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Compiled by

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Bilateral Issues

a. Iran

1. External Affairs Minister on United Nations Security Council Sanctions against Iran, New Delhi, 12 October 2010

Question: Question on Iran. Iran is likely to come up in the UN Security Council yet again even though we had a Resolution that was passed earlier this year. We have traditionally not supported sanctions against Iran. Yet all sanctions against Iran have been unanimous from the UN Security Council. How would you characterize India's position on Iran issue?

External Affairs Minister: On sanctions India's position is fairly well known. On Iran we have had occasions to exercise our vote on one or other occasion. So, India will certainly take a constructive view. We believe that all questions between nations will have to be resolved by mutual discussions. And India will continue to work in that direction.

Source: MEA, New Delhi, <http://meaindia.nic.in/mystart.php?id=530316563>

b. Iraq

2. Air Service Agreement between India and Iraq Modified, 19 October 2010

Civil Aviation consultations were held between India and Iraq on 18-19 October 2010 to discuss matters relating to operation of air services between their respective territories. The Indian delegation was led by Mr Prashant Sukul, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation, and the Iraqi side was led by Mr Ali. K. Ibrahim Director Air Traffic Services.

Now both sides can designate multiple airlines for operations between the countries. Earlier there was provision for only one airline from each side. The designated airlines of each side shall be entitled to operate up to a total of 12 frequencies per week in each direction, with any type of aircraft not exceeding the capacity of 250 seats. Earlier entitlements were restricted to 2 services per week.

The designated airlines of India are now entitled to operate to Baghdad, Basrah, Al Najaf and one more point to be specified later. Reciprocally the designated airlines of Iraq can operate to Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and one more point to be specified later. Earlier only one point of call was available for each side.

Since the existing Air Services Agreement (ASA) was signed in 1955, the two sides agreed that it needs to be updated and modernised. Therefore the two sides exchanged their respective draft texts of Air Services Agreement to be finalised at a later stage. Pending finalisation of a new ASA it was agreed that the existing agreement shall be modified to incorporate therein new Articles on Safety, Aviation Security and Cooperative Marketing Arrangements (code share).

The delegation of Iraq expressed interest in technical cooperation and training of their technical personnel to be conducted at the facilities available in India. The Indian side welcomed the proposal. It was agreed that the next meeting would be held within six months to finalise the pending issues.

Source: PIB, New Delhi, <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=66428>

c. Oman

3. Briefing by Official Spokesperson and Joint Secretary (Gulf) on visit of Foreign Minister of Oman, New Delhi 20 October 2010

Official Spokesperson (Shri Vishnu Prakash): A very good afternoon to all of you. Let me introduce my good friend and colleague Mr. Rajiv Chander who is Joint Secretary (Gulf).

Later today we will welcome the Foreign Minister of Oman, His Excellency Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah, who is coming on an official visit. He would be in India till the 22nd. An experienced diplomat and a senior leader, he has been the Foreign Minister of Oman since 1997.

The Foreign Minister and the External Affairs Minister would be holding delegation-level talks today; and would also be having a joint press interaction at 2000 hours today at Hyderabad House. They will be taking a few questions. All members of the media are cordially invited.

Besides delegation-level talks the visiting Foreign Minister would be calling on the Prime Minister of India tomorrow and would be meeting with Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission.

We have very close, friendly, warm and issue-free relations with the Sultanate of Oman which date back many centuries. Our relationship has been underpinned by very close people-to-people contacts which have only grown over time.

India has always been one of the preferred destinations for Omanis for business, leisure, tourism and education. On the other hand Oman is home to over 550,000 people of Indian origin, some of who have been there for generations. Oman's population is 3.4 million. Therefore, Indians constitute a sizeable proportion of the population in Oman living and working happily side by side with their Omani brethren. No wonder we have over 125 flights every week between the two countries, and the frequency is likely to be enhanced in due course. I may add that people of Indian origin are held in very high esteem in Oman. They have been contributing diligently and working vigorously in promoting peace, harmony, prosperity and development of Oman and relationship between our two countries.

