The violence in Xinjiang has clearly prompted China to prevent Afghanistan from descending into chaos post-2014.

Relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan are in a constant state of souring.

India is steadfast in its support to Afghanistan in a variety of areas.
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this series of quarterly monitoring reports (2014) is to monitor and track the actions, public statements of five key STAP RP regional actors (India, Iran, Russia, China, Saudi Arabia) on Afghanistan; the development of, and their participation in relevant international and regional discussion meetings, including the Istanbul Process, Heart of Asia, RECCA, SCO; the five key regional actors’ economic decisions and agreements, including, but not limited to, the energy and infrastructure sectors, which have implications for the identified sources of tension in Afghanistan with regional implications (see CIDOB STAP RP Mapping Document at www.cidobafpakproject.com).

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

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

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

### Governance

- Afghanistan’s National Security Council decides against banning Facebook after some officials had complained of its use against the national interests of the country.
- Afghanistan is ranked 7th in the Fragile States Index.
- Afghanistan will become the 14th full member of the Main Intergovernmental Agreement (MIA) on development of the Europe-Caucasus-Asia Transport Corridor (TRACECA) coming December.
- Afghanistan becomes a member of the International Organization For Standardization (ISO).
- The Afghan government has run out of cash as the election impasse and the dwindling international support are taking a toll on the country’s finances.
- US President, Barack Obama, asks presidential candidate, Abdullah Abdullah, not to resort to violence amidst the deepening electoral crisis as the latter alleges fraud against his rival, Ashraf Ghani.
- US Secretary of State, John Kerry, brokers a deal between the Afghan presidential candidates that provides for audit of all votes cast in the second round and establishment of a “government of national unity”.
- Outgoing President Hamid Karzai salvages the deal on the national unity government following further disagreements, managing to get the signatures of both candidates on the agreement.
- After months of uncertainty, Afghanistan gets its second elected president. Ashraf Ghani is sworn in in Kabul. His rival is appointed as the CEO of the new government in line with agreement reached earlier.

### Security

- NATO Secretary General asks the Afghan government to sign the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) with the US within two months.
- Afghan President condemns a bomb attack in a busy market in the Paktika province which leaves scores dead and injured.
- Three Indian nationals who had been kidnapped by the Taliban are freed by the Afghan security forces.
- NATO promises to provide Afghan security forces with 185 war-planes of different types until 2017.
- The Afghan National Army Officer Academy (ANAOA) graduates its first batch of officers who will now take up appointments in the Afghan National Army (ANA).
- Residents of Ghazni province hang four Taliban militants to avenge the beheading of fifteen villagers by the Taliban in the Ajristan District.
- A group of militants in Afghanistan pledges allegiance to the Islamic State (IS).
- The Bilateral Security Agreement with the United States and a separate agreement with NATO are signed by the new Afghan government on its second day in the office.

### Development

- Kabul gets first private shuttle company with 80 buses starting to operate.
- Afghan female cricketers is granted around half a million USD grant to receive leadership and skills training in an exchange program with Pakistani and Indian cricketers.
- Afghan Saffron export sees a 67% increase, with Europe as the main destination for the “red gold”.
- A three-day agricultural exhibition is held in Kabul.

### Afghanistan-Pakistan Tensions

- Pakistani army asks the Afghan government to either eliminate or handover Mullah Fazlullah, chief of the Pakistani Taliban.
- A high level military delegation from Afghanistan visits Pakistan, to discuss the issue of Pakistani artillery shelling of the Afghan province of Kunar with their Pakistani counterparts. The Pakistani side raises the issue of sanctuaries for the Pakistani Taliban on the Afghan side of the Durand Line.
- The Export Promotion Agency of Afghanistan (EPAA) reports that Afghan and Pakistani authorities have found a solution for the transit issues between the two countries.
- Afghan National Security Council rebuffs Punjabi Taliban’s announcement that they will end militant activities in Pakistan and instead solely focus on Afghanistan as “no news”.
- Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs reprimands Pakistan’s chargé d’affaires to Kabul to lodge an objection against the stop and search of vehicles belonging to the Afghan General Consulate in Peshawar by the Pakistani police.
## Regional Powers

