

„Discovering International Relations and Contemporary Global Issues“

Cultural Relations Policy

News and Background

August 2012





About CRP News & Background

Cultural Relations Policy News & Background is a part of ICRP Monthly Review Series and an initiative of Institute for Cultural Relations Policy Budapest. Launched in 2012, its mission is to provide information and analysis on key international political events. Each issue covers up-to-date events and analysis of current concerns of international relations on a monthly basis.

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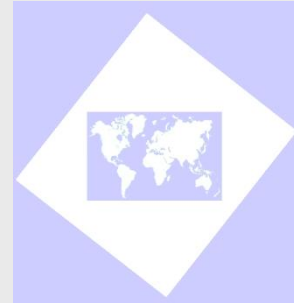
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Law on Languages Divides Ukrainians

On August 8, 2012 Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich signed into law a bill which allows the official use of Russian language in Ukraine where the number of Russian-speaking people is higher than 10%. The bill was harshly criticized by Ukrainians who worried about the identity of the country.

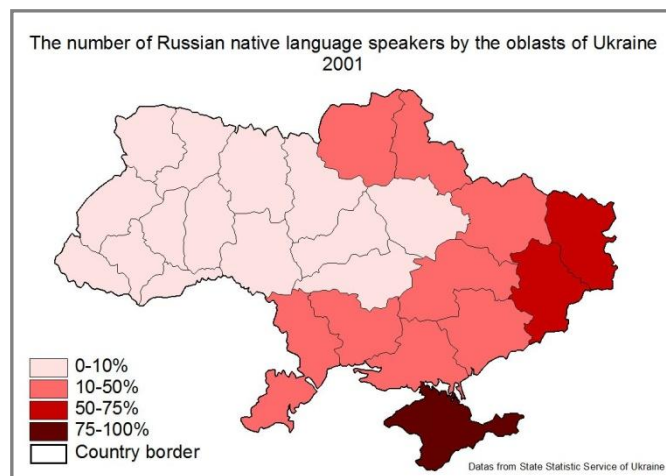
Under the new law, Ukrainian is the official language. The official language is used all over the territory of Ukraine by the agencies representing the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of power, in international agreements, in the education process, within limits and according to the procedures stipulated in the law.

Under the document, the government will also assist to use of the official language in the media, science, culture, and other spheres of public life. The law also provides that regional or minority languages include Russian, Belarusian, Bulgarian, Armenian, Gagauz, Yiddish, Crimean Tatar, Moldovan, German, Greek, Polish, Romani, Romanian, Slovak, Hungarian, Rusyn, Karaim and Krymchak.

According to the document, if the number of native speakers of one of these languages is 10% or more of the population of the territory on which the language is used, then measures aimed at use of regional and minority languages will apply.

Ukrainian political parties are sharply divided into pro-Western and pro-Russian ones, therefore the future of the country not simply depends on which party wins the elections but the concept of those parties and the worldview of their voters. Yanukovich is the president of the pro-Russians; however previous president Viktor Yushchenko was in favour of Western values.

Ukraine was a part of the Soviet Union until the early 1990s. During the Soviet era large numbers of Russians moved to Ukraine. Therefore nowadays 17% of the population has Russian identity, and 24% of the population uses Russian as native language. In the early 1990s separatist movements formed in the Eastern regions. The Russians supported such movements in Crimea and the Ruthenians in Zakarpattia. Although the only region that managed to



gain the status of territorial autonomy was Crimea. Historically Crimea used to be part of Russia till First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Nikita Khrushchev promised the area to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1954.

In the early 2000s the United States tried to isolate Russia on the stage of world politics. Washington was interested in the geopolitical implications of a pro-Western Ukraine in the former Soviet region and in relations between Russia and the West.

By backing the Ukrainian "Orange Revolution" the US expected Ukraine to leave the Russian zone of interest. Ukraine also had plans for accession to NATO and European Union. As a consequence of Russian President Vladimir Putin's active and effective foreign policy Ukraine still could not escape from the Russian sphere of interest.

The recent language law can be called as a victory of Russian kin-state policy, but the Russian foreign policy is much-led by

geopolitical doctrines. Russia wants to keep its leader-role in the post-Soviet area, and for this reason Moscow protest Ukraine's accession to Western alliances. Russia often uses the Russian minority in Ukraine to reach its foreign goals. Now the pro-Western parties of Ukraine are afraid of the Russian influence would grow in the region.

Unlike in other European countries, members of the Russian minority in Ukraine live in ethnic blocks in the Eastern regions adjacent to Russia and in the Autonomous Republic Crimea. There are fears that Ukraine would be torn up for a pro-Western part which citizens would join NATO and EU, and for a pro-Russian part which would include the Eastern provinces. Pro-Westerners often cite the Eastern regions probably are in favour of joining to Russia, however their vision is to keep Ukraine united as a country. Due to the decreasing number of Russian people within Ukraine, Russian influence could decline as well.