Oman is one of our strategic partners and the ties are multidimensional. Our strategic dialogue with Oman dates back to 2002, and the seventh round of the Indo-Oman Strategic Consultative Group meeting was held in January 2009.

The ties have been nurtured by regular high-level attention. Prime Minister paid a landmark visit to Muscat in November 2008, which he described as a 'voyage of discovery'. He was accorded full state honours and received with exceptional warmth. Speaking at Muscat Prime Minister observed that India saw Oman as a "natural partner in progress".

This year we have already seen the visits of our Raksha *Mantri* (Minister of Defence) and Commerce and Industry Minister to Oman. We have received the Minister of National Economy from Oman who came in July. Now we welcome the Foreign Minister who last paid a visit in December 2008.

During Prime Minister's visit to Oman, inter alia a MOU on establishing an 'India-Oman Joint Investment Fund' was concluded. The Fund would have a seed capital of 100 million dollars, and the amount can be raised to 1.5 billion dollars as per requirement. Detailed documents have already been signed in the presence of our Finance Minister and the visiting Omani Minister of National Economy on the 15 July, 2010. The Fund would be established in Mumbai, will operate out of Mumbai, and will be jointly managed by the State Bank of India and the Oman State General Reserve Fund.

At the same time, Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission and Advisor to H.M. the Sultan for Economic Planning, were entrusted with the responsibility by Prime Minister and Sultan Qaboos, to thrash out a blueprint to qualitatively raise our economic and business ties. The Committee chaired by them met twice and their report is awaited soon.

Trade and economic relations constitute one of the important pillars of our historical ties with Oman. In 2009 the non-oil trade increased 65 per cent to \$ 3.3 billion. It is significant that in this period generally trade, because of the global economic issues had declined with most countries, but with Oman 2009 it saw a sharp increase. Including oil, in 2009 our trade was 4.5 billion dollars and is maintaining an upwards trajectory. While on trade let me note that the GCC countries now have become the second largest global trading partner of India. In 2009 our trade with GCC countries was close to 100 billion dollars.

We also have established good institutional mechanisms to boost our important trade and economic relations. We have the Joint Commission meeting which is chaired by the Commerce and Industry Minister of India, and Omani Minister for Industry and Commerce. The sixth session of the Joint Commission meeting was held in Muscat in September 2010.

Significantly, we already have over 1500 India-Oman joint ventures covering 13 important socioeconomic sectors. Over 7.5 billion dollars have been invested, of which the Indian companies have contributed 4.5 billion dollars. As such sizeable Indian investments have flown into Oman.

One of the biggest public sector investments came from IFFCO which set up the Oman-India Fertilizer Company (OMIFCO) which is a billion dollar company. It was inaugurated in January 2006. Since then the entire production of fertilizers, both urea and ammonia, is imported by India.

Again late last year, Oman scaled up its stake in another billion dollar project, this time in Madhya Pradesh, called Bharat Oman Refinery Limited, to 26 per cent. This year, Jindal Group has acquired one of the Omani steel companies for close to half a billion dollars. This is just to give you a flavour of the nature of our trade and economic ties.

By the same token, the Who's Who of Indian industries are already operating in Oman in vital sectors like oil and gas, mining, manufacturing, IT and telecom, power, energy, water, construction, healthcare, steel and tourism.

We have a slew of important agreements between the two countries which include the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement, the Bilateral Investment Protection Agreement, an extradition treaty, and a MOU on defence cooperation, amongst other important agreements.

I mentioned GCC. Oman is one of our most important partners in GCC. You are aware that GCC is home to a large section of the Indian expatriate community which is currently estimated at over 5.5 million. They remit something like 30 billion dollars every year back home. GCC is very important for us to meet our energy needs. About 75 per cent of our crude requirements comes from GCC countries.

2010 is also a very important milestone in the history of Oman. It is being observed as the 40th anniversary of the renaissance under the visionary leadership of HM Sultan Qaboos bin Said al Said.

