

Chronology of Major Events 2009

Written by Administrator
Tuesday, 21 May 2013 00:00

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United States

Strategic Profile

12 January: In a strong diplomatic signal to Pakistan, US imposed sanctions on AQ Khan and a dozen members of his worldwide illicit nuclear trade network including three companies.

20 January: General David Petraeus revealed that he had struck deals with Russia and several other Central Asian states to allow US to transport supplies to American troops in Afghanistan through their territory.

20 January: Barack Obama was sworn in as the 44th President of the United States, the first black to do so.

20 January: In his inaugural speech, President Barack Obama said no to new nuclear weapons, paused prosecutions in the notorious Guantanamo Bay prison, embraced alternative energy, pledged to re-evaluate Bush's national missile defence programme and described the resurgence of al-Qaeda and Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan as the "greatest threat" to America's security.

23 January: George J Mitchell was appointed as special envoy for Arab-Israeli affairs, and Richard C Holbrooke was appointed as special representative on Afghanistan and Pakistan affairs.

13 February: US Congress approved a \$787 billion economic stimulus measure. The House vote was 246-183, while in the Senate it was 60-38.

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17 February: In his first significant move to change the course of conflict in Afghanistan, President Barack Obama approved adding 17,000 more American troops to fight the militants.

27 February: President Barack Obama ordered an end to US combat in Iraq by 31 August 2010.

1 March: In an interview to *MSNBC*, Defence Secretary Robert Gates said that all terrorist networks have a safe haven in Pakistan to operate them.

6 March: In an interview to *The New York Times* President Barack Obama conceded that the US is not winning the war in Afghanistan and indicated that US troops could reach out to moderate elements in Taliban for reconciliation, much as it did with Sunni militias in Iraq.

29 March: While warning that the US expected much more accountability from Pakistan in rooting out extremism, US President Barack Obama said that America would go after high value targets after consulting Islamabad.

31 March: US offered Taliban fighters who renounce violence in Afghanistan an honourable form of reconciliation as a revamped strategy to tackle deepening insurgency.

1 April: In a significant diplomatic breakthrough, US president Barack Obama and his Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev agreed to reopen talks on reducing their nuclear warheads.

18 April: US President Barack Obama pledged to seek a “new beginning” in ties with communist-ruled Cuba as a part of a new era of US partnership and engagement with Latin America and Caribbean.

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4 May: In an effort to bring the ailing US economy back on track, President Obama announced an end to years of tax incentives to those companies which create jobs overseas in places like Bangalore. Instead, the incentives would now go to those creating jobs inside the US, in places such as Buffalo city.

7 May: Concerned over increasing influence of Taliban in Pakistan, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton told the top leadership in Islamabad that the 'era of lip service was over' and it was now time to work plans and be very specific.

14 May: In a startling disclosure, US military, Pacific Command chief Admiral Timothy J Keating revealed that China offered to divide the Pacific and Indian Ocean regions between China and the US after Beijing launched its own fleet of aircraft carriers.

21 May: A powerful Congressional panel gave approval to the Pakistan Enduring Assistance and Cooperation Enhancement (PEACE) Act 2009 tripling aid to Pakistan, but imposed tough conditions that include prevention of 'cross border attacks onto neighbouring countries' by Islamabad.

4 June: In a landmark speech at Cairo reaching out to the Islamic world, President Obama called for a 'new beginning' between the US and Muslims, saying both sides should overcome the cycle of suspicion and discord, and that religious beliefs across the world were not inimical or exclusive to each other.

19 June: The US revealed that it had deployed anti-missile defences around Hawaii, following reports that North Korea was preparing to fire its most advanced ballistic missile in that direction.

2 July: The US launched the biggest military offensive under Obama's presidency, Operation Khanjar or Strike of the Sword, which was intended to seize virtually the entire lower Helmand river valley, the heartland of Taliban insurgency and the world's biggest opium poppy producing region.

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7 July: President Obama on his two-day visit to Moscow said that America and Russia share common interests in building a secure, free and flourishing world. However, he rejected complaints about American support for missile defence and expansion of the NATO alliance into Eastern Europe.

6 August: President Obama's chief counter-terrorism adviser, John Brennan, said that the President had replaced the 'global war on terror' with a strategy more narrowly focused on Al Qaeda and relying more on a broader effort to engage the Muslim world.

17 September: President Obama shelved a Bush-era plan for Eastern European missile defence plan that had been a major irritant in relations with Russia. He said a redesigned defensive system would be cheaper, quicker and more effective against the threat from Iranian missiles.

22 September: During a meeting with President Obama at New York, China's President Hu Jintao put forward four propositions on furthering bilateral ties – First, the two countries should maintain close top-level exchanges. Second, the two sides should strive to do a good job in completing the follow-up work of the first China-US Strategic and Economic Dialogue held in July. Third, the two countries should deepen coordination and cooperation on major regional and international issues. Fourth, the two countries should step up cultural and people-to-people exchanges.

14 November: US President Barack Obama during his first nine-day trip to Asia from 12-20 November in a move for greater engagement with a vibrant Asia-Pacific region said that US was not threatened by a rising China. He also pledged to deepen dialogue with China rather than seek to contain the rising power.

16 November: US President Barack Obama started his maiden China visit by speaking against two sensitive issues – censorship and human rights. He said that freedoms of expression and worship, of access to information and political participation were universal rights which should be available to all people, including ethnic and religious minorities all over the world.

30 November: *The Washington Post* reported that US President Barack Obama's two-page

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letter to Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari, delivered through NSA James Jones in early November, conveyed the message that if Pakistan did not halt using insurgents like Lashkar-e-Taiba as a strategic tool towards India and Afghanistan, then US might be impelled to use 'any means' at its disposal.

2 December: US President Barack Obama unveiled his new strategy for Afghanistan where he issued an order to send about 30,000 additional American troops. But he also vowed to start bringing the US forces home from Afghanistan in the middle of 2011 as US could not afford and should not have to shoulder an 'open-ended commitment'.

2 December: In his Afghan-policy speech at the West Point Military Academy, US President Barack Obama said that Al-Qaeda after getting defeated by the US-led international forces in Afghanistan had established a safe haven in Pakistan.

10 December: President Barack Obama in his acceptance speech for the Nobel Peace Prize said that US must uphold moral standards while waging wars that were necessary and justified.

Relations with India

1 January: India and USA signed a defence deal involving a \$2.1 billion contract for eight Boeing P-8I long-range maritime reconnaissance (LRMR) aircraft for navy.

7 January: US ambassador to India David C. Mulford said that India's dossier provided to Islamabad containing evidences of linking Pakistani nationals with the Mumbai terror attacks was credible. He also revealed that the dossier had been prepared by India with help from the FBI.

26 January: While asserting that Indians have no better friend and partner than the American people, US President Barack Obama said that their shared values enable the two countries to meet any challenge, particularly from those who use violence to try to undermine free and open societies.

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2 April: In the sidelines of G-20 meeting at London, US President Barack Obama called for a dialogue process between India and Pakistan but Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said that a minimum pre-condition was that Islamabad should not allow its soil to be used to promote terrorism.

14 April: The US Congress cleared, through a notification, the \$1.2 billion sale of eight Boeing Long Range Maritime Reconnaissance and Anti-submarine Warfare aircraft to India.

5 May: Assistant Secretary of State for Verification, Compliance and Implementation, Rose Gottemoeller, told an international conference that getting India to sign non-proliferation treaty (NPT) 'remains a fundamental objective of the United states.'