In Zakarpattia Hungarians want wider ethnic rights and autonomy. They watch the treaties between the Ukrainian government and Russian minority and ask similar rights for Ukraine's westernmost region.

The ethnic and ideological tensions in Ukraine escalated after the breaking-up of the Soviet Union when former administrative borders became the boundaries of the new states. During the dissolution of the USSR the situation of ethnic groups was not taken into consideration.



European Sovereign Debt Crisis

The European Union still could not tackle the monetary crisis which have been setting the political agenda dominantly and continually for two years. In August 2012 the EU member states also still could not agree on the future role of European Central Bank either. The disagreement had negative results on world monetary markets.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel travelled to Canada to talk with her Canadian counterpart about the support of European banks and a free trade pact between the European Union and Canada. Merkel also met French President Francois Hollande and Greek Prime Minister Antonis Samaras in Berlin to discuss the financial support of Greece, the eurozone and the bailout for euro. The Greek Prime Minister expected more flexible attitude but Chancellor Merkel did not agree with the roadmap of bailout envisaged by the Greek government.

The United States also urged the stabilisation of eurozone. US President Barack Obama called Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy on telephone to discuss the state of the Spanish economy and the crisis in the eurozone. Obama recognized the efforts conducted by the government of Rajoy.



Rising Ethnic Tensions in Africa

In August 2012, Guinea and Sierra Leone agreed that the two countries would take back troops from mutually disputed area. In 2005 revolution had been in Sierra Leone and Guinean forces entered in Yenga town in order to help the government. However, after ceasing the fights, Guinean military units did not leave the town.

The disputed border on Lake Malawi caused a feud between Malawi and Tanzania. The border was set in a treaty in 1890 signed by the United Kingdom and Germany. The cause of the current disagreement was the oil field that was explored under the lake resulting each bordering country's claim for a greater part of the lake. Mozambique is also bordered with Lake Malawi.



Photo: Steve Evans [Flickr]

The Secretary of State of the United States, Hillary Clinton took an 11-day visit in Africa. Clinton visited Senegal, South Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, Malawi, Ghana and South Africa. She started her visit in Senegal.

After her first speech she was criticised by Beijing, citing that she mentioned "partnership that adds value, rather than extracts it". She did not mention the People's Republic of China, however Beijing regarded this sentence was against Chinese policy in Africa. China is a strategic rival of the United States in Africa in the competition for resources.

Clinton's next stop was South Sudan. She urged Sudan and South Sudan to normalise relations. President Barack Obama also pledged the United States would support talks between Sudan and South Sudan. The two country have disputed borders because of the two vast oil fields situated in both states.

In Kenya Hillary Clinton met President Mwai Kibaki, Prime Minister Raila Odinga, the chief justice of the Supreme Court and parliament speaker. She encouraged the leaders of Kenya to support forthcoming democratic election.



Photo: Steve Evans [Flickr]

In Nigeria Clinton talked with President Goodluck Jonathan about the danger of radical Islamic groups, mainly about Boko Haram jihadist militant organisation which have been fought against the government of Nigeria since 2001. The rebel group refused talks with the government. Clinton also mentioned the enormous corruption of oil-business in the country. Nigeria is one of the major oil-producer countries and an important exporter for the United States. Later this month, new oil and gas resources were discovered in the Bakassi region by China Petroleum & Chemical Corporation. Representing the opinion of the indigenes of Bakassi region the Bakassi Movement for Self-Determination, a militant organization is in favour of secession from Nigeria since 2006 and declared independence on 10 August, 2012, however a former resolution by the International Court of Justice ruled that the oil-rich Bakassi did not belong to Nigeria but Cameroon.

During the last days of her visit, Hillary Clinton met Nelson Mandela in South Africa. Clinton urged the government to take a greater role in the region's stability and to express its opposition against the nuclear program of Iran.

Sudan and South Sudan Confirmed Oil Agreement

An agreement over oil trade between Sudan and South Sudan in August was an important step towards peace in the region. However, the two countries have not agreed yet over their disputed border, as a consequence of the deal they managed to cease fights and enabled growth in both countries' economy. Earlier the United Nations Security Council had made sanctions against the countries and urged the governments to open discussions with each other. In the same time the African Union also played an important role by mediating between Sudan and South Sudan. The United States welcomed the declaration of agreement and pledged Washington's support for talks between the two countries in the future.