### 1. India

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>The Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.1. Actions</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| - July 1, 2014  
India helps Afghanistan in its bid not to have the latter’s banks blacklisted by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) due to lack of a money laundering legislation. | Official Facebook Page | Afghan President’s Office |
| - July 1, 2014  
India announces new liberal visa policy for Afghans which will allow visitors to stay for up to two years in India. | Ghanizada | Khaama Press |
| - July 2, 2014  
Indian Ambassador to Kabul calls on the Afghan Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, to discuss issues of mutual interest. | Official Facebook Page | Afghan Foreign Affairs Ministry, Kabul |
| - July 2, 2014  
Spokesman of India’s External Ministry states that a “credible, peaceful and transparent election, accepted by all” is necessary for a peaceful, united and stable Afghanistan. | Official Facebook Page | Indian Embassy, Kabul |
| - August 9, 2014  
India announces a grant of USD 1 million for construction of a cricket stadium in the southern city of Kandahar. | Official Facebook Page | Indian Embassy, Kabul |
| - August 16, 2014  
India’s independence day is celebrated by its embassy in Kabul. | Official Facebook Page | Indian Embassy, Kabul |
| - August 16, 2014  
Tolonews conducts an interview with the Indian Ambassador to Kabul, in which a variety of issues pertaining to the relations between Delhi and Kabul are discussed. | Official Youtube Channel | Tolonews |
| - August 16, 2014  
India’s Prime Minister conveys his best wishes to President Hamid Karzai and Afghan people on the occasion of the 95th Independence Anniversary of Afghanistan. | Official Website | Afghan President’s Office |
| - August 31, 2014  
India offers 37 scholarships to the staff of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock of Afghanistan to pursue their postgraduate studies in India. | Official Facebook Page | Afghan Ministry of Agriculture |
| - September 7, 2014  
India’s Deputy National Security Advisor meets Haji Mohammad Mohaqeq, Abdullah Abdullah’s running mate, in Kabul. | Official Facebook Page | Haji Mohammad Mohaqeq |
| - September 10, 2014  
India’s Foreign Minister meets President Karzai in Kabul, promises India’s continued support and cooperation with the government of Karzai’s successor. | Official Website | Afghan President’s Office |
| - September 10, 2014  
Indian gifts a huge flag of Afghanistan to President Karzai in a ceremony attended by | Official Youtube | Afghan President’s |
India’s Foreign Minister and other dignitaries.

- **September 29, 2014**
  India’s Vice President [meets the newly-appointed](#) CEO of Afghanistan in Kabul.

- **September 29, 2014**
  India’s Vice President [meets the outgoing](#) President of Afghanistan and his [successor](#) in Kabul.

### 1.2. Public Statements

- **July 12, 2014**
  Indian Embassy in Kabul believes an agreement between the presidential candidates will strengthen faith of the Afghan people in [democracy](#) and promote [national unity](#).

- **July 27, 2014**
  The Indian Embassy in Kabul "wishes all the very best for Afghan students going to India for pursuing their [education](#)."

- **August 17, 2014**
  Indian Prime Minister says his government is [committed](#) to a strong, peaceful, united, democratic and prosperous Afghanistan.

- **August 19, 2014**
  Indian Prime Minister [tweets](#): “Independence Day greetings to the people of Afghanistan. India’s ties with Afghanistan are strong & will grow further in the coming years”.

- **September 23, 2014**
  Indian [Prime Minister](#) states: “We wholeheartedly welcome the agreement between the two Afghan leaders - Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah.”

- **September 23, 2014**
  “We want Afghanistan to be [happy](#)”, Indian Prime Minister tells CNN.