As such we look forward to the important visit of the Foreign Minister of Oman. He will be holding wide-ranging discussions on all aspects of bilateral relations with External Affairs Minister Shri S.M. Krishna. The two leaders will also discuss regional and multilateral issues of interest.

The visit marks the continuation of a very happy tradition of regular high-level exchanges which have been adding vigour and dynamism to our relations.

Thank you. We will be happy to take your questions pertaining to the visit of the Foreign Minister of Oman.

Question: Is any business delegation coming with the Foreign Minister? Are there going to be any business-level talk with the Indian business leaders?

Official Spokesperson: Thank you for the question. I would just like to draw your attention to the very recent visit, last month, for the sixth Joint Commission meeting of the Commerce and Industry Minister to Muscat. He was accompanied by a business delegation. JCM as you know covers the entire gamut of the economic and commercial relationship. Talks also covered the SME sector and looked at various other facets.

Question: He is meeting the Prime Minister tomorrow, right? Is he carrying any letter from the Sultan of Oman? Secondly, can you highlight to us about the maritime relation in this regards because of this activity? You used to have lots of common meetings on the rim countries?

Joint Secretary (Gulf): As regards the call on the Prime Minister, I think it is entirely up to the Omani side if they have any message to convey to our Prime Minister. So, that is something which we will have to wait and see.

As regards the Indian Ocean Rim Association, there was a meeting which was held earlier this year. But in terms of any specifics as regards India and Oman, that may not be the central focus of the discussions over here. But this would form part of the discussions that we would have spread over the two days, starting and over tomorrow.

Official Spokesperson: Let me add that defence and security cooperation is again an important facet of our relationship with Oman.

Question: Sir, the Royal Navy of Oman had a proposal to train their technical sailors in the Indian Naval establishments in India. What is the status of that? **Joint Secretary (Gulf):** I would not be having a very specific response to that. But what I can tell you is that Raksha Mantri had visited in May of this year, and we also have a Joint Committee which has been set up under the MOU on Defence Cooperation. So, such questions of training, cooperation and other aspects of defence cooperation, deputation of defence personnel, these are part of the ongoing discussions that we have. But if you are interested in any specific aspect, we could get back to you on that.

Official Spokesperson: Under the MoU on Defence Cooperation we have regular port calls, exchanges, training and so on, between our countries. Rajiv mentioned that our Raksha Mantri

had paid a very important visit. Also as he mentioned, we have constituted the Joint Military Committee meeting. The 4th round was held in Muscat in May 2010, which was co-chaired by our Defence Secretary and the Under Secretary for Defence of Oman.

Question: Sir, at one point there was a very active proposal of the Indian Air Force to buy slightly used fighters that the Omanis had - I think they were Mirage 2000s – and after some talk it got fizzled out. But apparently it has sort of come back again. Can you tell me where it stands right now? Also, there is a long-term proposal with the Indian Air Force to have a permanent airbase there. Where does that stand?

Official Spokesperson: I did mention that defence and security cooperation is an important facet of our ongoing cooperation. I have also mentioned about the recent visits and exchanges that we have had. Further details, if any, would be available with the Ministry of Defence.

Question: Has Oman or any of the other Islamic country asked any questions on Kashmir? Have there been enquiries? Have there been concerns?

Official Spokesperson: Let me refer to Oman here. We have a very important relationship with Oman. Oman has always been very understanding of our position on the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir.

Thank you very much.

Source: MEA, New Delhi, <http://meaindia.nic.in/mystart.php?id=530316580>

4. Joint Press Interaction of External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna and Foreign Minister of Oman, New Delhi, 20 October 2010

Official Spokesperson (Shri Vishnu Prakash): A very good evening to you and welcome to the joint press interaction of Minister of External Affairs Shri S.M. Krishna, and His Excellency Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah, Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman. First the External Affairs Minister would be making an opening statement. Next His Excellency the Foreign Minister of Oman will be addressing the media.