South Sudan became independent in July 2011. Prior to the declaration of independence there had been a civil war for decades between the Muslims and Christians living in Sudan. More than 2 million people died during the fights until 2005. The recent crisis roots in the way of division of Sudan. In 2011 South Sudan inherited two-thirds of Sudanese oil reserves but Sudan still operates production facilities in the area. The pipelines lay on the territory



Photo: Ahmed Rabea [Flickr]

of Sudan and due to South Sudan is a landlocked country the only way for the new country to sell its oil is through the ports of Sudan. Another problem for both countries' economy is that they highly depend on oil-selling. In case of South Sudan shut down the pipelines, the capacity of both economies fell. In March and April 2012 fights broke out for the possession of the oil fields which are laying under both countries and divided by their mutual border.

For the call of United Nations the leaders of the two countries, Omar al-Bashir of Sudan and Salva Kiir of South Sudan have met and talked about the problem on a summit of the African Union held in Ethiopia on 23

September 2012. The African Union prepared a map to settle the disputed areas. The map was accepted by South Sudan, but it was not by Sudan. In the map the border is about 1800 km long and the mediators made a plan of a 10-kilometre wide demilitarised border zone. The buffer zone would cut support of rebels in South Kordofan and Blue Nile wilayats (provinces) of Sudan. These regions remained in Sudan after the secession of the South and where the Sudan's People Liberation Movement-North military organisation fights against the Sudanese government. According to Sudan its southern neighbour give supports to this group. Although, the government of South Sudan denies any relation with the SPLM.

Still many problems remained concerning the two countries; however they are already far from the long and bloody civil war. Due to the actions of the United



Nations, the African Union and the United States, they managed to stop further fights and to prevent a general war. The governments of Sudan and South Sudan facing that their economy depends on each other and it may possibly make negative results for both if they are not able to make compromise. They agreed on to continue discussions about the disputed borders.

SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN: “STILL MANY PROBLEMS REMAINED”

Military Intervention in Syria is Not Supported by UN

While the permanent members of United Nations Security Council could not agree on the intervention in Syria, fights in the country went on in August. Russian president Vladimir Putin and British Prime Minister David Cameron discussed about the Middle East crisis in London. The United Kingdom offered 7.8 million dollars support for Syrian opposition.

In this month Kofi Annan resigned his position of the joint U.N.-Arab League special envoy to Syria. The former UN Secretary General previously submitted a six-point peace plan to the UN. Annan resigned on August 2, 2012, citing the intransigence of both the Assad government and the Syrian opposition, as well as the stalemate on the Security Council as preventing any peaceful resolution of the situation. After Annan's resign Iran criticised those countries which had detained Annan's idea and Nabil el-Araby the Secretary-General of the Arab League met envoys of Syrian rebels.

Representatives of US government initiated bilateral discussions about a potential intervention in Syria: Foreign Secretary Hillary Clinton travelled to Turkey and Defence Secretary Leon Panetta met King Abdullah II of Jordan.

Meanwhile Libyan fighters joined Syrian rebels against Assad's regime. In Turkey Turkish and Iranian foreign ministers discussed about the situation in Syria but they could not conclude an agreement. Due to difference of opinions the relations between the two countries worsened. Iran suspended visa waivers for Turkish citizens and Turkish government officials refused Iran's invitation for the Tehran Congress of Non-aligned Nations. Also in Turkey 11 people were arrested for spying for Iran. Syrian opposition claimed that an Iranian diplomat was assassinated in Damascus, however this information was denied by Iran which is openly supported the Shiite government in Syria.

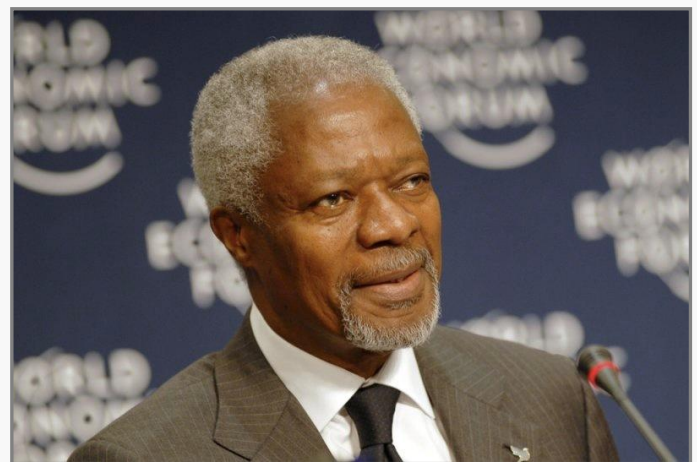


Photo: World Economic Forum [Flickr]

According to Iranian sources Turkey supported Sunni rebels in Syria. To strengthen its presence and security, Turkey started military drills close to the Syrian border. Soon after the beginning of the military operations, the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia threatened Turkey over its Syria policy. Turkey and Armenia still have limited diplomatic ties and their mutually disputed border has been closed since 1993.



