreement brokered last month to leave a 20km buffer zone along the border is difficult to implement because parts of the border are still contested. The long-term fate of Abyei still remains uncertain, as UN peacekeepers cannot remain in the region indefinitely. Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir stated in an interview with BBC on 10 July that Abyei will always belong to the North, unless there is a referendum. A referendum for Abyei proper stipulated under the CPA for January 2011 was sidelined after arguments over residency and voter eligibility reached a stalemate. Mr. Bashir demands the restoration of the 1956 borders, which would include the Blue Nile and South Kordofan/ Nuba Mountains. After losing the South in the January referendum, Mr. Bashir seems to have intensified Khartoum's military efforts in these highly contested areas in a bid to preserve the National Congress Party's (NCP) political leadership – to show in essence that there would be no more break-away's from the Republic of Sudan. 9 July marks the birth of two new nations, not just one. With 12% inflation and rising food prices, there are looming fears of revolt in the North, and Mr. Bashir is wary of the growing discontent among his citizens.

After Mr. Bashir declared southerners residing in the north as non-citizens in early July, they have been left stateless. Khartoum has ruled out the possibility of dual nationality, and has already terminated the employment of all Southerners in the government and military. Mr. Bashir told the press that it was 'illogical' for southerners to call for the creation of their own state while simultaneously seeking citizenship rights in the north. An estimated 300,000 out of 800,000 southerners have returned to the south since last fall and many more are making the journey south. While Mr. Kiir in Juba has expressed his willingness to extend northerners citizenship rights in the south, the policy is yet to be put into action. Until the citizenship issue is resolved, hundreds of thousands of people will be denied ownership rights, access to essential services, and jobs. This issue therefore must be speedily and carefully hashed out between the two governments.

For the security of both nations, another pressing matter is oil. Oil exports account for 98% of the south's and more than 60% of the north's government revenue. The two countries are mutually dependent on each other's resources when it comes to oil because while the south holds 75% of the oil reserves, the north currently controls all pipelines, refineries, and ports used for export. Days before southerner independence, Mr. Bashir threatened to shut off pipelines carrying oil unless the south agreed to a) a 50/50 revenue split or b) to pay a per barrel surcharge on using the north's oil infrastructure. According to Reuters, on 25 July, Sudan demanded a pipeline usage fee from South Sudan that would take 20 percent (\$22.8 of \$114.50/barrel) of the value of its oil exports. Juba accused Khartoum of 'daylight robbery' and an 'economic war.' The oil question is a contentious issue that will likely require more third party mediation in the future.

Contrary to popular belief, the United States does not have an immediate stake in Sudan's oil reserves. US sanctions against Sudan do not allow the US to import a single drop. President Obama has not removed Sudan from the list of states sponsoring terrorist activities, despite former promises to lift the label if Khartoum honored the terms of the CPA and supported southern independence. China, which has more than \$15 billion invested in infrastructure in Khartoum, has been building positive relations with Juba, and is a major oil importer from Sudan. China therefore has substantial interest in seeing that the oil keeps flowing. With roughly 24,000 Chinese citizens living in the north and an estimated 60% share of the 490,000 barrels of crude oil produced daily, China is the key foreign player in Sudan. It also built the 1,500 km pipeline that links the oil fields of the south with Port Sudan in the north. China knows full well that it will need to deal with both north and south without appearing to favor one side. Given the stakes, China's role as an arbiter on oil revenue negotiations seems a natural one. Their level of involvement, however, remains to be seen.

National Identity building: What does it mean to be South Sudanese?