I would like to invite the Minister of External Affairs to please make his opening remarks.

External Affairs Minister of India: Your Excellency, the Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman, Friends

I am extremely happy to have the privilege of welcoming to this interaction His Excellency Mr. Yousuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah, Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman, who is on an official visit to India at my invitation. I am also happy to note that we have just had a most useful exchange of views on various issues of mutual interest.

India and Oman have a historical relationship marked by warmth and cordiality which encompasses all aspects of our multi-dimensional strategic relationship. This relationship has been sustained over the years by regular high-level dialogue between our two friendly countries. The visit of His Excellency Mr. Yousuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah is part of the happy tradition of regular high-level exchange of views in order to share our perceptions on issues of mutual interest and concern.

I conveyed to His Excellency Mr. Yousuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah the warm greetings of the Government and people of India to the Sultanate and the friendly people of Oman on the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the Renaissance under the guidance of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said.

We had broad-ranging discussions on recent developments in our bilateral relations especially in the economic and commercial fields where our relationship has grown exponentially in the last few years. Our bilateral trade now amounts to US\$ 4.5 billion and we share bilateral investments worth US\$ 7.53 billion stretching across 13 sectors. There are around 1,537 joint ventures between our two countries. Oman is also one of the few countries in the world with which India has signed a Memorandum of Understanding on a joint investment fund. Through this mechanism, we also aim to channelize further investment in each other's economies for the benefit of our people.

The last few years have also seen enormous progress in our political understanding and dialogue, security & defence relationship and in people to people exchanges.

I also made use of this opportunity to express the appreciation and thanks of the Government of India to the Sultanate of Oman for being such a fine hosts to over 550,000 Indian nationals living in Oman. Through their hard work and dedication, they have enriched our excellent bilateral relations. They also serve as a vital link between our two countries.

I wish His Excellency Mr. Yousuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah and the friendly people of Oman well in all their future endeavours.

I would now like to request my esteemed colleague, the Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman to address the media. Thank you.

Foreign Minister of Oman: Good evening. It is a great pleasure for me to be here in New Delhi. Since we have arrived, we have received warm welcome and have got this opportunity to exchange views with my colleague S.M. Krishna on bilateral matters and the general view of the relationship between Sultanate of Oman and India. We always feel at home when we are in any part of India, particularly in this region and the southern India.

The links historically between Oman and India go deep into the history. That is reflected in our Oman. We are grateful for all the assistance India and the people of India have offered to the Sultanate of Oman to maintain this very ancient relationship between Oman and India not only in terms of business but much more in terms of culture. The culture which has linked Oman and India has been affected positively on this relationship. Indeed we are looking forward to maintaining and building on what we have already achieved.

I have had the opportunity to congratulate India through His Excellency on the success of the Commonwealth Games as well as on India succeeding in getting a seat in the Security Council of the United Nations. We are very happy to see India in the Security Council. We strongly believe that India will play a very positive role through the Security Council in the coming years.

As His Excellency has said, we have discussed the relationship, the projects, the number of exchanges, the number of Indian citizen in Oman, and that it has gone through the period of the last forty years very smoothly with benefits to both countries. We are grateful for all the Indian citizens who have been in Oman and joined us in building a new era of Oman through the forty years of His Majesty the Sultan of Oman, Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said. We have no doubt that India and Oman will continue on this work and we will work together to reach the objectives as neighbours, as strategic partners, in every field. Therefore, this visit has offered to me the opportunities to exchange views. We are satisfied with the present level of relationship, but we are working to add more on what we have.

His Excellency has mentioned the Joint Investment Fund. We have done this as a result of the visits of the Prime Minister of India to Oman a few years ago and we hope to see this fund will also participate in joining efforts in helping India building the infrastructure which is going on now in India. Therefore, I look forward Excellency to see you in Oman so that we can continue our discussions once more. Thank you.

Official Spokesperson: Excellency, thank you. The Ministers will be happy to take a few questions. You are requested to please indicate whom the question is addressed to.