28 May: US President Barack Obama nominated Timothy J Roemer to be his new envoy in India.

30 May: US Secretary of Defence Robert Gates at the eighth annual Asian Security Summit at Singapore outlined that United States would look to India to be a partner and a net provider of security in the Indian Ocean and beyond.

5 June: The US special envoy on Pakistan and Afghanistan, Richard Holbrooke, said that India had a legitimate role to play in the search for stability in Afghanistan and the region.

18 July: On her visit to India, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton outlined the five pillars which would form the foundation for India-US relations, viz. economic growth, environment, nonproliferation, education and the war on terror.

20 July: Putting the India-US relationship as a 'personal priority' and intending to make deepening of relations as 'signature accomplishment' for the Barack Obama administration, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton concluded three agreements – on end use monitoring arrangements for defence equipment and technology, a technology safeguards agreement on

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space cooperation and a science and technology endowment fund.

13 September: The US government cleared a high technology system for India, the futuristic shipboard Hawkeye E-2D aircraft for Airborne Early Warning (AEW) and battle management. India was the second country after the UAE, to be cleared by the US state and defence departments for sale of this system.

19 October: 'Cope-India-09', a five-day joint air exercise between Indian Air Force (IAF) and United States Air Force (USAF) began at the Air Force Station in Agra. For the event, the USAF had flown in three C-130H Hercules, one C-17 Globemaster, one C-130J Super Hercules and 180 personnel. The IAF fielded five AN-32, one IL-76, two Mi-171V and one Chetak helicopter with a force strength of 270 personnel.

12 October: As part of the ongoing Indo-US Defence Cooperation, an Indo-US Joint Exercise Yudh Abhyas 2009 began at Babina (till 29 October) in Madhya Pradesh. The aim of the exercise was to conduct a joint Indo-US training exercise under the framework of agreed joint training programme for sharing useful experience in peacekeeping operations and humanitarian disaster relief situations.

17 November: US President Barack Obama during his meeting with the Chinese counterpart Hu Jintao acknowledged that China has a role to play in India-Pakistan relationship for which he gave a monitoring role to China.

18 November: The Indian MEA, reacting to the reference to India-Pakistan ties in the joint statement issued by US President Barack Obama and Chinese President Hu Jintao, issued a statement which said the role of any 'third party' in bilateral matters between India and Pakistan 'cannot be envisaged, nor is it necessary'.

24 November: US President Barack Obama welcomed Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, during his visit to US from 22-26 November, by telling him that India was 'indispensable' to a future US wanted to build. India-US ties, he said, was the 'defining partnership of the 21st century'.

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25 November: In a joint statement issued after the meeting between US President Barack Obama and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, both leaders unveiled new initiatives to intensify cooperation on counter-terrorism, climate change, agriculture and education.

11 December: The Obama administration rejected Pakistan's plea for US mediation on the Kashmir issue by saying that it understood the importance of the issue to both India and Pakistan but it had to be ultimately resolved bilaterally.

Canada

Relations with India

29 November: India and Canada reached an agreement on civil nuclear cooperation after months of hectic negotiations, paving the way for supply of Canadian atomic technology, equipment and uranium to India.

Europe

European Union

Strategic Profile

1 January: The Czech Republic took over the European Union presidency from France.

13 July: A landmark agreement over Nabucco pipeline was inked between the European Union and Turkey. The 3,300km conduit plans to become operational in 2014 and aims to reduce European reliance on Russian gas supplies.

3 November: Czech President Vaclav Klaus signed the revised Lisbon Treaty that paved the way for its enforcement within the 27 member EU in the days to come.

19 November: Belgian Prime Minister Herman Von Rompuy was elected EU's first President, while Britain's Catherine Ashton was named High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

Relations with India

6 November:The 10th India-EU Summit held at New Delhi decided to put the negotiations for a Free-Trade Agreement (FTA) on the fast track. However, India also made it clear that only trade and investment issues would be up for negotiations and it would not talk on non-trade issues like child labour and environmental laws.

6 November:India and EU signed an agreement in the field of fusion energy research and agreed to conclude a broad-based trade and investment agreement as swiftly as possible. Both sides also agreed to expand their cooperation in countering terrorism by accelerating negotiations between Europol and the Indian agencies.

22 December:The EU termed the Copenhagen Summit a 'disaster' and blamed India, China and US for the 'weak' document by stating that the accord does not match the climate needs.

Britain ***Strategic Profile***

30 April:Prime Minister Gordon Brown unveiled Britain's new Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy with the stress on Pakistan's need to give higher priority to problems of terrorism and violent extremism over other issues.

23 June:In a dramatic escalation of diplomatic tensions, Britain expelled two Iranian diplomats in retaliation against Iran's expulsion of two British diplomats regarding the accusation that Britain had fomented the post-election turmoil.

29 August:British Prime Minister Gordon Brown visited British troops in Afghanistan to counter criticism that the war effort was being undermined by a lack of equipment and personnel. He called for accelerated efforts to train Afghan soldiers and police so that they could take more burden of battling Taliban insurgents.

Relations with India

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15 January: India reacted sharply to the views of British Foreign Minister David Miliband over Jammu and Kashmir issue where he said that resolving the issue between India and Pakistan would help deny extremists from taking up arms as a reason.

23 January: The British Foreign Office said Foreign Secretary David Miliband's remarks on Kashmir that infuriated the Indian government were "fully consistent" with Britain's stated view that any conflict likely to be exploited by terrorists to "kill and maim" innocent people should be resolved quickly.

France

Relations with India

5 February: India signed its first commercial nuclear deal with French nuclear giant Areva to build power plants and supply nuclear fuel.

14 July: India and France discussed cooperation in areas like atomic energy, defence and space as Prime Minister Manmohan Singh witnessed a magnificent parade as the chief guest at the French National Day with President Nicolas Sarkozy.

15 July: The Indian and French navies conducted an operation to rescue a hijacked Indian dhow and its 14-member crew who were taken hostage by pirates near Somalia on 10 July.

17 July: Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh told the Rajya Sabha that France had stated that it is 'ready for full civilian nuclear cooperation with India' and that it included enrichment and reprocessing technology (ENR).

25 November: French Ambassador to India Jerome Bonnafont said that the 'hottest area' of French investment in India was nuclear energy and that France was excited about the MoU signed between the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) and France's nuclear company Areva.

Finland

Relations with India

26 November: India and Finland signed three agreements to boost cooperation in science and technology. Both the countries also decided to set up a Joint Business Council and address climate change. The agreements were signed during the India-Finland Technology Partnership Forum meeting in New Delhi.

Spain

Relations with India

20 April: India's President Pratibha Patil arrived in Spain on a three-day state visit, the first by an Indian head of state. The visit was intended to strengthen ties on tackling terror and promoting bilateral trade and investments.

Poland

Relations with India

24 April: India and Poland signed two agreements at Warsaw during the visit of President Pratibha Patil – one on cooperation in healthcare and medicine, and the other on tourism.

Cyprus

Relations with India

31 October: India's President Pratibha Patil paid a three days visit to Cyprus. During her visit, Cyprus President Demetris Christofias assured India of its continuing support for a permanent seat in the UNSC. The two countries also agreed on early adoption of the Comprehensive Convention against Terrorism that India had proposed to the UN in 1996.