In early July, a freelance journalist named Ali Latifi wrote an article for Al Jazeera entitled "Sudan split was 'over-simplified' by the media." The article sheds light on the fact that the conflict in Sudan is more than just an inter-religious or inter-ethnic conflict. "One should not overplay this idea of north versus south or Christian versus Muslim...a small group of people in power in Khartoum used race and religion to divide and conquer," says human rights activist John Prendergast. The fighting in South Kordofan is just as much about the disenfranchisement of a people overlooked by the government as it is about religious differences and color. The polarizing rather than unifying political rhetoric of leaders in Khartoum and Juba has led to the development of a strong negative identity for the southerners. Much the same can be said about how the Sudanese in the north view themselves in contrast to those in the south, but this identity crisis is especially salient in the newborn nation. Much of what has held the South Sudanese together has been getting to the January referendum, and then getting to 9 July. Jonathan Temin, Director of the Sudan Program at the United States Institute for Peace, argues that it is time to move beyond the negative identity of shared suffering and marginalization toward the creation of a positive identity for the South Sudanese. Critics argue that the narrative within South Sudan must turn from combating a common enemy to finding shared values, interests, and national goals. While the ruling Southern People's Liberation Movement's (SPLM) fight for nationhood and self-determination appealed to democratic values, its rule and treatment of opposition groups have been less than inclusive. President Salva Kiir is still at war with at least seven rebel militia groups in his country. Observers have commented that a post-independence South Sudan still resembles a national liberation movement more than it does a newly liberated nation. The state requires additional dimensions for the shift to occur, and the SPLM must allow civil society and opposition parties to actively partake in the nation-building process from the very beginning.

South African President Jacob Zuma congratulated the South Sudanese on 9 July saying, "We have always aspired to witness the dawn of peace, security and stability prevailing in the whole of Sudan. That dream is coming to fruition." As South Sudan enters its second month, media attention has begun to wane. Still, an array of domestic and cross border issues remains, and southern independence is only one small step in the direction of achieving the dream of peace, security and stability in all of Sudan.

Regional Actors Raise Alarm about Spread of Looted Libyan Weapons

By: Tom Aagaard

As fighting between rebels and embattled dictator Muammar Ghaddafi's forces drags on, regional leaders are increasingly concerned about the spread of weapons beyond Libya's borders. From the beginning of the uprising rumours have circulated about militants exploiting the chaos to acquire weapons looted from government stores and transport them out of the country. As early as April, Algerian security officials reported that a convoy of eight pick-up trucks carrying arms had travelled from Eastern Libya, through Chad and Niger, and into Northern Mali, a stronghold of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. Military and political officials from Algeria, Chad, Niger, and Sudan have all made statements to the press about the threat to regional stability posed by the diffusion of Libyan weapons to non-state actors. These statements prompted US Africa Command General Carter F. Ham to tell reporters recently, "there is a very real concern for all the regional partners, and the United States shares this concern, about the proliferation of weapons from Libya to other places, including those under the control of al Qaeda and others."

African states have a long history of suffering when government small arms get loose. The looting of Ugandan government armouries in 1979 resulted in decades of chronic violence in the trans-border Karamoja Cluster region, and bloodshed in Darfur has been fueled by the availability of weapons stolen from Chadian government stockpiles. However, the Libyan situation attracts particular consternation for two reasons: the supposed recipient of the weapons and potential inclusion of man-portable surface-to-air missiles.

The organization now known as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) originally emerged in the late 1990s during the Algerian Civil War. Then known as the Salafist Group for Prayer and Combat (GSPC), it was formed by militants of the Armed Islamist Group (GIA) that grew disillusioned with the organization's indiscriminate violence. While the GIA was effectively destroyed by the Algerian government in the early 2000s, the GSPC managed to survive, largely by withdrawing into Mali's Sahara dessert and eventually broadening its focus to the larger North African region. Contacts existed between the two groups from early on but in 2006 it officially merged with the global Al-Qaeda organization and took on its new name. While responsible for many attacks, it is best known to Canadians for kidnapping diplomat Robert Fowler in 2008 while he was working in Niger as a UN Special Envoy. Due to its aggressive history, tendency to target foreigners, and apparent revitalization of dormant GIA cells in Europe, there is obviously more concern about the impact of heavier weapons falling into AQIM hands than say, cattle rustlers or tribal militias.