Syrian army deployed rockets close to the Lebanese border and Syrian soldiers fought Jordanian soldiers next to the border. Syrian president Bashar al-Assad sent government officials to Beijing and Moscow for discussions on partnership. An economic agreement was concluded in Moscow according to which Russia would buy Syrian oil and sell processed oil products to Syria. Assad tried to keep and save Syrian economy and army with this agreement. Russia also sent 120 marines to the harbour of Taurus.

Due to Russia's and China's vivid economic ties with Syria, the two countries use their veto – given by their status in UN Security Council – from time to time on the issue of intervention.

**“MILITARY INTERVENTION IN SYRIA
IS NOT SUPPORTED BY UN”**

Iran: Sanctions and New Bilateral Economic Agreements

The recent developments of the Iranian nuclear program have divided the nations. Israel made a pre-plan for attacking the nuclear facilities of the Muslim country. US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta travelled to Israel to meet the leaders of the country that would confront Iran. He revealed that the United States would not allow Iran having nuclear weapons, nevertheless “the best methods are the sanctions not war” – he commented. In consequence of the economic sanctions and embargo the price of the Iranian oil dropped by 40 percent and the amount of oil export fell 50 percent. Australia also introduced gas-oil sanctions against Iran. The leadership of Saudi Arabia was also worried about Israel's attacking, mentioning that such action would reach the airspace of Saudi Arabia. The direction of a possible Israeli attack would probably stretch to the airspace of Turkey, Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia.



Photo: Muhammad Mahdi Karim [www.micro2macro.net]



Iran had negotiations with International Atomic Energy Agency, but the parties could not agree in Vienna. The European Union tried to seek for a compromise, when High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton declared that Iran was ready to discuss about its nuclear program. However, other states did not share the US policy of sanctions for different reasons. South Korea dissolved the trade embargo against Iran due to the economy of Republic of Korea's need for Iranian oil.

South Korea established the economic sanctions along with the European Union earlier. Pakistan also dissolved some of the sanctions by selling wheat to Iran as well. The members of Non-aligned Nations supported Iran's nuclear program but the member states did not supported Iran's foreign policy about Syria on the congress in Tehran.

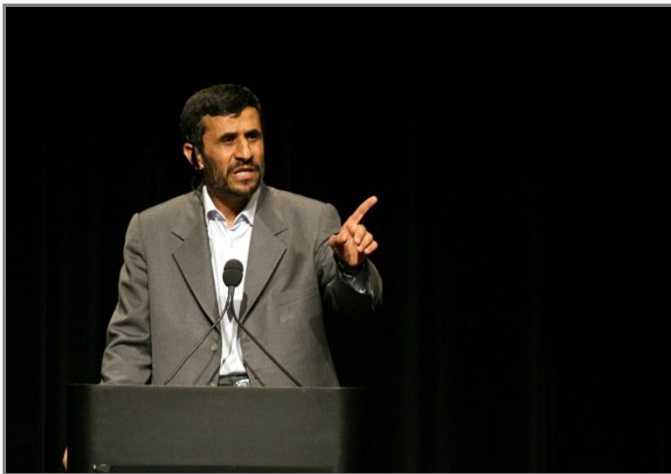


Photo: Daniella Zalcmán (Flickr)

The United States made sanctions against a Chinese Bank and British Standard Chartered Bank. The British bank was fined for 340 million dollars. The amount had to be paid for New York bank regulator because the two banks were involved in illegal transactions for Iranians. Meanwhile Iranian Defence Minister declared his country would produce new air fighters, submarines and drones. Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran made successful test with short-range ballistic missiles earlier. With this missiles Iran could attack naval and also land objects. Yet the development of Iranian long-range missiles was stuck in consequence of the sanctions. Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Khamenei, the leader of Iran declared that Iran did not plan to build up nuclear weapons, rather wanted to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. In his speech he also mentioned that in a possible war with Israel the latter state would disappear.

„SOUTH KOREA DISSOLVED
THE TRADE EMBARGO”

Strengthening Relations Between Afghanistan and Pakistan

In Afghanistan and Pakistan fights became widespread in August between Coalition Forces and the Taliban. The first moment of the series of fights was when Taliban killed four people accused for Western links. Soon after a suicide bomber killed three NATO troops and Afghan para-militarists killed two American soldiers. The helicopter used by U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman Martin Dempsey was damaged by an Afghan rocket. Another NATO helicopter crashed in Pakistan resulted the death of eleven troops.

In Pakistan also an airbase was attacked where ten people died. According to the Taliban this was the revenge for the murder of Bin Laden. The forces of the United States-led alliance responded by the capture of three Taliban leaders. In Afghanistan a controversial NATO air strike killed 52 people. In the neighbouring Pakistan a drone killed eighteen militants and another drone killed the leader of Haqqini Network. Haqqini Network is a group linked with Al-Qaeda.