### 1.3. Track II Events

- **July 24, 2014**
  Afghan social media provider wins [Special Mention Award](#) at the mBillionth event in New Delhi.

- **July 27, 2014**
  Afghanistan’s Deputy Ambassador to Delhi is invited as the [Guest of Honor](#) to the International Interdisciplinary Conference on "Contemporary Issues in Commerce, Management, Computer Applications and Social Sciences," in Haryana.

- **August 5, 2014**
  An international [seminar](#) is held at [Pune University](#) titled: "Post 2014 Afghanistan after US Drawdown: Rethinking India’s Policy".
### 2. Iran

#### 2.1. Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 2, 2014</td>
<td>Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran travels to Kabul to meet President Karzai amongst others.</td>
<td>Afghan President’s Office Youtube Channel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2, 2014</td>
<td>Based on the information provided by the Iranian police, Afghan police apprehend an Iranian national in the western city of Herat for an alleged murder in Iran.</td>
<td>BBC Pashto Youtube Channel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 6, 2014</td>
<td>Iran’s Ambassador to Kabul meets Afghanistan’s Foreign Minister, who asks for an increase in the numbers of visas issued to Afghans by the Iranian embassy in Kabul.</td>
<td>Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs Facebook Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2, 2014</td>
<td>USD 100 million Indian funding will be made available to Iran to upgrade the Chabahar Port with a view to facilitate India’s access to Afghanistan and Central Asia.</td>
<td>Wadsam Youtube Channel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 12, 2014</td>
<td>Iranian and Afghan Ministers meet on the sidelines of the 14th Summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, discuss Afghan elections.</td>
<td>Iranian President’s Office Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 27, 2014</td>
<td>Iranian and Afghan Ministers meet on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly Meeting in New York.</td>
<td>Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs Facebook Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 27, 2014</td>
<td>Iran’s Ambassador to Kabul attends a farewell meeting with President Karzai as the latter bows out.</td>
<td>Afghan President’s Office Youtube Channel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 29, 2014</td>
<td>Iran’s Vice President meets the newly-appointed CEO of Afghanistan, Abdullah Abdullah, in Kabul.</td>
<td>Abdullah Facebook Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 29, 2014</td>
<td>Iran’s Vice President meets the outgoing President of Afghanistan in Kabul.</td>
<td>Afghan President’s Office Website</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 2.2. Agreements (Negotiated/Signed)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 21, 2014</td>
<td>An agreement of mutual cooperation in the health and medical sciences is signed between the governments of Iran and Afghanistan.</td>
<td>Afghan President’s Office Facebook Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 6, 2014</td>
<td>A bilateral commission of consular services is established between Iran and Afghanistan whose next meeting will be held in Kabul.</td>
<td>Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs Facebook Page</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 2.3. Public Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 2, 2014</td>
<td>Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran says his country will continue its friendship with Afghanistan regardless of who wins the presidential election.</td>
<td>Afghan President’s Office Youtube Channel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- **September 12, 2014**
  Iran’s President says all parties in Afghanistan should be part of the country’s march towards democracy, promises "all-out ties in all fields" with Afghanistan.

- **September 27, 2014**
  The Iranian Foreign Minister says that his country is interested in continuing mutual cooperation with Afghanistan’s next government.
## 3. CHINA

### 3.1. Actions

- **July 1, 2014**
  China helps Afghanistan in its bid not to have the latter’s banks blacklisted by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) due to the lack of a money laundering legislation.

- **July 10, 2014**
  The Ninth Senior Officials Meeting of the Heart of Asia – Istanbul Process is held in Beijing, co-chaired by the Chinese and Afghan Deputy Foreign Ministers.

- **July 12, 2014**
  Deputy Foreign Ministers of Afghanistan and China meet on the sidelines of the Istanbul Process Senior Officials Meeting in China.

- **July 23, 2014**
  China appoints a special envoy to Afghanistan.

- **July 23, 2014**
  China’s newly-appointed Special Envoy to Afghanistan meets the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan in Kabul.