Of particular importance is the alleged transfer of Man-Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADS), i.e. small shoulder-launched anti-aircraft missiles similar to the famous American Stinger. Africa has a dark history with this type of weapon. Rebel groups have used it to destroy civilian aircraft in Zimbabwe, Angola, Sudan, Western Sahara, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Somalia with many casualties. Perhaps the most infamous African MANPADS incident remains the 1994 shoot-down of Rwandan President Juvénal Habyarimana's presidential jet which served as the catalyst for the Rwandan genocide.

Libya is believed to have maintained a stockpile of around 20 000 MANPADS, apparently mostly the Soviet-designed SA-7b, and pictures have surfaced confirming the weapons have fallen out of government hands. This model is now relatively obsolete and its reliability is questionable given the degradation of the power unit and propellant over time. However; while this system may not pose a potent threat to military aircraft equipped with countermeasures, it still poses a serious danger to civil aircraft. Airliners are traditionally key terrorist targets and their low speed and large infrared signature (for missiles to home in on) makes them relatively easy prey at the same time that improved airport security has made hijackings and bombings more difficult. Recognizing the grave danger posed by the terrorist acquisition of these weapons, the United States

has aggressively tried to limit their availability on the black market . One of the anti-terrorist activities revealed by Wikileaks was an intense American effort to obtain and destroy MANPADS in Yemen after it was identified as a "critical proliferation threat." Diplomatic cables from 2009 show the US was offering \$15 000 for first-generation systems in private hands and destroyed over 1 100 missiles in four years.

The major fear among Western observers is a successful reenactment of the failed 2002 MANPAD attack on an Israeli charter plane departing Mombasa, Kenya. Luckily, it appears Al-Qaeda made the mistake of purchasing training rounds which while otherwise fully functioning SA-7s, lacked a guidance system. While this incident ended up demonstrating that even Al-Qaeda is not immune to the perils of the black market it easily could have resulted in the deaths of several hundred people.

Given the likely outcome of AQIM acquiring functioning missiles, it should come as no surprise that the US is already at work trying to contain the threat posed by looted Libyan MANPADS. In mid-June, the Associated Press reported that the US is paying around a million dollars to two mine clearing companies to search for and destroy looted MANPADS in eastern Libya. The US has made it clear to the rebel Transitional National Council government that continuing aid is conditional upon their cooperation. However, due to their high monetary value and limited utility to rebels who enjoy a NATO no-fly zone, it is likely that many of the looted missiles are already out of the local area. Given this, and the importance the US places on restricting these weapons (an evaluation of the Libyan MANPADS threat was allegedly included in the Obama Administration's classified report to Congress on the Libyan mission) it would not be surprising to see a buy-back program established in the region similar to those put into place in Afghanistan in the 1990s or post-invasion Iraq.

Further Reading: [Hunting Col. Qaddafi's heat seeking missiles](#), [Experts Fear Looted Libyan Arms May Land in Terrorist Hands, 'Al Qaeda' snatched missiles' in Libya](#), [U.S. concerned over Libya weapons reach Al Qaeda](#), [U.S. Is Paying European Teams to Hunt Stray Munitions in Libya](#), [Backgrounder: Al-Qaeda in the Arab Maghreb](#)