Question: India always praised the relation between Oman and India as natural strategic partners, and it has been built through the years. How do the Omanis look at this? How do they assess this kind of relation especially the current situation in the Gulf where we have the problem of security and regard to the piracy at one angle and also the turbulent region with the military build-up? Does the Omani Hon. Minister see any role for India in bringing security to this region?

Foreign Minister of Oman: Indeed India has a role to play in the security sector for simple reasons: (a) India has almost something like eight million people working in the GCC countries; and (b) India is a neighbour to the Gulf countries. India has always played a role of peace. So, when time comes to discuss real terms of putting up a security for the Gulf, in our view as a Member of the GCC we see India should be also invited. I have said India but also there are others. There is Iran, there is Iraq, there are the six members of the GCC, there is Pakistan, and there are others who have a great interest in the Gulf. I wish to say that the United States of America as well as a number of European countries, and China, and Russia, we cannot secure that important area of supplying energy to the world without collective efforts to maintain security and peace in the region.

Question: My question is addressed to the Omani Foreign Minister. Sir, this is with reference to the Joint Investment Fund that both you and Mr. Krishna referred to. It was set up two years ago. I was wondering when it is likely to become operational. It had an initial corpus of 100 million dollars with the provision to increase it to 1.5 billion dollars. What is the timeframe for the increase, if there is any? If I could just ask one more question, which sectors of India are Omani companies looking to invest in?

Foreign Minister of Oman: That is, as you said, in place and its seed fund. This was suggested by the Hon. Prime Minister of India when he was in Oman a few years ago. And we agree that this is going to be invested both in Oman and India. But of course we would like very much that fund to participate in the infrastructure projects in India. This money which has been planned for is not the end of that Fund, but depends on the size of projects which the Fund would be addressing in India or in Oman. Besides, we believe that this will initiate public funds from the people to be also supported this Fund for larger projects, big projects, particularly in the road sector. And the power generation sector would be probably the first priority for the Fund and other investors.

Question: Sir, my question is for the EAM. Very recently, Lashkar terrorist David Headley's wife has made some revelations that she had informed the US agencies in advance much before Headley's terror links. This also indicates that perhaps US had prior information on a possible attack in Mumbai, which eventually happened. Do you think, Sir, it casts a shadow on Indo-US Strategic partnership? And would this issue specifically be taken up in Osama's visit to India?

External Affairs Minister: India and USA are strategic partners. Our ties are multifaceted and have been transformed in recent years. We share a common outlook on a host of issues including the scourge of terrorism that confronts us all. Both sides have very good cooperation on matters of security and counter terrorism. We had received some general and non-specific information from the US Government, prior to the heinous terror attack on Mumbai in November 2008.

Official Spokesperson: Thank you, Sir. This brings the interaction to a close. Thank you for your presence. Goodnight!

Source: MEA, New Delhi, <http://meaindia.nic.in/mystart.php?id=530516582>

Specific Issues

d. Hajj

5. Address by External Affairs Minister during Ceremonial send off to Hajj pilgrims, 12 October 2010, New Delhi

Smt. Sheila Dikshit Ji,
Honourable Chief Minister of Delhi
Shri Sultan Ahmed Ji,
Honourable Minister of State for Tourism
Smt. Mohsina Qidwai Ji, Honourable Member of Parliament and Chairperson,
Hajj Committee of India
Honourable Ministers of Delhi,
Members of Parliament, Legislative Assembly and Hajj Committees
Ladies and Gentlemen

Salaam Alekum.

It gives me great pleasure to greet the pilgrims embarking on the pious pilgrimage for performing Hajj this year. This pilgrimage is a precious gift from the Almighty Allah and is a privilege for which every Muslim yearns.