- **August 29, 2014**
  China postpones the 4th Ministerial Conference of Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process planned to be held in Tianjin due to inconclusive Afghan presidential election.

- **September 7, 2014**
  Senior Chinese security officials meet Afghanistan’s National Security Advisor in an unspecified location to discuss terrorism.

- **September 15, 2014**
  Afghanistan’s carpet makers participate in the Qinghai International Tibetan Carpet Exhibition and Silk Road Carpet Trade Fair 2014, winning the best design and quality awards.

- **September 27, 2014**
  China’s Ambassador to Kabul attends a farewell meeting with President Karzai, and invites the outgoing president for a ping pong game in the Chinese Embassy.

- **September 29, 2014**
  China’s Minister of Human Resources and Social Affairs meets the outgoing and newly-elected Presidents of Afghanistan as well as its newly-appointed CEO, in Kabul.

### 3.2. Public Statements

- **July 8, 2014**
  Chinese Foreign Ministry announces that the Senior Officials Meeting of the Istanbul Process will be held in Beijing on July 10th, co-chaired by Deputy Ministers of Afghanistan and China.

- **July 8, 2014**
  Hong Lei
Chinese Foreign Ministry states that the successful completion of the electoral process in Afghanistan will ensure peace, stability and development so the electoral dispute should be resolved through continued dialogue.

- **July 10, 2014**
  Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister emphasizes the importance of regional cooperation through mechanisms such as the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process.

- **July 12, 2014**
  Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister reaffirms his country’s commitment to stability and peace in Afghanistan.

- **July 23, 2014**
  China’s Special Envoy to Kabul states that Afghanistan is a “very important neighbor and that China is looking for a more prominent role in the country”.

- **July 24, 2014**
  China’s Special Envoy welcomes minimal US military presence post-2014 in Afghanistan, asserts importance of investment and joint Sino-Indian ventures.

- **August 18, 2014**
  China’s President observes that relations between his country and Afghanistan have strengthened in the last few years in a message to President Karzai.

### 3.3. Agreements Negotiated/Signed

- **July 2, 2014**
  Draft of an agreement between Afghanistan, China and Tajikistan to establish a border “connecting point” is debated in the Afghan parliament.

- **September 15, 2014**
  Afghanistan’s carpet makers earn contracts, amounting up to USD 1 million, following their participation in the Qinghai International Tibetan Carpet Exhibition and Silk Road Carpet Trade Fair 2014.

