

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>
Sent: Friday, December 18, 2009 5:06 AM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Morning Press Highlights 12/18/09 (U)

See first point on israel. Lieberman put a call into you early this am. Suspect it was about this.

From: OpsAlert
Sent: Fri Dec 18 05:00:19 2009
Subject: Morning Press Highlights 12/18/09 (U)

S/ES-O Morning Press Highlights

Friday, December 18, 2009
0500 EST, 1100 Copenhagen

MIDDLE EAST

ISRAEL

Foreign Minister Lieberman announced construction will restart in full force once a temporary 10-month moratorium on settlement activity ends. (*haaretz.com*)

ISRAEL/EGYPT

Egyptian intelligence chief Suleiman is scheduled to visit Israel to discuss the lack of progress in Israel and Palestinian Authority peace talks and update Israel on Egyptian efforts to prevent weapons smuggling into Gaza. (*jpost.com*)

SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA

INDIA

Ajmal Kasab retracted his earlier statement regarding his involvement in the Mumbai attack and said he was tortured by Indian authorities into confessing. (*timesofindia.com*)

AFGHANISTAN

Former senior UN official Peter Galbraith rejected reports he drafted a plan for the White House to replace President Karzai. (*aljazeera.net*)

NEPAL

Nearly 3,000 child soldiers who fought as Maoist guerillas are to be released from camps where they have been confined for the past three years. (*timesonline.co.uk*)

WESTERN HEMISPHERE

VENEZUELA

Venezuela's economic minister approved the merger of four banks to create a public banking institution named Bicentenario. (*AFP*)

COLOMBIA/VENEZUELA

Colombia has asked Venezuelan authorities to arrest and handover 15 FARC leaders allegedly in Venezuelan territory. (*El Universal*)

AFRICA

SOMALIA

The 57-member Organization of Islamic Conference announced plans to open a Mogadishu office in January to support reconstruction efforts in Somalia. (*arabnews.com*)

SUDAN

Election observers said they were gravely concerned about government crackdowns on opposition rallies that undermined “political rights and fundamental freedoms” ahead of polls in April. (*Reuters*)

EUROPE

POLAND

Polish police say the infamous iron sign over the gate to Auschwitz with the phrase “Work Sets You Free” has been stolen. (*AP*)

IRELAND

Gross domestic product rose by 0.3% in the third quarter, indicating the country has pulled out of what was one of Europe’s worst recessions. (*bbc.co.uk*)

EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Intelligence agencies said computer hackers who might be from the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea have gained access to a secret U.S.-South Korean plan to defend the peninsula in case of war. (*chosun.com*)

ROK/DPRK

The South Korean government is moving to review its plan on improving ties with the DPRK and include the principle of linking improvements in the DPRK’s nuclear issues with economic cooperation between the two countries. (*xinhuanet.com*)

Drafted: MEPolley

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****Morning Press Highlights alerts senior Department officials to breaking news items and is a synopsis of select media stories from around the world. It solely reflects the gist of the stories as presented in their original publications and does not contain analysis or commentary by Department sources.****