Russia

Strategic profile

1 January: After talks on gas prices for 2009 fell through, Russia's gas monopoly Gazprom halted deliveries of natural gas supplies to neighbouring Ukraine.

7 January: Russia halted all deliveries of natural gas to Europe through Ukraine. Russian gas export monopoly Gazprom accused Kiev of shutting down its transit pipelines.

18 January: Russia and Ukraine agreed on the price of natural gas for Ukraine in 2009 and resolved the three-week standoff between the two countries.

30 January: During a weeklong visit to Russia by Cuban President Raul Castro, Russia and Cuba signed a strategic partnership pact designed to revive the Soviet-era close alliance between the two countries.

17 March: Russian President Dmitry Medvedev announced a "large scale" rearmament and renewal of Russia's nuclear arsenal, accusing NATO of pushing ahead with expansion near Russian borders.

16 April: Russia ended an anti-terror operation in Chechnya. The operation saw Russian forces defeat separatist rebels who had gained control of the majority Muslim region.

6 June: Russian President Dmitri A Medvedev told an economic forum that wobbly American financial policy had made the dollar an undesirable currency for reserves held by central banks. Russia, along with China and other nations floated the idea of forming a supernational currency to supplant the dollar.

9 June: Russia slammed the door on its 16-year old bid to join the World Trade Organisation saying it will only seek WTO membership as part of a single regional bloc with Kazakhstan and Belarus.

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20 June: Making a reference to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), Russian President Dmitry Medvedev told journalists in Amsterdam that Russia is ready to significantly reduce its nuclear arms.

16 June: On the sidelines of SCO summit in Yekaterinburg, Russia set up a trilateral mechanism with Afghanistan and Pakistan to help resolve the problem of terrorism in the tribal zone.

20 June: Russian President Dmitry Medvedev reaffirmed Russia's commitment to drastic cuts in nuclear weapons but conditioned it on US scrapping its global missile defence system and plans to put non-nuclear warheads on strategic missiles as well as reconfirming START-1 ban on deploying strategic offensive weapons outside national territory.

6 July: At Moscow, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and US President Barack Obama struck a preliminary deal to reduce their nations' stockpiles of nuclear warheads to as few as 1,500 each, aiming toward the lowest levels of any US-Russia arms control mechanism.

10 July: Russian President Dmitry Medvedev during a press conference at the G-8 summit warned the US that if it did not reach agreement with Russia on plans for missile defence systems, Moscow would deploy rockets in an enclave near Poland.

19 September: Russian deputy defence minister Vladimir Popovkin told Ekho Moskvyy radio that Russia will scrap a plan to deploy Iskander short-range missiles in Kaliningrad, Poland. The announcement was the most explicit declaration after US President's decision to halt Eastern European missile defence plans.

29 November: Russia published its proposal for a new Euro-Atlantic security treaty that would restrict its ability to use military force unilaterally if the US and its European allies agreed to do the same. The document, published on the Kremlin website, reaffirmed the role of the UN Security Council, in which Russia has a veto, as the ultimate arbiter of international conflicts.

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22 December: Russia agreed to resume gas imports from Turkmenistan after an eight-month halt over a price dispute. Under a long-term agreement signed during Russian President Dmitry Medvedev's visit to Turkmenistan, Russian's Gazprom monopoly agreed to import upto 30 billion cubic metres (bcm) of Turkmen gas.

29 December: Prime Minister Vladimir Putin reiterated that Russia must develop new offensive weapons systems to counter US missile defences and prevent Americans from feeling they can do whatever they want.

Relations with India

11 February: Russian leading nuclear company TVEL and India's department of atomic energy signed two contracts for supplying uranium for Indian nuclear reactors. The contract was for the long-term supply of 2,000 tonnes of natural uranium pellets for India's pressurised heavy water reactors.

3 September: During her five day visit to Russia (2-6 September), President Pratibha Patil stated that India shared a 'unique bilateral relationship' with Russia founded on civilizational and historical ties and India's improvement of relations with 'other countries' would not be at the expense of 'tried and tested' friendship with Russia.

21 September: General Director Tishchenko of the Russian company Phazotron told *The Hindu* at Russia pledged 100 per cent technology transfer for the MiG-35, including the radar and all its systems.

15 October: At the 9th session of the Indo-Russian Inter-Governmental Commission on Military Technical Cooperation (IRIGC-MTC) in Russia, India and Russia finalised a new 10-year military cooperation pact covering both the ongoing projects and 31 new projects.

21 October: At the 15th session of the Indo-Russian Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation in Russia, co-chaired by External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna and Russian Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Sobyenin, the two countries decided to boost bilateral trade to \$20 billion by 2015.

27 October: At the 9th trilateral meeting of foreign ministers of Russia, India and China (RIC) in Bangalore, the three sides took common positions on multilateral financial institutions' reforms and North Korea, and continued to coordinate their positions on international issues like terrorism, Kosovo and climate change.

27 November: India abstained from a resolution at the IAEA moved by Russia to create an international nuclear fuel bank on its territory so that there is an assurance of fuel supply as a safety measure for all member countries. India maintained that such a distinction is only made by the Non-Proliferation Treaty and cannot be applied to the IAEA, where no such categorization exists. But, despite Indian abstention, the resolution was passed.

7 December: During Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Moscow (6-8 December), India and Russia signed the civil nuclear agreement for expanding unrestricted civil nuclear cooperation. Under the agreement, Russia would set up more nuclear reactors in India, transfer the full range of nuclear energy technologies and ensure uninterrupted supply of fuel.

8 December: ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) and Russia's Sistema signed a memorandum of understanding to scout for oil and gas assets in Russia and other Central Asian Countries.

28 December: Russian Navy inducted the nuclear attack submarine Nerpa for subsequent leasing to the Indian Navy in spring 2010.

Japan

Strategic Profile

23 January: Japan's space agency launched a domestically made rocket H2A carrying the world's first greenhouse-gas monitoring satellite.

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24 February: According to *Kyodo* news agency, two Japanese businessmen disclosed details of secret trade deals they had with Pakistan's scientist A.Q Khan. Their remarks shed new light on the connection between Khan and Japanese companies.

5 April: In response to North Korea's firing of a long-range rocket flying over northern Japan into the Pacific Ocean, Japan protested with threats of sanctions and called for an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council.

7 April: Japan announced an aid of \$5 million to help Pakistanis displaced by conflict in its restive Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) regions.

16 September: Yukio Hatoyama, the leader of Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), was elected Japan's new Prime Minister. DPJ, the left-of-centre party, came to power after nearly 50 years of rule by the conservatives.

13 November: In a meeting between Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama and US President Barack Obama in Tokyo, the two sides agreed to explore ways to enhance a new global framework for civil nuclear cooperation including assurances of fuel supply, so that countries can access peaceful nuclear power without increasing the risks of proliferation.

Relations with India

3 July: During the third round of the Japan-India strategic dialogue in Tokyo, Japanese Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone and External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna discussed ways to sustain and possibly expand their cooperation in the bilateral and international domains.

9 November: In talks between Indian Defence Minister A.K. Anthony and his Japanese counterpart Toshimi Kitazawa in Tokyo, the two sides renewed their commitment to develop an action plan to advance security cooperation and expressed their determination to take forward bilateral defence exchanges and cooperation in a meaningful way in 2010.

29 December: During Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama's visit to New Delhi, India

became the third country after the United States and Australia to have a “two-plus-two” dialogue with Japan, involving their respective foreign and defence ministers. The two sides also identified nine areas of collaboration and reviewed economic cooperation especially in infrastructure development.