### 3.4. Media Commentary

- **July 30, 2014**
  Afghanistan a building block for China-India ties
4. RUSSIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who</th>
<th>The Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.1. Actions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>July 1, 2014</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Russia helps Afghanistan in its bid not to have the latter’s banks blacklisted by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) due to lack of a money laundering legislation.</td>
<td>Afghan President’s Office Facebook Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>July 2, 2014</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Russia’s “Central Military District” conducts an exercise on potential threats that may be posed from Afghanistan after the withdrawal of the international military forces.</td>
<td>Kremlin Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>September 18, 2014</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>President Karzai and Russia’s Ambassador to Kabul hold a farewell meeting as the latter’s term in Afghanistan comes to an end.</td>
<td>Afghan President’s Office Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>September 21, 2014</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Outgoing Russian Ambassador to Kabul calls on Afghanistan’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, congratulates the latter on the “National Unity Government” deal.</td>
<td>Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs Website Facebook Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.2. Public Statements</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>July 10, 2014</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Russia’s President says that withdrawal of the international military forces from Afghanistan will not make the country “any better or calmer” so Russia and its regional allies should be prepared.</td>
<td>Kremlin Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>July 17, 2014</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Russia’s President says that Afghanistan’s problems are due to the failure of the American foreign policy.</td>
<td>Kremlin Website</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>August 14, 2014</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Russia’s President states that his country is interested in stability in Afghanistan so if NATO members invest resources in supporting it, this doesn’t run counter to Russia’s interests.</td>
<td>Kremlin Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>August 14, 2014</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan is the problematic part of the region and its election should be finalized soon, Russia’s President says in a speech in the 14th SCO Summit in Tajikistan.</td>
<td>Afghanistan Times Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>September 21, 2014</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Outgoing Russian Ambassador says he hopes that relations between Russia and Afghanistan in the future will continue to be based on friendship and mutual respect.</td>
<td>Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs Website Facebook Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.3. Media Commentary</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>August 28, 2014</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATO, the finger of death</td>
<td>Pravda Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>September 26, 2014</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Asia Prepares for Afghan ‘Threat’ (Part 2)</td>
<td>Radio Liberty Website Facebook Page</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. **SAUDI ARABIA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.1. Actions</th>
<th>5.2. Public Statements</th>
<th>5.3. Media Commentary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>- July 6, 2014</strong>&lt;br&gt;King of Saudi Arabia sends a message of felicitation to President Karzai on the eve of the <em>holy month of Ramadan</em> – the Muslim month of fasting.</td>
<td><strong>- July 6, 2014</strong>&lt;br&gt;King of Saudi Arabia in a message to President Karzai says that he wishes <em>prosperity and development of Afghanistan</em>.</td>
<td><strong>- July 5, 2014</strong>&lt;br&gt;Who is Abu Bakr al-<em>Baghdadi</em>?&lt;br&gt;<strong>- September 14, 2014</strong>&lt;br&gt;Face up to ISIS, but don’t ignore <em>Iran</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>- July 6, 2014</strong>&lt;br&gt;Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia also sends a message of felicitation to President Karzai on the eve of the <em>holy month of Ramadan</em> – the Muslim month of fasting.</td>
<td><strong>- August 19, 2014</strong>&lt;br&gt;Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia congratulates President Hamed Karzai on the occasion of the 95th anniversary of <em>Afghanistan’s Independence</em>, says he wants to see a developed and prosperous Afghanistan.</td>
<td><strong>-</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>-</strong>&lt;br&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>- August 19, 2014</strong>&lt;br&gt;Saudi Arabia allows Afghan airlines to transport Afghan pilgrims to the country on an exceptional basis this year, reversing an earlier decision to ban Afghan airlines because of technical issues with their carriers.</td>
<td><strong>- September 28, 2014</strong>&lt;br&gt;Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Kabul tells Radio Liberty Pashto that his country is willing to <em>help in the peace process</em> of Afghanistan.</td>
<td><strong>Al Monitor</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Al Arabia</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>- August 19, 2014</strong>&lt;br&gt;Saudi Arabia <em>executes a Pakistani national</em> in connection with the murder of an Afghan after a royal order is released.</td>
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</table>
3. **Regional Dynamics and Crosscutting Issues**

**July 10, 2014:** The Senior Officials meeting of the Istanbul Process stresses on the importance of successfully concluding the presidential elections, in which millions of Afghans took part (Link).

**July 14, 2014:** The 18th Ministerial Working Group Meeting of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Gas Pipeline Project (TAPI) is held in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan (Link).

**July 23, 2014:** A workshop on the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process is hosted for governmental and nongovernmental agencies by the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kabul (Link).

**August 17-19, 2014:** The first meeting of the Afghanistan-Tajikistan-India Trilateral Process is held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan from 17-19 August 2014 (Link).

**August 19, 2014:** Afghanistan and Tajikistan sign an agreement for cooperation in the fields of culture, arts and publishing (Link).

**September 7, 2014:** First round of ministerial talks on opening a new transit route to the black sea takes place between Afghanistan, Turkmenistan Azerbaijan and Georgia (Link).

**September 10, 2014:** A conference on prospects of cooperation between Afghanistan, India, Central Asia and the US is held in New Delhi (Link).

**September 13, 2014:** Afghanistan’s President attends 14th Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. The Summit reaffirms commitment to peace and security in Afghanistan (Link).