Mumbai Bomb Blasts Threaten to De-Stabilize Regional and International Security

By: Kavita Bapat

The week of July 18th saw US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visit India for a second round of the US-India Strategic Dialogue. Discussion was focused on a variety of bi-lateral concerns from defense, trade, and civil nuclear cooperation, to education, innovation, and women's empowerment. However, as the discussions occurred hot on the heels of three bomb blasts in Mumbai on July 13th, counterterrorism featured as a predominant item on the agenda. The three consecutive blasts that occurred in Mumbai brought an end to 31 months of relative peace in India and resulted in 130 people injured and 18 dead. While the Indian Government has yet to name a group responsible for the most recent Mumbai attacks, it is putting considerable pressure on the India-Pakistan dynamic, as the last time such bombing occurred in Mumbai in 2008 the two countries very nearly went to war. The grave danger of ratcheting up tensions has led both governments and media outlets in either country to be wary of making false accusations. Especially due to the fact that the last few months have seen both countries engaging in negotiations with one another for the first time in years and, as the talks have been productive, there has been a relative ease in tensions between the two nations. The recent bomb blasts threaten further developments and negotiations between India and Pakistan. In the worst possible scenario, a series of accusations and counteraccusations may emerge, as they so often have in the past, leading to mounting tensions at the India-Pakistan border.

The blasts have also exposed major weaknesses in India's internal security complex and indicate that the lessons of 26/11 still need to be learned. Mumbai is continually a terrorist target as it is a popular home of international mafia groups such as Dawood Ibrahim; a nucleus of India's financial activity; enjoys high political visibility; and is a society that lives with uneasy communal relations between Hindus and Muslims. Mumbai is under the jurisdiction of the Maharashtra state government which has found it difficult to cope with pressure put upon it by New Delhi to contend with issues of corruption. For them, these bomb blasts have come at a difficult time as they indicate the reemergence and reassertion of terrorist groups in Mumbai, singling out the city as a terror hotspot. Though other attacks have taken place across India in main cities such as Pune, Delhi, and Chennai in 2010, they were relatively less impactful and left only minor casualties. What is most concerning to the Government of India and Maharashtra is that, despite intelligence and security infrastructure revamping post-26/11, India's internal security structure still seems to be a work in progress. Though a National Intelligence Grid to network 21 available databases in the public and private sector to flag potential terrorist threats has been approved in June of this year, India's National Counter Terrorism Centre has apparently been almost entirely abandoned. In fact, the approved National Intelligence Grid is actually much feeble than initially proposed, as it is

not linked with India's Financial Intelligence Unit.

In the bomb blasts that took place in Mumbai on July 13, though the target sites had CCTV cameras installed, but the full completion of counter-terrorism safety measures have not been implemented as they have been held up in discussions of the evolving technological limits of the tools and debates over procurement methods. Upon closer inspection of triggering devices and explosives utilized, it is becoming increasingly clear that the Indian Mujahideen (IM) is greatly involved in this crime. Though the IM is a homegrown terror group, its strong ties with the Lashkar-e-Taiba Pakistani militant group and al-Qaeda are well known. While Indian intelligence agencies have yet to foil the IM or other Indian communist militant groups known as the Naxals, the groups have developed considerable sophistication in order to dodge the agencies. The Naxal groups are suspected to be the most significant threat for the Government's post- 13/7 task forces. The Naxalites have always wanted to further their influence to urban areas and have claimed to have a solely ideological orientation assumed not to attack innocent, unarmed civilians. However this has not been a reality in recent "train accidents" that killed innocent civilians and are suspected to be the work of Naxal groups. Therefore they cannot be ruled out as violent actors at this stage.

Furthermore, the July 13th attacks have left the subcontinent fearful as to how the bombings will affect the regional and international sphere. Pakistan is already facing a dismal situation and tenuous standoff with the Americans due to Washington's withholding \$800 million in aid to the Pakistani military. There is growing anti-Americanism in Pakistan due to the May 2nd US raid that killed Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad, and because of CIA operated drone attacks. Secretary of State Clinton acknowledged the "common threat of terrorism" faced by India and the US, furthermore stating that a continuing relationship with Pakistan is bound by the understanding that the US will not tolerate Pakistan as a terrorist base. Additionally, Clinton stressed US commitment towards greater collaboration between India and the US on counterterrorism tactics and signed an agreement to enhance information sharing on terrorism and cyber security. David Rothkopf of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace argued that Clinton's statements "essentially announce a US-India alliance against Pakistan."