The military operations in August had effect on political issues of the region as well. Afghanistan and Pakistan made an agreement that the two countries would send joint forces against the Taliban, enabling them to cross the boarder. In the same time, Afghan military expert, General Atiqullah Amarkhil warned that it would be worse for Afghanistan if Afghan troops fought in Pakistan. The Afghan Foreign Minister, Salahuddin Rabbani travelled to Pakistan to negotiate about the amnesty of Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, who used to be the second leader of the Taliban. NATO and Pakistan agreed a new accord in which United States would support the Islamic country by 1.18 billion dollars. The agreement was needed because US-Pakistani relations became worse after American troops killed twenty-four Pakistani soldiers in an incident earlier.



New Diplomatic Initiatives of India

Economic and political relations improved between India and Pakistan in August as India made steps towards conciliation. India formally allowed the investments from Pakistan and slashed 30% of the list of banned Pakistani goods; the decision was welcomed by the Islamic country. India also issued longer period of visa for Hindu pilgrims from Pakistan. Furthermore India offered debrief for three imprisoned Pakistanis who were accused for terrorism by Indian authorities. Pakistan, however, was not as responsive as the Indian government expected. Moreover, Pakistani hackers started cyber war against the Hindu country when they uploaded pictures to the internet on which Hindu people made violence against Muslims. Additionally the group of Pakistani hackers sent mobile phone messages to threaten Indian receivers by their content.



Photo: Koshyk [Flickr]

India also initiated active diplomacy with its other neighbours. India opened talks with Bangladesh and the Peoples Republic of China about the disputed borders. China's intent was to stabilize its southern border in order to secure relationship with India and to concentrate on disputed islands in the South Chinese Sea. Meanwhile Indian and Russian military units were made joint anti-terrorist training close to the Mongolian and Chinese border.



Photo: Tore Urnes [Flickr]



(India)

Ongoing Civil War in Myanmar

Violence between Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar's Rakhine region erupted in June after the alleged rape and murder of a Buddhist girl by Muslim men. The scale of violence has led to scores of deaths and the mass displacement of tens of thousands of people. After a state of emergency was declared in the province, the entry of Myanmar's security forces lent another dimension to this conflict.

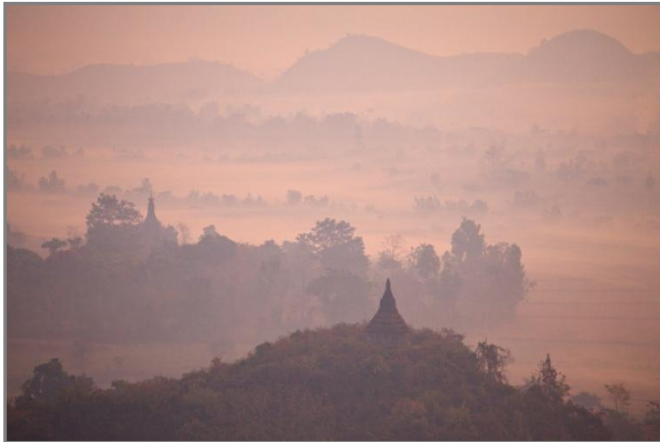


Photo: Suzan Black [Fotopedia]

The civil war in Myanmar between the Hindu government and the Islamic Rohingya group made other countries interested in the conflict as regional powers wanted to take part in peacekeeping on their own way. The European Union urged Bangladesh to help taking aids to the region where Rohingya people live while the United States banned the imports from Myanmar.

Islamic countries were more active. Turkey and Indonesia sent envoys to discuss. Saudi Arabia blamed Myanmar with ethnic cleansing and King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia offered 50 million dollars for Rohingya refugees. Bangladesh, another Muslim country, ordered three NGOs to stop providing food and other humanitarian assistance to Rohingyas in the border area, claiming it did not want to encourage more asylum seekers to its shores. Already 40,000 unregistered Rohingyas live in makeshift camps in Bangladesh, and according to the UN Refugee Agency, the latest violence will result in a greater influx of people – whether Bangladesh likes it or not.



Warming Waters in the Southeast Asian Seas

China-Japan row over disputed islands threatened to escalate in September 2012 while other territorial disputes in the region turned violent. The background of the claims is linked to economic interests.

There is a myriad of tiny islands scattered in the South China Sea, numerous lands disputed by many countries in the Far-East. The origin of the disputes is that the islets and lands on these seas had never been divided clearly among the countries which currently claim more of the oil- and gas-rich fields under the sea. In addition, the United States officially declared neutrality in these conflicts, however US has obvious interest in the security of the region.