**September 25, 2014:** Afghan Minister of Foreign Affairs attends the Informal Session of SAARC Council of Ministers in Maldives (Link).

**September 26, 2014:** The ninth session of the SPECA Governing Council and the 2014 SPECA Economic Forum, will be held under the Chairmanship of Afghanistan in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, from 4 to 5 December under the theme of “Improving connectivity: a key contribution of SPECA to the success of the Transformation Decade of Afghanistan” (Link).

**September 27-28, 2014:** “Herat Security Dialogue III” is held in Herat, Afghanistan (Link).
4. Summary of Trends for the Quarter

Towards the end of the quarter, there was finally an end to the highly contested presidential election of Afghanistan. Despite the fact that John Kerry, the US Secretary of State, had managed to get Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah agree to form a government of national unity, disagreements persisted until an eleventh-hour intervention by the outgoing president, Hamid Karzai, who got signatures of both of the candidates on the power-sharing deal. Ghani was sworn in as the new president of the country, and subsequently signed a decree to appoint Abdullah as the CEO of the newly-formed government.

As the electoral dispute dragged on, Afghanistan’s economic woes became even graver. The Ministry of Finance announced that the government would not be able to pay the salaries of public servants beyond the end of September. On the other hand, Taliban intensified their summer offensive. Several provinces in the North and Northeast saw rising levels of violence. The fighting in the southern Helmand Province still continues.

In the region, India remained Afghan government’s closest ally. India’s new government relaxed the visa regime for Afghans visiting India and gifted a huge flag of Afghanistan to the outgoing President Karzai. The highlight of their support was their pledge to provide USD 100 million for upgrading the Iranian port of Chabahar to enhance Afghanistan’s connectivity with the rest of the world.

Relations between Afghanistan and Iran remained cordial during the quarter. Despite reports in Kabul that Iran and Russia were behind further complicate the election impasse, the highest echelon of the Iranian government continued to reiterate that it will respect the result of the election and is prepared to cooperate and even expand relations with the incoming government.

Interaction between China and Afghanistan was at an all-time high this quarter. China now has a Special Envoy for Afghanistan. China was supposed to host the Ministerial Conference of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process but it was postponed due to the electoral dispute in Afghanistan. There were several bilateral meetings between the officials of the two countries.

Russian authorities, President Vladimir Putin in particular, continued criticism of the American policy globally but also in relation to Afghanistan. However, they emphasized the fact that in Afghanistan their interests converged with those of the Americans and their allies.

There were limited interactions between Saudi and Afghan officials during the quarter. Saudi Arabia’s presence on multinational fora was also insignificant. Relations between the two countries are friendly but there were no moves of strategic importance to report.
5. Publications from the Region

**July 11, 2014:** Kakar, Kawun. *Is coalition government in the best interests of Afghanistan?*, Afghanzariza. Available [here](#).

**July 23, 2014:** Joshi, Ravi. *Why is India’s West Asia policy ineffective*, Observe Research Foundation (ORF). Available [here](#).


**August 11, 2014:** Bansal, Alok. *India at 68: Beginning of a New Dawn*, India Foundation. Available [here](#).


**August 27, 2014:** Farasoo, Abbas. *Afghanistan and Regional Cooperation*, Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies (AISS). Available [here](#).


**September 2, 2014:** Suslov, Dmitry. *How to avoid a new stagnation in the US-Russian relationship*, Russia Direct. Available [here](#).

**September 8, 2014:** Abdali, Shaida Mohammad. *Recommitting to a Shared Mission Against Terrorism*, Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies (AISS). Available [here](#).

**September 18, 2014:** Hosseini, Seyed Mohammad Ali. *ISIS and the Threadbare Scenario of “War on Terror*, Iran Review. Available [here](#).

**September 27, 2014:** Sood, Vikram. *New Delhi has to be prepared for new Pakistan-based Jihadi threats*, Observer Research Foundation (ORF). Available [here](#).