

# COUNCIL *on* FOREIGN RELATIONS

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Daily News Brief

December 8, 2009

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Five car bombings strike Baghdad.
- Japan announces \$80.6 billion stimulus plan.
- Russia and India sign nuclear deal.
- Environmental Protection Agency announces emissions regulations.

### Top of the Agenda: Baghdad Bombings

Five coordinated car bombings, including at least one suicide attack, struck Baghdad Tuesday (NYT), killing at least 101 people in the worst attacks in Iraq since October. Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Kamal al-Maliki blamed the attacks on al-Qaeda in Iraq and the remaining Baath Party in exile. The attacks came the day the Iraqi government was expected to announce a date for parliamentary elections, following a long-stalled agreement by Iraqi political leaders on the country's election law. The attacks echoed fears that violence would intensify ahead of the election, as insurgents and terrorists seek to destabilize Maliki's government.

The bombings indicate (WashPost) that insurgents can still easily smuggle large amounts of explosives into downtown Baghdad. They also detract from the government's positive developments this week, including the upcoming auction of oil field contracts to foreign companies.

Attacks in August and October triggered (WSJ) a revamping of security

operations by the government and Iraq's military, as well as U.S. assistance to Iraqi officials. It was unclear if U.S. forces were asked to help again Tuesday. American officials have been counting on recent security gains in preparation to withdraw American troops by next August.

## **Analysis**

In *Newsweek*, CFR's Richard Haass says it does not seem likely that the United States will be able to extract its troops from either Afghanistan or Iraq by 2011.

## **Background**

A CFR Backgrounder examines Iraq's political landscape.

### MIDDLE EAST: Turkey-U.S. Ties on Iran

After a meeting between Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and U.S. President Barack Obama in Washington, Obama said (al-Jazeera) Turkey will be an "important player" in turning Iran away from its nuclear ambitions, while Erdogan did not mention Iran in public remarks.

In an Expert Brief, CFR's Steven Cook writes that despite improved bilateral ties between the U.S. and Turkey, there are still significant differences that need to be managed when Erdogan visits the White House.

### PACIFIC RIM: Japan Stimulus Package

The Japanese government announced (Xinhua) an \$80.6 billion economic stimulus package to prevent the economy falling back into recession.

**North Korea:** U.S. envoy to North Korea Stephen Bosworth arrived (Yonhap) in Pyongyang Tuesday, as the United States stressed that Bosworth will not offer new inducements to lure North Korea back into negotiations on its

nuclear program.

#### SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA: Karzai on Afghan Security

During a surprise visit by U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates to Afghanistan, Afghan President Hamid Karzai said (BBC) it would take fifteen years before his country would be able to afford to maintain its own security forces.

**India:** Russia and India signed (al-Jazeera) an agreement Monday to cooperate on the peaceful use of nuclear technology. The deal would increase atomic fuel exports from Russia to India and build several new nuclear reactors in India.

#### AFRICA: Climate Aid

President of the African Development Bank Donald Kaberuka says rich nations at the Copenhagen summit should commit (Reuters) \$40 billion a year to help Africa adapt to climate change.

**Congo:** Despite international sanctions, minerals and arms smuggling continue (UNNews) in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, fueling rebels and violence, according to a new United Nations report.

#### AMERICAS: U.S. Climate Change Regulations

The Environmental Protection Agency announced (WashPost) Monday that six gases pose a threat to the environment and Americans' health and said the agency would begin creating regulations to reduce their emissions. The move means the EPA could order emissions cuts without Congress' approval.

**Mercosur:** Mercosur is considering (MercoPress) extending a bilateral trade pact between Brazil and Argentina that favors using regional currencies over the U.S. dollar to members Paraguay and Uruguay. The proposal would skirt problems with the falling dollar.

#### EUROPE: EU Expansion

The Netherlands agreed Monday (DeutscheWelle) to unfreeze a trade agreement with Serbia due to its cooperation with the UN war crimes court. The move brings Serbia one step closer to EU membership.

**Greece:** Greece's skyrocketing public deficit could lead the country to bankruptcy and pose serious danger to the euro, Der Spiegel reports.

#### TRANSNATIONAL: Economic Integration and Trade

In a new CATO Institute paper, Daniel Ikenson says trade and investment policy has not kept pace with global economic integration and that governments should focus on increasing the flow of services, investment, and human capital to minimize "frictions throughout the supply chain."

In a CFR Expert Brief, Marc Levinson says that amid the global economic downturn, the World Trade Organization has been reduced to a talking shop as the prospects for a new global trade deal grow dimmer.