China

Strategic Profile

20 January:China issued a white paper on national defence, titled “National Defence in 2008” in which it for the first time specified in detail China’s long-standing policy of no first use of nuclear weapons.

20 February:Communist Party of China signed an agreement with Pakistan’s main Islamic party, Jamaat-e-Islami. As part of the agreement the Jamaat-e-Islami promised not to encourage Islamic Uighur separatists in the Xinjiang region.

1 March:China’s *Chang’e-1*, the first satellite for lunar probe landed on moon. The satellite ended its 16-month mission when it hit the lunar surface at 1.50 degrees south latitude and 52.36 degree east longitude.

4 March:Li Zhaoxing, spokesman for China’s parliament, stated that China added \$9.1 billion to its military budget bringing the total outlay for 2009 to \$70.2 billion.

10 March: China lodged objection to U.S. Navy vessel USNS *Impeccable* which conducted activities in China’s special economic zone in the South China sea without its permission. It demanded that the US put an immediate stop to related activities and take effective measures to prevent similar acts from happening.

12 March: The US and China agreed on the need to reduce tensions and avoid a repeat of a confrontation between American and Chinese vessels in the South China Sea. US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi agreed that similar episodes should be avoided in the future.

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1 April: China and France announced an agreement to restore high-level contacts and promote bilateral cooperation following a lengthy spat over Tibet. As part of the agreement France also pledged not to support Tibetan independence in any form.

1 April: Chinese President Hu Jintao and his American counterpart Barack Obama held their first meeting in London, where they vowed to work together to deal with the global economic crisis.

16 April:China disclosed a massive naval expansion plan to give its warships longer reach capabilities by building new generation of sea craft, including stealth submarines, supersonic cruise aircrafts and longer range missiles.

23 June: Defence officials from the US and China met for the first time in 18 months at a time when the strategic relationship between the two countries faced strains from the security situation in North Korea and a spate of naval confrontations.

5 July: At least 156 people were killed and more than 800 injured following ethnic violence in Urumqi, the capital of China's western province of Xinjiang.

14 July: The Algeria based terror group Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) declared that it will target Chinese interests in North Africa to avenge the violence against Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang.

13 October:China and Russia signed trade deals worth \$3.5 billion during Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's three-day visit to Beijing.

18 November: During U.S. President Barack Obama's three-day visit to China (16-18 November) the two countries pledged to work together to fight protectionism but appeared to make little progress on resolving differences over China's currency policies.

18 November:China settled another long drawn dispute over land with Vietnam. The two countries signed a package of agreements on the demarcation of their 1,300km border and also agreed to solve pending disputes over their naval boundaries through talks.

31 December: Offering six proposals to promote peaceful development of the cross-Straits relationship with Taiwan, Chinese President Hun Jintao said that China was willing to discuss with Taiwan proper and reasonable arrangements for Taiwan's participation in international organisations.

Relations with India

4 February: Indian defence sources said that no Indian submarine had "stalked" any Chinese Navy destroyer in the Gulf of Aden and dismissed reports in this regard published in a section of the Chinese media.

28 March:External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee said that Arunachal Pradesh is an integral part of India and China's observations about the state are absolutely untenable. Mukherjee's comments were significant in the background of reports that China had objected to the Asian Development Bank (ADB) granting loan to Arunachal Pradesh for two projects.

20 April:According to a media report, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) rejected China's request to induct its navy in some form into the 33-member Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) initiative started by India in 2008. The MEA said there was no strategic rationale to let China be associated with IONS as it was strictly restricted to littoral states of the Indian Ocean.

30 May:During the military-level talks on anti-piracy cooperation between Indian Naval Chief Admiral Sureesh Mehta and Chinese Deputy Chief of the General Staff Ma Xiaotian on the sidelines of Asian Security Summit in Singapore, India and China explored new proposals for cooperation in the ongoing anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden.

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15 June: Despite strong dissent from China, India scored a major diplomatic victory at the ADB board meeting as US, Japan and other members voted in favour of approval of the \$2.9 billion India plan.

16 June: Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh met Chinese President Hu Jintao in Yekaterinburg, Russia, to review bilateral relations, reiterate their intention of pursuing closer ties and give a fresh push to their high-level dialogue on the disputed boundary between the two countries.

9 July: India officially confirmed for the first time that China had blocked India's development plan at the Asian Development Bank (ADB) because it contained a \$60 million project for Arunachal Pradesh.

22 July: India and China resolved to further deepen ties, especially in bilateral trade. On the sidelines of a conference of Foreign Ministers of two-dozen countries in Phuket, Thailand, External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna and his Chinese counterpart Yang Jiechi also agreed to be in close touch on major issues such as climate change, the Doha round of trade talks and the global financial crisis.

8 August: The 13th Round of India-China Special Representatives talks ended in New Delhi with both side expressing satisfaction at the progress being made on the boundary question. The two countries also agreed to set up a hotline between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao.

25 August: Jujian Hua, a Chinese foreign ministry official, said that New Delhi could re-open its consulate in Tibet's capital, Lhasa, any time it wants. The consulate was closed following 1962 India-China war.

31 August: Indian Army Chief General Deepak Kapoor admitted that a Chinese military helicopter had violated Indian airspace in Jammu and Kashmir's Ladakh area on 21 June.

6 September: Fresh intrusions by China's People's Liberation Army troops into Indian territory

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across the Line of Actual Control in the Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir were reported. According to media reports, the Chinese troops entered nearly 1.5 kilometres into the Indian territory near Mount Gya, recognized as International border by India and China, and painted the boulders and rocks with red spray paint.

1 October: Responding to media reports about the Chinese embassy issuing stamped visas to some Indian nationals from Jammu and Kashmir on separate sheet of paper and not on their passport, India asked China to ensure that there was no discrimination against visa applicants of Indian nationality on grounds of domicile or ethnicity.

14 October: India advised China to take a long-term view of Sino-Indian relations and to “cease” undertaking infrastructure projects in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

25 October: Rebuffing China’s wish that India bar Dalai Lama from traveling to Arunachal Pradesh, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh told Chinese Premier Wen Jiabo that the spiritual leader was an ‘honoured guest’.

27 October: Foreign Minister S.M. Krishna and his Chinese counterpart Yang Jiechi decided to step up dialogue between the two countries to build trust at several levels on the sidelines of the trilateral Russia, India and China (RIC) dialogue in Bangalore.

3 November: The National Remote Sensing Agency (NRSA) confirmed the construction of dam at the Zangmu site on the Chinese side of the Brahmaputra River. The confirmation prompted the government to take up the matter with China at a political level.

5 November: Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Ma Zhaoxu said that China would not undertake dam projects on the Brahmaputra River that would damage India’s interests.

8 November: Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama on his arrival in Arunachal Pradesh criticized China for objecting to his visit to Tawang and expressed surprise over its claim to the border town of Tawang.

10 November:The Chinese government accused New Delhi of disregarding China's grave concerns by allowing the Dalai Lama to visit Arunachal Pradesh.

30 November:*The Indian Express* reported that the Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah stated that his government had stopped work on a road project under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) in Demchok in southeast Leh in Ladakh after the Chinese army objected.

10 December:Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao called on Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to harmonise positions of both countries on climate change.

Pakistan

Strategic Profile

9 January: Pakistan and Iran failed to agree on the gas price under the \$7.6 billion Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) pipeline gas project.