Government of India attaches the highest importance to facilitating this important religious obligation of our Muslim brethren. We pay close attention to the arrangements in India and in Saudi Arabia. This year, we faced some difficulties which you all aware of. I am happy to tell you that with the grace of the Almighty Allah, your good wishes and the cooperation we received from all quarters, we were able to overcome those difficulties. As a result, the preparations for the Hajj pilgrimage were brought back on track well in time. It is indeed a matter of satisfaction for all concerned to see these flights leave on schedule.

The Ministry of External Affairs extensively coordinates with all concerned provision and improvement of facilities for pilgrims in India and all the points in Saudi Arabia, I also wish to put on record my appreciation for the cooperation we receive from other agencies.

I am happy to tell you that a record number of 125,000 Hajj pilgrims will be travelling through the Hajj Committee on 525 return flights. A further 45,431 pilgrims are travelling through private tour operators. Bhopal and Goa have been added as new embarkation points from this year, in addition to the existing 19.

While I wish all the pilgrims the very best in this journey of faith, I also request them to pay adequate attention to the aspects of their security and well-being, on which they are briefed by the concerned officials.

I would also assure you that all through the pilgrimage, the welfare of the pilgrims will be constantly in our thoughts. I am also sure that their prayers will include wishes for the welfare, peace and prosperity of their country and compatriots.

Once again, on behalf of the government of India and on my personal behalf, I offer my heartiest greetings to all of you and I extend my best wishes for a very successful Hajj. May Almighty Allah reward you with a perfectly accomplished Hajj. *Ameen.*

Source: MEA, New Delhi, <http://meaindia.nic.in/mystart.php?id=530116559>

e. Palestine

6. External Affairs Minister S.M Krishna on India's role in the issue of Palestine at the United Nations Security Council, New York, 12 October 2010, New York

Question: Sir, you said India is good for the world in the United Nations Security Council. You expressed so much of faith to be in the UN Security Council. But many countries like the Arab world have lost faith in the Security Council when it comes to the Palestinian issues. As you said you will be more proactive in that. France has indicated that they may bring back the Palestinian issues to the United Nations Security Council. Do you see India playing a proactive role in this issue?

External Affairs Minister: Even on the Palestinian issue India has taken the stand in support of Palestine and we will continue with that stand. Whether we are in the Security Council or outside, our stand continues, and it is consistent with our stated policies.

Source: MEA, New Delhi, <http://meaindia.nic.in/mystart.php?id=530316563>

Multilateral Issues/ Regional Issues

7. Chair's Statement of the Eighth Asia – Europe Meeting Brussels, 4-5 October 2010¹

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¹ His Excellency Vice-President Dr. Hamid Ansari represented India in the Conference. This is the final consensus statement and India is party to it.

69. Leaders underlined the importance of finding an early negotiated solution to Iran's nuclear program. They expressed their determination in pursuing the objective of reaching comprehensive negotiated solution to restore international confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program, while respecting Iran's legitimate rights to peaceful use of nuclear energy. They reaffirmed their commitment to fully implement the Security Council Resolution 1929. They confirmed the need for Iran to comply fully with the Security Council and IAEA Board of Governors requirements. They called for an early resumption of the dialogue between Iran and China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom and United States and encouraged Iran's positive and constructive participation in this dialogue...
70. Leaders were encouraged by the launch of direct talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority in Washington on 2 September 2010 and by their continuation since. They commended U.S. President Barack Obama and his administration, the Quartet, the Arab partners and other international partners for their support and contribution to this process. They supported a solution negotiated on the basis of the principle of "land for peace", consistent with the relevant UN resolutions, the Middle East Roadmap for Peace, the Arab Peace Initiative. They reiterated the ultimate goal of establishing an independent, sovereign, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State, living side by side in peace and security with Israel, both in a peaceful and stable region. Leaders regretted the Israeli decision not to extend the moratorium on settlements and called on both parties to act responsibly and choose the path of peace. They recalled that settlements are illegal under international law and inconsistent with Israel's obligation under the Roadmap for Middle East Peace. The parties must now engage with determination to overcome the obstacles and to find a satisfactory way for the negotiations to continue and gather momentum. The parties must also keep working intensively on final status issues consistent with the Quartet's call for a negotiated settlement within an agreed timeframe. Meanwhile, it is also very important that all relevant parties avoid provocative actions and violence which could undermine the success of the talks. Leaders welcomed the readiness of a number of partners to contribute substantially to post-conflict arrangements aimed at fostering enduring peace.
71. Leaders considered that the current situation in Gaza is unsustainable. They called for a solution that ensures the unimpeded flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza, and addresses Israelis' and Palestinians' legitimate security concerns, consistent with United Nations Security Council resolution 1860 (2009). The recent measures announced by the Israeli government