Photo: Kim Ji Ho [Wikitravel]



Photo: Pham Nguyen Phuong Quynh [Flickr]

One of the disputed islands is Dokdo of Korea (Takeshima in Japanese or Liancourt Rocks in English). The island is disputed between South Korea and Japan. Tensions began when President Lee Myung-bak of South Korea visited the island on 10 August, 2012 and the Korean navy conducted a drill on the surrounding waters. The Japanese government condemned Korean intents and protested against the actions made by its maritime neighbour. Tokyo recalled Japanese ambassador from Seoul immediately after the events. Japan offered to discuss the conflict at the International Court of Justice but South Korea refused the initiation. At the end of the month Japan sent back its ambassador to Seoul.

Tensions get worse over another disputed lands, Senkaku Islands (Diaoyu in Chinese) which are claimed by Japan, China and Taiwan. The owner of three uninhabited islands – a wealthy Japanese family – sold them to the Japanese state for 2 billion Japanese yens. The purpose of Tokyo government was to purchase the Senkakus to maintain and manage them in a peaceful and stable manner.

Prior the transaction 14 activists from China travelled to the island but the Japanese coast guard arrested the members of the group. Beijing protested against Japan while Japanese activist also went to the island to plant their country's flags, however coast guard did not give any permission for them to enter the islands. After the action of Chinese activists demonstrations against Japan began in several of Chinese cities.



President of Taiwan, Ma Ying-jeou urged China and Japan for considering peaceful discussions about the disputed islands. Ma Ying-jeou said Taiwan will not start protests over the territorial dispute. Unlike mainland China, the island maintains good relations with Japan. However Ma also noticed that Taiwan is geographically the closest state to the islands and historically it had been the part of Republic of China.

The largest archipelago under dispute in the region is the Spratly Islands which is claimed by Taiwan, Brunei, Vietnam, China, Malaysia and the Philippines. At the end of August 14 university students and lecturers from National University of Taiwan were taken to a summer camp in Taiping which is the largest island of the Spratlys. Meanwhile the Philippines sent back its ambassador to Beijing, who was called home earlier because of the conflict over the disputed islands. While re-establishing diplomatic ties, Foreign Minister of China, Yang Jiechi visited Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia to have discussions about the area. China is the most powerful country in the region, however Chinese Defence Minister, Geng Yansheng reminded that China is not intent to start armed conflict with its neighbours over the disputed islands.

Diplomatic Opening by North Korea

Kim Jong-un, leader of North Korea made his diplomatic debut. Kim looked active and had discussions with envoys of different countries. In the first days of August, he hosted a dinner in Pyongyang for senior political officials visiting from China. It was a sign that he is turning his attention to foreign affairs. The Korean leader invited Chinese officers and Wang Jiarui, the head of the Chinese Communist Party's international affairs department. Wang declared that China would support the economy of North Korea. Chinese president Hu Jintao also had discussions with officers of North Korea on cross-border investments facilitated by China.

North-Korea also opened diplomatic talks with Japan after 4 years. The agreement concluded on the meeting in Beijing was apparently in a sign of North Korea's desire to reduce tensions with Japan, and by extension, the United States. According to Japanese analysts the talks in Beijing may be a signal that the ruler of North Korea, Kim Jong-un wants to improve his nation's destitute economy by reaching out to Japan, America's most important Asian ally. They said Kim might also be trying to reduce his country's economic dependence on China, which supplies the North with fuel and food.

As a sign of diplomatic opening, the North Korean Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly, Kim Yong Nam attended on the Congress of Non-aligned Nations in Tehran.

Nevertheless the state leaders of North-Korea considered the joint drill between South Korean and US army threatening. The two-week military test was held in August with the participation of over 30,000 US troops. The military exercises followed a drill partnered by Washington and Seoul in June. The goal of the August drill was checking South Korea's defenses against North Korea. Pyongyang, however, said they believe the drill is for a possible nuclear attack. Kim Jong-un threatened "all-out war" against South Korea in case of invasion.



Australia and New Zealand Would Stabilize Ties with Fiji

The relations between Australia, New Zealand and Fiji worsened after 2006, when the army of Fiji made a coup d'état against the legally elected government. As a consequence of the takeover Commodore Frank Bainimarama became the prime minister of Fiji. Arguing that the country needed reforms, elections will not held until 2014. Envoys from Australia and New Zealand were expelled from Fiji because the two countries protested against the military regime. Bainimarama said there will not be elections even in 2014 if Australia and New Zealand continue their actions. European Union and the United States also made sanctions against the regime. Fiji's membership of the British Commonwealth and of the Pacific Islands Forum has been suspended.