15 January: Interior Minister Rehman Malik stated that Pakistan shut down five training camps and detained or kept under surveillance over a hundred people linked to the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)/Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) in connection with the Mumbai attacks on 26 November 2008.

25 January: US ambassador to Pakistan Anne W. Peterson met Pakistan President Zardari and handed over \$101 million on account of coalition support fund for Pakistan's role in the War on Terror.

3 March: The Sri Lankan Cricket team was attacked by terrorists in Lahore killing six policemen. Seven players, an umpire and a coach were injured.

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7 March: US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton told a group of European leaders in Brussels that much of the planning for terror strikes around the world takes place in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

30 March: In a terrorist attack on a Pakistani police training school in Manavan, barely 12 km from the Wagah border, at least eleven people were killed.

7 April: Pakistan turned down a US proposal for carrying out joint operations against Al-Qaeda and Taliban in its tribal provinces as differences between the two countries over the conduct of war on terror surfaced for the first time.

13 April: Pakistan's Parliament passed a resolution in favour of the controversial Nizam-e-Adal Regulation unanimously paving the way for the enforcement of Shariat law in the Swat valley.

17 April: Pakistan secured promises of more than \$5 billion in fresh aid over two years at International Donors Conference held in Tokyo, after President Asif Ali Zardari vowed to step up the fight against militants. The United States and Japan pledged \$1 billion each.

27 April: The hardline religious group Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Sharia Muhammadi negotiating with the Pakistani government pulled out of peace deal in Swat to protest the intensified Pakistani troop operations against Taliban in North West Frontier Province (NWFP) after intense US pressure.

28 April: Pakistani forces backed by fighter jets and helicopter gunships began an offensive against the Taliban fighters in a key valley in Lower Dir, 100 km northwest of the capital Islamabad. The aim of the offensive was to eliminate and expel militants from Buner.

14 May: At a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing, chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen confirmed reports that Pakistan was increasing its nuclear weapons programme.

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28 May: A US Congressional Report stated that Pakistan had about 60 nuclear warheads and was continuing production of fissile material for weapons.

4 June: The World Bank approved an aid package worth \$900 million for Pakistan, of which \$350 million was approved for Punjab province.

9 June: A massive explosion ravaged Pearl Continental, a five-star hotel in Peshawar city killing at least 11 people and wounding 50.

13 June: Pakistan unveiled a deficit national budget for fiscal 2009-2010. It proposed an increase in defence expenditure by 17 percent to Rs 343 billion from Rs 296 billion in 2008-09.

17 June: At the first EU-Pakistan summit held in Brussels, the European Union decided to give more aid to Pakistan and announced an overall aid package of over 100 million Euros.

18 June: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan announced its accession to the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. With this, Pakistan became a party to 11 international conventions against terrorism.

9 July: President Asif Ali Zardari admitted that militants and extremists were deliberately created and nurtured in Pakistan as state policy in the past 'to achieve some short-term tactical objectives'.

30 July: The Pakistan Navy received first of four new naval frigates built by China in a deal intended to bolster naval capability. The frigate named PNS Zulfikar was a part of four Sword class ships that China had been building for Pakistan to be delivered by 2013 as part of \$700 million F-22P frigate programme.

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6 August: Acting on Pakistan's request, Interpol issued a global alert for 13 suspects, including Laskhar-e-Tayyaba operatives, wanted for the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks.

22 August: Pakistan and China signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for construction of a 7,000 mw hydro-power station at Bunji in Astore district of Northern Areas, PoK, at an estimated cost of \$6-7 billion.

15 October: US President Barack Obama signed the Kerry Lugar Bill for a \$7.5 billion aid package for Pakistan into law after Congress offered assurances that the plan did not violate Pakistani sovereignty.

21 October: Pakistan cabinet accepted the Kerry-Lugar aid package and decided to avail the \$7.5 billion financial assistance offered by the United States.

28 November: Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari gave up control of Nuclear Command Authority shifting it to the Prime Minister in a bid to fend off mounting pressures threatening to weaken his rule further and complicate the war on the terrorism.

12 December: The Pakistani army ended its offensive against the Taliban in South Waziristan.

Relation with India

4 January: India handed over a dossier to Pakistan in which it gave the evidence of involvement of the elements based in Pakistan in 26/11 Mumbai attack.

6 January: Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh called Pakistan as the main sponsor of terrorism against India and stated that the "sophistication and military precision" of the 26/11 attack pointed to the involvement of its official agencies.

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10 January: Pakistan cut by 20 per cent the non-developmental expenditure of all ministries to meet defence needs amidst tensions with India after the 26/11 attack.

21 January: Pakistan's Foreign Minister Mahmood Qureshi said that Pakistan had given a "blank cheque" to China authorizing it to negotiate with India on its behalf to deal with the aftermath of the 26/11 attack.

12 February: Interior Minister of Pakistan Rehman Malik formally acknowledged that part of the 26/11 planning was done in Pakistan. The case was registered under sections of the 1997 Anti-Terrorism Act that enable the prosecution of Pakistanis for directing, abetting, conspiring or facilitating a terrorist act in another country.

26 February: At the SAARC summit, Foreign Secretary Shiv Shankar Menon rejected his Pakistani counterpart Salman Bashir's suggestion for resumption of talks by stating that two countries had entered a 'new phase of relations' post 26/11.

2 June: The Lahore High Court ordered the release of JuD founder Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, citing lack of evidence regarding his involvement in the 26/11 terrorist strike.

14 July: In a first high-level meeting after 26/11, the foreign secretaries of India and Pakistan met and started a 'limited dialogue process'.

16 July: The Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan, in a meeting at Sharm-el-Sheikh, Egypt, issued a joint statement that stated '[A]ction on terrorism should not be linked to the Composite Dialogue process and these should not be bracketed.' The statement also noted that Pakistan had 'some information on threats in Balochistan and other areas.'

25 August: The Interpol issued a Red Corner Notice (RCN) against Hafiz Saeed and Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi, making it obligatory for Pakistan to arrest them and hand over to India.

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17 September: Under pressure from India and the US, Pakistan registered two cases against JuD chief Hafiz Mohammad Saeed, the mastermind of Mumbai terror attack and one of his close aides Abu Jandal under the 1997 Anti-Terrorism Act.

12 October: The Lahore Court invalidated two cases against Hafiz Saeed registered under Pakistan's Anti-Terrorism Act for delivering inflammatory speeches, accepting his plea that he could not be charged under the law as his group, JuD was not officially a proscribed organisation in Pakistan.

25 November: An anti-terror court in Pakistan indicted seven men, including Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi, operations commander of the LeT, for their suspected involvement in the Mumbai terrorist attack.

Nepal

18 February: India's Foreign Secretary Shiv Shankar Menon said that India had no problems with Nepal's growing relationship with China. He reiterated that India wanted stability, peace and democracy in Nepal.

3 May: Nepal's Prime Minister Prachanda dismissed Chief of Army Staff General Rookmangud Katawal, on charges of disobeying orders, sparking off a crisis which threatened to derail the fragile peace process in Nepal.

4 May: Nepal's Prime Minister Prachanda resigned as Army Chief was asked to stay by Nepal's President Ram Baran Yadav. The President said that the Army Chief's dismissal did not "meet the constitutional requirements and due process."

23 May: Senior leader of Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist) Madhav Kumar Nepal became the second Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal unopposed.