are important steps. Yet full implementation and complementary measures are needed in order to achieve a fundamental change of policy that would allow for the reconstruction and economic recovery of Gaza.

72. Leaders stressed the importance of promoting, in parallel, the settlement of the issues between Syria and Israel and between Lebanon and Israel, through dialogue and negotiation, to promote the Middle East Peace Process comprehensively.

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Source: ASEM 8, Brussels,

<http://www.asem8.be/sites/default/files/ASEM%208%20Chair%27s%20Statement.pdf>

8. World Economic Forum on Middle East and North Africa- 2010, 27 October 2010

Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia, Minister of state for Commerce and Industry during his bilateral meeting with Moroccan Minister for Commerce has called on the Indian companies to invest in areas such as apparel, automobiles amongst others and Indian competencies in areas such as Information technology and education that could be leveraged by Morocco. He is presently visiting Marrakech to participate in World Economic Forum on Middle East and North Africa-2010.

During the visit, the Minister met the Moroccan Minister for External Commerce, Mr. Abdellatif Maazouz and discussed various aspects of bilateral trade which currently stands at USD 1.1bn. During the meeting both sides agreed to convene a meeting of Joint Economic Commission in the first quarter of 2011 at New Delhi, enhancing cooperation in Trade and Investment would be the main agenda of this meeting. The Moroccan Minister invited investment from India considering the fact that its strategic location provides access to both European and African markets. He further invited Indian investment into Morocco for setting up of value addition industries in the textile sector to serve European fashion market. He also invited Indian participation in renewable energy and automobile sectors in Morocco.

While addressing a session on “Gulf Cooperation Council: Growing with India” the Shri Scindia spoke about the ancient and friendly ties with the MENA region. He stated that both India and MENA region are likely to grow fast in the near future and present tremendous opportunities and added that progress in the FTA with GCC would serve as a window to greater bilateral trade and closer relationship. He further said, while Indian infrastructure sector presents a great opportunity for investment, the demand for skilled manpower spurred by the growth of GCC region could be effectively fulfilled by India. He expressed the need for further cooperation in the areas of industrial innovation, bio technology and green technologies.

The World Economic Forum on Middle East and North Africa -2010 is a gathering of the leaders from government, business and civil society to renew the region's growth and development strategies in the context of current global economic scenario. The theme of this year's meeting at Marrakech was "Purpose, Resilience and Prosperity".

Source: PIB, New Delhi, <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=66620>

9. Press Conference by EAM on India's election to UNSC, New Delhi, 12 October 2010

...We live in a troubled neighbourhood. Our immediate priorities in the Council will include peace and stability in our near and extended neighbourhood, including Afghanistan, the Middle East and Africa, Counter-terrorism, including the prevention of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-state actors, and the strengthening UN peacekeeping....

Source: MEA, New Delhi, <http://meaindia.nic.in/mystart.php?id=530316563>

f. Gulf of Aden

10. Prime Minister's Valedictory Address at the Seminar on the Occasion of Golden Jubilee of National Defence College, New Delhi , 22 October 2010

..The problem of piracy off the coast of Somalia in the Gulf of Aden is a case in point. Non-state actors are becoming increasingly fused and employing the best technologies to target open and democratic societies like ours.

Source: PIB, New Delhi, <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=66514>

Notes:

MEA: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi

PIB: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi

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The views expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views/positions of the MEI@ND.

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