However, the small island nation found a new partner: China. Fiji supports China's Tibet and Taiwan politics, while China backed the construction of an important seaport for Fiji and loaned 200 million dollars for road construction. It is an important relationship for the small country because with the support of China the Western powers are not able to isolate Fiji,

furthermore, in the United Nation's Security Council China can veto every possible resolution against the regime. By this cooperation China tries to impose more significant influence in the Pacific region against Australia and the United States.



Photo: Qiliho [Wikimedia Commons]

India also protested against Fiji due to the ignored rights of the Indian ethnic minority. 38% of Fiji's population is Indian. Indians were taken to the islands in the 19th century by the British to work on the sugarcane fields. The situation of ethnic Indians was the worst between 2000 and 2006, when the government led by Laisenia Qarase nationalised the lands possessed by Indian people. Qarase's party was popular

among indigenous people of Fiji. Indians voted for a Hindu politician, Mahendra Chaudhry, consequently the country was ethnically divided. When Bainimarama seized to power he regarded prevention of ethnic violence as primary task.

Recently Bainimarama speaks about holding free elections in 2014 and the possibilities of the restored democratic system. Australia and New Zealand regarded this declaration positively. Officials from the three countries have already made an meeting after many years. But critics says Fiji still detains human rights, freedom of speech and press and the judiciary cannot be considered as

independent, Bainimarama sends his opponents to prison. Australia and New Zealand certainly will urge Fiji to change these things before the proposed elections in 2014.



“CHINA TRIES TO IMPOSE
MORE SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE
IN THE PACIFIC REGION”

■ News in Brief

Trade and Political Issues in South America

■ Argentina protested against the Texan Oil Company's action on Falkland Islands. President Cristina Fernandez government expressed its deep disappointment directly to the State Department following the announcement that the Texan oil company Noble Energy would become involved in hydrocarbons activities in the Falkland Islands.

■ Argentine President Christina Fernandez stated that the inclusion of oil-rich giant Venezuela to Mercosur trade bloc "strengthens" regional integration and creates the opportunity to face the main challenges of the 21st century: "energy, mining, food, science and technology"

■ Argentina and Venezuela concluded an agreement on the cooperation between the two countries' oil companies.

■ Buenos Aires declared that Argentina is not intend to pay back IMF loans. Argentina had paid 92% of the credit, but the government would give the rest of the money to those people who had been the money taken from.

■ An alleged mercenary was captured in Venezuela. American officials travelled to the country to meet him. Hugo Chavez, President of Venezuela told the mercenary was sent by the White House.

■ United States alleged that Venezuela keeps relations with terrorist groups (ETA and Columbian groups) as well as with Iran.

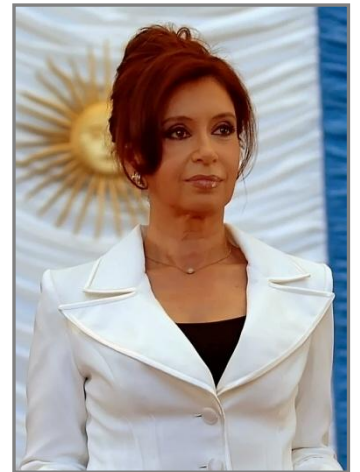


Photo: Presidency of the Nation of Argentina



■ Different views on trade barriers led tensions broke out between the USA and Argentina within World Trade Organisation. The tensions escalated further in August as Argentine Ambassador to the US Jorge Argüello highlighted: "the United States has been reported for a number of trade law violations." Prior to the statement by the Ambassador the United States and Japan made sanctions on Argentine beef export.

■ News in Brief

Operation Sinai

■ Egypt has launched a military campaign in Sinai Peninsula in early August 2012 against Islamic militants. The operation of Egyptian army and police began on 8 August, when Egyptian military troops and jets killed 20 militants, wounded a few dozen people. The country had not conducted similar actions since 1973. Prior the air strikes militants killed 16 Egyptian soldiers during Sinai insurgency that initiated in early 2011, as a fallout of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution.

■ Sinai is an insecure area because the peninsula is bordered with Israel and Israeli officials alleged that Egypt breach the peace treaty with its army operations. US Foreign Secretary Hillary Clinton urged Egypt and Israel to make discussions on the conflict; however Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi refused the Israeli invitation.

■ News in Brief

Chinese Economy Outside China

■ The People's Republic of China and Taiwan concluded a cross-border trade agreement. This was a vantage for both Taiwanese businesses and Chinese production.

■ 37 Chinese fishermen were arrested by the coast guard of Sri Lanka next to the island Batticaloa because of illegal fishing.

■ Nearly all of 65 Chinese fishermen were released by Russia after they were arrested for crossing into Russian waters in two separate incidents in August.

■ 67% of the world's fish, crustacean and mollusc output comes from China, according to the Food and Agriculture Organisation.