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22 June: Shiv Shankar Menon concluded his two-day visit on 20-21 June to Nepal by saying that India was committed to assist Nepal in its transition to multi-party democracy.

19 August: During his five-day visit to India (18-22 August), Nepal's Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal met the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh who re-offered and reaffirmed India's assistance in drafting a new Constitution of Nepal.

9 September: General Chhatra Man Singh Gurung was appointed as Nepal's new army chief. He became the first person from Nepal's indigenous tribes to assume the post.

19 October: Nepal's Maoist chief Prachanda said that his week-long visit to China from 11-17 October was important in improving relations between the two countries. He said that Chinese leaders advised his party to continue in the political mainstream and not wage another war against the government.

27 October: India and Nepal signed a 'historic' new treaty, 'India-Nepal treaty of Trade and Agreement of Cooperation to Control Unauthorized Trade', to control unauthorized trade across the border and redefine their trade and commercial relations, putting an end to uncertainty over the issue.

9 November: An agreement was reached between Nepal and China to start flights on the Katmandu-Lhasa route in 2010, making Nepal the first country to operate flights to Lhasa.

11 December: The Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists (UCPN-M) unilaterally declared two new autonomous provinces – Kochila in the east and Limbuwan in the West – without waiting for a consensus on the model of federalism that Nepal would adopt.

26 December: Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal set off on a six-day visit to China claiming 'it would strengthen the bilateral ties' between Nepal and China.

Bangladesh

6 January: Sheikh Hasina, leader of the Awami League-led 14-party grand alliance was sworn in as the 12th Prime Minister of Bangladesh.

9 February: India's External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee, on a day-long visit to Bangladesh, met Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina who proposed the formation of South Asian task force to combat terrorism, in the interest of maintaining greater security for all countries in the region. Two agreements – on bilateral trade and investment promotion and protection – were also signed.

11 February: Awami League loyalist Zillur Rahman was elected unopposed as the President of Bangladesh.

18 February: Bangladesh's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hasan Mahmud told CNN-IBN in Dhaka that Bangladesh agreed to extradite Anup Chetia, founder of United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), who was lodged in a Bangladeshi jail since 1996 to India.

28 February: At least 76 people, including several army officers, were killed in a dramatic mutiny over pay hike launched by Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) on 25 February. The mutiny ended on 26 February.

24 March: India and Bangladesh renewed the Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Travel for two more years.

3 May: Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty handed over a list of Indian criminals and terrorists hiding in Bangladesh and asked Dhaka to step up security along the border in the wake of the ongoing general elections.

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10 September: During the visit of Bangladesh's Foreign Minister Dipu Moni to India, the two countries announced that they would conclude three agreements, including one for mutual legal assistance on criminal matters, and work on issues of river water sharing, connectivity, trade and energy.

8 October: Bangladeshi Foreign Minister Dipu Moni informed India and Myanmar of its decision to go to the United Nations for a resolution of its long-standing dispute with these two countries over maritime boundary. The decision followed unsuccessful negotiations among the three countries over the past 35 years.

15 November: Bangladesh set up six special courts to try the suspected rebellious soldiers for the bloody mutiny by the paramilitary BGB that led to the massacre of at least 76 people, including several army officers in February.

19 November: Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was chosen for the prestigious Indra Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development.

2 December: The 10th round of Indo-Bangladesh Home Secretary-level talks (30 November-2 December) concluded in New Delhi with finalization of agreements on mutual legal assistance on criminal matters, transfer of sentenced persons, combating international terrorism, organized crime and illegal drug trafficking.

Sri Lanka

5 February: Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickremanayake told the Parliament that the government offered an amnesty to LTTE if they surrender, but rejected international appeals for ceasefire talks and vowed to crush those who fight on.

12 February: Sri Lanka rejected Britain's 'unilateral' appointment of a special envoy 'to address the deteriorating humanitarian situation and help resolve the ethnic conflict' as it was

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tantamount to 'an intrusion into Sri Lanka's internal affairs and was disrespectful to the country's statehood.'

13 April: Sri Lanka stripped Norway of its role as the peace broker after the 12 April incident in which Sri Lankan diplomatic mission in Oslo was ransacked by suspected LTTE sympathisers. The decision came as Sri Lankan forces were poised to crush the LTTE and perceived that it is no longer feasible for Norway to act as the facilitator.

26 April: Sri Lankan government rejected the unilateral ceasefire declared by the LTTE with Defence Secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa insisting that the rebels must surrender.

28 April: Brigadier Udaya Nanayakara disclosed that India and Pakistan, separately but consistently, trained and equipped the Sri Lanka Army to prepare and fight its enemy, the LTTE.

16 May: Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa declared that his country 'militarily' defeated the LTTE and promised the minority community with a 'homegrown' political solution in the country's north.

18 May: The 33-month-long Elam War IV ended when the Sri Lankan military decimated the military capabilities of LTTE, resulting in the death of at least 18 top leaders, including the LTTE chief V. Prabhakaran.

19 May: India's Minister of External Affairs Pranab Mukherjee said that New Delhi offered a package of `500 crores to provide relief to those affected by the conflict in Sri Lanka and to rapidly rehabilitate the displaced persons.

21 May: Sri Lankan Defence Minister Gotabaya Rajapaksa revealed that 6,261 members of the security forces died since military operations began in August 2006, while 29,551 were injured.

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29 June: Sri Lanka and China signed an agreement on the second and third stages of the \$891 million Norochcholai Coal Power 600 mw Project. The 300 mw first stage was commenced in 2006.

15 July: The Sri Lankan Chief of Defence Staff, Gen Sarath Fonseka, said that the island nation had cancelled the import of ammunition valued at \$200 million from China and Pakistan following the end of Eelam War IV. He also added that India would send 500 personnel to clear mines in the north.

3 August: India handed over bank drafts worth Sri Lankan Rs.117 million to Sri Lanka for Palaly military-cum-civilian runway rehabilitation project in the Jaffna peninsula. Palaly houses the main base of the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF).

6 August: The new LTTE chief Selvarasa Pathmanathan known as 'KP' was arrested in Malaysia and brought to Colombo for questioning.

13 August: Sri Lanka signed two key developmental projects worth \$350 million with the Exim Bank of China. The agreement is for the construction of the Colombo-Katunayake Expressway and Hambantota Bunkering project.

18 August: High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka Alok Prasad handed over the 600- tonne consignment of relief goods valued at over \$3 million to the UN Resident Representative, Neil Buhne.

6 October: Indian and Sri Lankan navies commenced a joint military training, code named Cadex-2009, in the western seas of the island nation. A group of 140 Indian Navy and Coast Guard cadets from Kochi-based First Training Squadron on board INS Shardul, INS Krishna and Coast Guard Ship Varuna would train along with Sri Lankan Navy Officer Cadets on board Sayura and Samudra.

18 October: Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram said that the Indian government would give another `500 crore to the Sri Lankan government towards rehabilitating Tamils displaced by

the civil war.

5 November: Colonel Karuna Amman, the former LTTE commander said that the LTTE procured most of their arms from Ukraine as well as China. They also obtained arms from Asia and Africa but the main source was Ukraine.

16 November: Air Force Chief Roshan Gunathilleke was named as the Chief of Defence Staff after the resignation of General Sarath Fonseka.

10 December: A three-member Sri Lankan delegation consisting of Senior Adviser to the President Basil Rajapaksa, Secretary to President Lalith Weeratura and Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa assured India that it would resettle all internally displaced persons of Tamil origin by the end of January 2010. It also agreed on establishing an institutional mechanism to resolve issues relating to fishermen.