A result of the deterioration of the US-Pakistan relationship for India is that New Delhi loses its ability to utilize American leverage in influencing Pakistan. This is especially pertinent concerning the impending withdrawal of NATO troops from Afghanistan, as India becomes increasingly worried about what Afghanistan will look like once international forces pull out of it entirely. Partially because of this mounting fear, India has positioned itself as a significant player in Afghanistan, doling out millions of dollars in aid with the goal of curtailing the rebirth of Taliban rule and preventing the use of Afghanistan as a sanctuary for anti-India insurgent groups. It has been argued by several South Asian security analysts, such as Sumit Ganguly, that given India's tactical interests in stopping a resurgence of Taliban rule in Afghanistan, it should be permitted to train Afghan security forces and that "Washington should prod it to assume that burden." However, Washington has shown little willingness to promote such a possibility fearing that it might promptly bring forth strong objections from Pakistan and increase tensions both regionally and internationally.

India's fears of Taliban resurgence are not only due to its past experiences with the regime but also due to the radical movement's long history and relationship with Pakistan. Primarily, India worries that the rebirth of a radical Taliban leadership would permit a laundry list of anti-Indian terror groups, most notably the Lashkar-e-Taiba who were found responsible for the 2008 Mumbai bombings, to find safe havens and training grounds in Afghanistan. There is also the larger concern that a Taliban-dominated leadership would create stronger ties with the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and various Central Asian jihad groups, thereby harming India's pursuit of access to energy resources and regional markets. However, New Delhi is also aware of the writing on the wall, as this June saw India dropping its previously obstinate opposition to any reconciliation with the Taliban when Prime Minister Manmohan Singh stated that India would be "open to any form of Afghan-led reconciliation." This concession is one of the largest in India's recent history and reflective of India's acute awareness that it must show some degree of flexibility as the NATO troop drawdown begins to assure that its interests are not entirely disregarded.

Meanwhile, in Afghanistan, a poll conducted in December 2008 and January 2009 indicates that India is popular in the nation, in spite of its previous blunders during the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan. However, lack of clarity on security issues make it less obvious that India will be able to keep up its current status in Afghanistan. Especially since, India's considerable diplomatic presence within Afghanistan has still been the target of customary Pakistani diplomatic barrage and, it is speculated, at least one Pakistan associated attack on its embassy in Kabul in October 2009. Nevertheless, India has been persistent in Afghanistan and has continued pursuing developmental activities in the nation, indicating that it will not walk away from Afghanistan so easily. That being said, Indian policymakers have not yet conceived of any viable plan for a post-NATO protected Afghanistan. Experts claim that key officials in India's policy establishments feel that the slow but sure American shift from counterinsurgency to counterterrorism will be successful. In large part, this belief is grounded in India's historical ties to the

Northern Alliance which may prove to be helpful, but New Delhi must still determine the appropriate time to mobilize its contacts in order to curtail a radical Taliban takeover in Afghanistan. For now, India has shown a surprising contentment with sustaining ties with the Karzai regime, even bolstering its developmental assistance programs in the country.

If one thing has been made clear by the 13/7 Mumbai bomb blasts, it is that India will have to be vigilant in protecting its people from acts of terrorism and itself from the regional repercussions of such acts. Though international diplomacy can be used to India's advantage in mobilizing collective counter-terrorism efforts, the real solution is in bolstering its internal security complex and defense capabilities. India's internal security agencies must now perfect not only post-terror investigations and clean-up operations, but also terrorist group isolation and pre-emptive operations.

Further Reading: [Mumbai: Explosions shake India's financial hub](#), [Terrorism Concerns on US-India Agenda](#), [Afghanistan Is Now India's Problem](#), [The Mumbai Mayhem: Global War on Terror Comes to India](#), [Lone Gunmen and Terrorism](#)



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The Atlantic Council of Canada + 165 University Ave., Suite 701, Toronto, ON M5H 3B8
Ph.: 416-979-1875 + F.: 416-979-0825 + Email: info@atlantic-council.ca