■ News in Brief

Turkey and the Kurdish Question

■ Kurdish rebels and Turkish soldiers died in a clash in August 2012. According to Turkey's interior minister Turkey's security forces have killed as many as 115 Kurdish rebels during a major security offensive over two weeks in August. 6 Turkish soldiers and 2 village guards also died in the town of Hakkari.

■ Turkish Foreign Minister, Ahmet Davutoglu travelled to Kirkuk city in Iraq without informing Baghdad. The visit of Davutoglu angered Iraqi government officials. "Kirkuk's unity and fraternity is Iraq's unity and fraternity. In Kirkuk, Turkmen, Kurds and Arabs have lived together for centuries and they will live in peace forever. And we will live together in peace with our Iraqi brothers regardless of their Sunni, Shiite, Arab, Kurdish, Turkmen or Christian identities," Davutoğlu told reporters whom he greeted in Turkish, Kurdish and Arabic after a meeting with Kirkuk Governor Najmadin Kareem. Kirkuk city is disputed between Baghdad's Arab-led central government and ethnic Kurdish officials over who controls territory and oilfields along their internal border.

■ News in Brief

War on Al-Qaeda

■ An American drone killed Osman Adil the leader of Islamic Movement in Uzbekistan. The group is linked with Al-Qaeda.

■ Four Yemeni soldiers and a civilian died by the attack of Al-Qaeda linked Ansar al-Shaira group. Al-Qaeda also killed 42 Yemeni people. Later an American drone killed 8 Al-Qaeda members in Yemen.

■ Kenyan Defence Forces (KDF) have killed 73 Al Shabaab militants in an attack at a remote region of Fafadun in Somalia on 16 August. The radical group is alleged to be linked with Al-Qaeda.

■ News in Brief

Russian Near Abroad and Central Asia

- Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev pledged Russia's full support to South Ossetia. Medvedev visited South Ossetia on the anniversary of the 2008 attack by Georgian forces, when they attempted to retake control over the de-facto independent republic.
- Russia and Ukraine concluded an agreement which includes that Nikita Naval Pilot Training Centre could be used by Russia.
- Russia joined World Trade Organization.
- The parliament of Uzbekistan voted for not to join any international security organisations and therefore bans any foreign military bases in the territory of the country. At the same time Uzbekistan had suspended its membership in Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization.
- Peace agreement was violated in Tajikistan, when a rebel commander who had given up his weapons was killed by government forces in an incident occurred in Pamir province. Shortly after the murder nearly 3,000 inhabitants demonstrated outside the regional government building, throwing rocks at it and demanding that President Emomali Rahmon investigate the case. In response soldiers fired the protesters wounding several people. Last month the Aga Khan Development Network reached a peace agreement under which rebels laid down their arms in exchange for a guarantee from government officials not to attack.

■ News in Brief

International Law

- Nicaragua Continued Fighting Costa Rica and Colombia in International Court of Justice. Nicaragua claimed that Colombia and Costa Rica wanted to take over the canal. Land ownership disputes continued when Nicaraguan agent Carlos Arguello presented a claim to the International Court of Justice that Colombia and Costa Rica wanted to "own" the Inter-Oceanic Nicaragua Canal by any means possible.
 - Serbian Prime Minister Ivica Dačić messaged to United Nations Security Council that any solution for the Kosovo issue that did not have the consent of the UN Security Council was unacceptable.
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■ News in Brief

Modern Spies

- The Russian Ministry of Justice has asked the United States to allow Viktor Bout to serve his sentence in Russia. Bout is a former Soviet agent who was sentenced in the U.S. to 25 years in prison for intent to sell a shipment of arms to rebels of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC). The Russian authorities now propose that Bout serve out the remainder of his sentence in Russia.
- Ecuador allowed Julian Assange to stay in the country's embassy in London. The founder of Wikileaks is wanted in Sweden. He's accused for sex-crimes.
- A NATO employment was arrested in Germany on suspicion of espionage for Russia. He was believed to have stolen "state secrets" for unidentified "third parties".

■ News in Brief

Bilateral Relations

- Representatives of the government of New Zealand and the Philippines discussed about bilateral trade agreement.
- Armenia suspended diplomatic ties with Hungary after Hungary extradited Ramil Safarov to Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijani soldier was sentenced to prison because of the murdering of Gurgen Margaryan Armenian lieutenant. They both participated on a military course in Hungary organised by NATO.
- Sweden stopped taking aid to Rwanda in consequence of the African country supported the rebels in Democratic Republic of Congo.

■ News in Brief

US Global Presence

- The United States, Norway and the Russian Federation conducted a joint navy drill in the Norwegian Sea which ended in 25 August.
 - Hilary Clinton visited the Cook Island. She was the first high-ranked American officer in the country. Oceania is regarded as a "battlefield" of the war of hegemony between the Peoples Republic of China and the United States.
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