Bhutan

18 June: During interaction with a visiting delegation from the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC), Bhutan's Prime Minister Jigmi Thinley pledged to provide an additional 11,000 MW of power to India in the next 12 years to help meet the country's growing energy demand.

22 December: During Bhutanese King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk's five-day visit to India (21-26 December), India and Bhutan inked 12 pacts, including in hydro-power, health, IT and aviation.

Maldives

3 February: India's Defence Minister A.K. Antony and Ameen Faisal, Minister of Defence and National Security of Maldives, during the latter's visit to India, agreed on working together to meet the threat of sea borne terrorism in the light of the Mumbai terror attacks and other such threats from the seas.

20 August: During Defence Minister A.K. Antony's visit to Maldives, India pledged two military

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helicopters and 26 coastal radars to be set up in all of Maldives' 26 atolls, regular Dornier sorties over the island nation, and setting up a 25 bed military hospital in Male.

17 October: The Maldivian cabinet held the world's first underwater meeting to highlight the danger posed to low-lying nations by global warming.

22 November: On a five day visit to India (21-25 November), Maldivian President Mohammed Nasheed in a conference on "Climate Change: Technology Development and Transfer" made an appeal to India to help Maldives survive the rising sea level due to global warming.

Major Global Developments

31 March: The World Bank announced a \$50 billion programme to counter a decline in global trade.

2 April: Leaders of the world's largest economies at the G20 summit in London agreed to a \$1.1 trillion deal to combat the worst economic downturn and boost global growth.

16 June: At the first-ever summit of BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) countries at Yekaterinburg in Russia, the members unveiled a collective agenda ranging from food security and financial reform to the creation of a 'more diversified international monetary system' and a 'more democratic and just multipolar world order'.

9 July: At their first ever joint declaration at L'Aquila in Italy, leaders of the G-8 and the G-5 countries called for an 'ambitious and balanced conclusion' to the Doha Development Round of trade talks in 2010. It expressed the joint commitment of the G8 and G5 to 'facilitating the development, dissemination and mutually agreed transfer of clean, low-carbon technologies, reducing carbon emissions and increasing energy efficiency'.

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15 July:At the 15th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit at Sharm el-Sheikh in Egypt, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh called the NAM a ‘moral force’ for the equitable transformation of a world and said that the 118-nation grouping must ensure the steps planned to revive the global economy take into account the developing world’s concerns.

14 September: The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) formally appointed Yukiya Amano of Japan as its new director-general from 1 December, succeeding Mohammed ElBaradei.

24 September: The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) unanimously approved a US drafted resolution asking all non-NPT nations to sign the treaty. Russia, China and developing nations supported the resolution. India refused to abide by it by saying that it cannot accept the ‘externally prescribed norms or standards’ on issues that were contrary to its national interests or infringed on its sovereignty.

15 October:UN General Assembly elected five countries – Nigeria, Brazil, Bosnia, Lebanon, and Gabon – to serve two-year terms on the UNSC.

Major Regional Developments East Asia

30 January: Accusing South Korea of hostile intent, North Korea announced scrapping of all political and military agreements with South Korea that pertained to putting an end to confrontation between the two countries.

5 April:North Korea fired a long-range rocket, Taepodong-2, provoking international outrage. North Korea claimed that the satellite was launched into orbit and circled the earth, while the US and South Korea said that it had failed to enter orbit.

14 April: North Korea announced that it would quit the six-nation nuclear disarmament talks

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and restart its atomic weapons programme as protest against the UN's condemnation of its rocket launch.

25 April: North Korea announced the reactivation of its reprocessing plant at the Yongbyon nuclear complex.

25 May: The state-run Korean Central News Agency of North Korea said that Pyongyang successfully conducted one more underground nuclear test as part of the measures to bolster up its nuclear deterrent for self-defence.

4 July: North Korea fired seven short-range ballistic missiles with a range of upto 500 km off its eastern coast defying a number of sanctions imposed by the United Nations.

7 August:After three years of negotiations, India and South Korea at Seoul signed a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement that commits the two countries to abolish or cut tariffs for 90 percent of Indian goods and 85 percent of South Korean products in terms of value by 2019.

Southeast Asia

3 January:India signed a bilateral labour mobility agreement under Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Malaysia after two years of negotiation. The MoU enabled orderly recruitment of workers to get employment in each other's countries.

2 May: After a decade long pause, Australia released a defence white paper. The paper entitled "Defending Australia in the Asia-Pacific century: Force 2030" envisaged the government's defence in the coming decades. The ambitious plan sets a target of 3 percent real growth in the defence budget till 2017-18 and 2.2 percent from then till 2030.

29 May: Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd proposed the formation of an 'Asia Pacific Community' on the basis of dialogue among regional powers and the United States at the eighth

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annual Asia Security Summit held in Singapore.

6 June: India sealed free-trade deal in goods with other BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) countries at Phuket in Thailand.

11 August: The Myanmar court sentenced Aung San Suu Kyi to 18 months of additional house arrest that drew widespread condemnation from around the world. The sentence assures that San Suu Kyi remains in detention through the parliamentary election to be held in 2010.

13 August: India signed Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) with 10 Southeast Asian nations at Bangkok for duty free import and export of 4,000 products ranging from steel to apparels to sugar and tobacco over a period of eight years.

1 September: Fiji was suspended from the Commonwealth after it failed to meet a deadline to make progress towards establishing democracy.

23 October: At the 15th Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit in Hua Hin, Thailand, Prime Manmohan Singh proposed the establishment of a joint task force that could ensure a substantive outcome for India's 10th summit with the South-east Asian grouping in 2012 and also offered to play host to the bilateral gathering that year.

12 November: India and Australia agreed to create comprehensive framework for enhancement of security cooperation. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and his counterpart Kevin Rudd concluded a Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation at the end of the meeting in New Delhi.

15 November: Leaders of 21 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation countries concluded a two-day summit held in Singapore. The leaders at the forum pledged to promote balanced, inclusive, and sustainable growth to ensure a durable economic recovery.

11 December: On the sidelines of BIMSTEC meet at Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar Prime Minister Thein Sein assured the External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna that Myanmar would not be a safe haven for the anti-India insurgents to operate from.

Central Asia

23 January: During Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev's visit to India, the two countries signed a major agreement for supply of uranium by Kazakhstan and a comprehensive cooperation in civil nuclear energy programme. Kazakhstan also invited India to join in uranium exploration.

19 February: Kyrgyzstan Parliament approved a government proposal to shut a strategic US airbase at the Manas international airport, the Pentagon's last foothold in Central Asia. The airbase was a transit point for US-led fighting in Afghanistan.

7 September: During the two-day visit from 6-7 September of Indian President Pratibha Patil to Tajikistan, both countries emphasized the unrealized potential for cooperation in the energy sector. She was the first Indian head of the state to visit Tajikistan.

14 September: During Mongolian President Tsakhiagiin's India Visit, India signed a civil nuclear agreement with Mongolia for the supply of uranium along with four other pacts in the field of peaceful uses of radioactive minerals and nuclear energy, health, culture, and statistics.

14 October: The 10-member countries and observers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), the central Asian security grouping, at Beijing pledged to work together on combating terror and improving financial co-operation among Asian nations to combat financial crisis.

West Asia

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18 January: The three-week armed conflict that started with Israel military air strike on 27 December 2008 in Gaza Strip ended with the declaration of ceasefire. Over 1,200 Palestinians and 13 Israelis were killed in the conflict.

22 February: The US and Iraqi forces launched a new military campaign called "Operation New Hope" with a motive to put an end to a stubborn insurgency in restive Nineveh province, a final holdout for Sunni Islamist militants.

25 February: Syria revealed that it built a missile facility over the ruins of a nuclear reactor in a remote area of the Syrian desert named al-Kibar that was destroyed by Israeli airplanes in September 2007.

27 February: India signed its biggest defence deal with Israel for the purchase of a state-of-the-art air defence system at a cost of \$1.4 billion (₹7,042 crore).

25 March: India inked another deal with Israel valued at ₹1,200 crores for the manufacture of biomolecular charge systems (BMCS) at five factory plants to be set up in Bihar's Nalanda district.

7 April: In a bid to woo Kuwaiti investment and improve bilateral relations, India and Kuwait signed three agreements on education, culture and science and technology during Vice President Hamid Ansari's three-day visit to the nation.

6 September: An UAE Air Force military transport plane Hercules C-130, flying from Abu Dhabi to Hanyang in China was grounded at Kolkata airport following the discovery of a large cache of undeclared arms and ammunition on board.

29 October: The Egyptian Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif offered the visiting Commerce and Industry Minister Anand Sharma to allow India to set up an 'India Zone' along the Suez Canal development area to create an India-specific industrial corridor for collaboration with Egyptian

companies to capture the European and African markets.

Southwest Asia

11 January: During Afghan President Hamid Karzai's visit to New Delhi, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh announced that India would gift 2,50,000 tonnes of wheat to Afghanistan.

22 January: Continuing on the path of developmental work in the war-ravaged Afghanistan with determination, India handed over the strategic Delaram-Zaranj highway built by it at the cost of ` 6,000 crore.

3 February: Iran successfully placed into orbit its first domestically made satellite, Omid, to carry out remote sensing and satellite telemetry operations using an indigenous launcher.

19 February: International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA) head El-Baradei reported to the United Nations Security Council that Iran had not converted the low-grade uranium into weapon-grade uranium.

25 February: Iranian and Russian officials tested the first nuclear power plant built at Bushehr in Iran. The 1000 MW light-water reactor was built with Russian assistance under a \$1 billion contract.

20 March: US President Barack Obama issued an unprecedented videotaped appeal to Iran offering a "new beginning" of diplomatic engagement.

21 March: Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Kamenei dismissed the overture from US President Obama responding that Iran did not see any change in US policy under its new administration.

9 April: Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad declared major advances in controversial

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atomic drive as he opened a nuclear fuel plant at Isfahan and announced the testing of two high capacity centrifuges and manufacture of nuclear fuel.

20 May:Iran test-fired a new advanced missile, solid-fuel Sejil-2, with a range of about 1,200 miles, capable of reaching Israel and US bases in Middle East.

24 May: On the sidelines of a trilateral summit on Afghanistan security at Dubai, Iran and Pakistan signed a deal to lay a gas pipeline for taking Iranian gas to Pakistan. The agreement had an article that would allow India to join the project at an appropriate time.

13 June: Iran's President Ahmadinejad secured a landslide victory in the Iran presidential polls where he defeated his rival Mir-Hossein Mousavi amidst allegations of manipulation of election results. Ahmadinejad got 62.6 percent of the vote.

28 July: To establish new dialogue architecture to further improve the relationship, India's External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna and Afghanistan counterpart Rangin Dadfar Spanta agreed to set up an India-Afghanistan Partnership Council.

21 August: Iran allowed inspectors from the IAEA to inspect the nuclear reactor at Ark. Iran also allowed the UN nuclear weapons watchdog to step up surveillance at the Natanz uranium enrichment plant.

22 September: US Army Gen Stanley McChrystal said that he had evidence that factions of Pakistan's ISI and Iran's Quds Force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards were supporting the Taliban that carried out attacks on coalition troops.

25 September:Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation head, Ali Akbar Salehi confirmed for the first time that Iran was building a 'semi-industrial enrichment fuel facility,' which was designed to produce nuclear fuel.

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28 September: Iran test-fired its two long-range missiles, Sejil and Shahab-3, which it claimed could hit targets in Israel. Iran said that both missiles had a range of around 2,000 kms.

1 October: During Iran's critical meeting with six global powers, known as E3+3, held in Geneva, it agreed in principle to export much of its stock of enriched uranium for processing to Russia and France, and to open its newly revealed enrichment plant to UN inspections within a fortnight.

3 October: India successfully completed a four-year effort to build a 202-km transmission line to bring electricity from Pul-e-Khumri to power-starved Kabul. The Chimtala sub-station would distribute 90-120 MW of electricity.

8 October: A Taliban suicide bomber blew up an explosives-laden car outside the Indian embassy in Kabul, killing 17 people and injuring over 80 others.

25 October: UN inspectors got their first look inside a once-secret uranium enrichment facility – known as Fordo – near Qom. The visit marked the first independent examination of the site.

28 October: Taliban militants killed six UN foreign staff in an attack on an international guesthouse in Kabul deepening concerns about security for a presidential elections run-off on 7 November. (The Indian Express, 29 October 2009)

1 November: Afghan officials cancelled plans for a runoff vote, declaring incumbent President Hamid Karzai the winner after the withdrawal of his rival candidate Abdullah Abdullah.

21 November: NATO took command of the training of the Afghan Army and police to consolidate efforts on building an effective security force, a vital precondition for the withdrawal of foreign troops. The US training mission - CSTC-A, merged with the NATO Training Mission - (NTM-A), under a single NATO command.

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27 November: India voted along with the United States, China and other major powers in favour of a German-sponsored resolution at the IAEA on referring the Iran nuclear programme yet again to the UNSC. The resolution, co-sponsored by Russia and China, passed by a 25-3 margin by the 35-member board of governors, was helped along by India's vote.

1 December: US President Barack Obama unveiled the new fast-track war strategy for Afghanistan where he announced the pouring of 30,000 more troops into the region, vowing to 'seize the initiative' to end the unpopular war and start a pullout in July 2011.

16 December: Iran test-fired an upgraded version of its most advanced missile, named Sejil-2 with a range of about 2,000 km, powered by solid fuel, which is capable of hitting Israel and parts of Europe. It was a new show of strength aimed at preventing any military strike against it amid the nuclear standoff with the West.

SAARC

27 February: At the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Foreign Ministers conference in Colombo, Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksha urged the South Asian countries for an immediate and collective response to deal with the menace of terrorism afflicting the region.

Africa and Latin America

Africa

31 August: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh after discussion with the visiting Namibian President Hifikepunye Pohamba in New Delhi set a road map for the future and decided to inject fresh dynamism into many areas of bilateral relations, including human resource development,

Chronology of Major Events 2009

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defence and IT.

Latin America

16 March:To boost military ties, Venezuela offered Russia unlimited use of an airbase off its Caribbean island base La Orchila.

19 April:Latin American leaders who gathered for the Fifth Summit of the Organisation of the Americas (OAS) in Port of Spain favoured the return of Cuba into the grouping and urged the US to end its economic blockade against the island nation.

14 October:India signed a civilian nuclear cooperation agreement with Argentina. The nuclear pact was among the 10 agreements signed with Argentina following talks between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and visiting Argentine President Cristina Fernando de Kirchner in New Delhi.