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(e-Scan 16-31 Oct 2021)

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ENVIRONMENT SCAN: 16-31 OCT 2021

CHINA (Geo-Strat, Geo-Politics & Geo-Economics)

Brig RK Bhutani (Retd)

India's Trade Deficit With China Widening Continuously: Foreign Secretary. India's trade with China is set to cross the \$100 billion mark for the first time in 2021 - an almost 30 % jump from pre-pandemic level. Data from China's General Administration of Customs (GAC) showed two-way trade jumped 49% in the first nine months to \$90.37 billion. India's imports from China surged 51.7% to \$68.4 billion, while India's exports rose 42.5% to \$21.9 billion.

Two-way trade is substantially higher than pre-pandemic levels, with bilateral trade up 29.7% compared to the same period in 2019, with India's imports up 21.5% and exports to China up 64.5%. Last year, the total trade volume between the two countries was around \$88 billion.

Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said that even as trade between India and China continues to expand, it remained 'unbalanced' and is tilted in favour of China, with a deficit at \$47 billion in the first nine months of this year - the largest deficit India has with any country. He further elaborated, "Our trade deficit concerns are twofold – the first, is the actual size of the deficit and second, is the fact that the imbalance has continuously been widening." He brought out that there are a number of market access impediments including a whole host of non-tariff barriers, for most of India's agricultural products, as well as the sectors India is competitive in areas such as pharmaceuticals and information technology.

However, India has been flagging concerns regarding the widening deficit and increase in trade barriers at the highest level, he added.

Comments. Bilateral trade between India and China attained a peak of USD 89.6 billion during 2017-18, with trade deficit at a whopping (-) USD 62.9 billion. China not only destroyed India's local industries by dumping its cheap products but made India so much dependent upon import of ingredients and components for its pharmaceutical, electronics and other items that India cannot easily get out of China's vice grip. Modi's government did succeed in bringing down this trade deficit to (-) USD 48.66 billion in 2019-20 by reducing the imports. But again, we are reverting back to greater trade deficit irrespective of the tense situation at the LAC. Till the time, we are too much dependent upon supply chains from China for our manufacturing sector; we cannot succeed in reducing the trade deficit. However, increase in trade between the two countries should logically prevent them from going to a major war and achieve de-escalation and disengagement on the LAC through diplomatic means.

<https://www.thehindu.com/business/indias-trade-with-china-set-to-exceed-100-billion-in-2021/article36991136.ece>

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/india-s-trade-deficit-with-china-widening-continuously-foreign-secretary-121102101472_1.html

New Border Law Doesn't Affect Existing Treaties: China to India. China's national legislature - the National People's Congress (NPC) - on October 23 adopted the new law on the protection and exploitation of the land border areas. President Xi Jinping signed a decree No. 99 on the same day and the law will come into effect from January 1, 2022.

According to Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin, "This law consists of seven chapters and 62 articles. It stipulates clearly the leadership system and division of duties among different departments as well as between military and civilian authorities".

He said on 28 October that its new land border law will not affect the implementation of existing border treaties and urged relevant countries to avoid making "wanton speculation" about a "normal domestic legislation", a day after India raised concerns over the legislation.

The new law drew sharp reaction from India as it was passed amid the protracted military standoff between the two sides in eastern Ladakh region. On 27 October, India hit out at Beijing for bringing out the new land border law and said it expects China to avoid taking any action under the "pretext" of the legislation that could "unilaterally" alter the situation in the border areas.

"It also offers clear provisions regarding delineation and demarcation of national land boundaries, defence and management of national land boundaries and borders, and international cooperation in national land boundary affairs", he said.

Comments. One of India's main concern is that the new law should not confer any legitimacy to the so-called China Pakistan "Boundary Agreement of 1963 which the Government of India has consistently maintained is an illegal and invalid agreement. Under the agreement, Pakistan had surrendered approximately 5,300 kms of territory to China in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK) region. To this China's spokesman has avoided any reference.

India-China over the years have worked out a host of agreements to resolve and handle the border differences. These include the Special Representatives mechanism, the Agreement on Political Parameters and Guiding Principles of 2005, the WMCC (Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs) besides protocols and CBMs to ensure peace and tranquility along the LAC.

The new boundary law could make it very difficult to conduct boundary negotiations with China because the Chinese government is likely to use it as a legal basis for setting up of border villages, which are being called "dual-use" villages and in fact fairly substantial villages have been set up in territory that is claimed by Nepal, or Bhutan and even in the Eastern Sector in India. Former foreign secretary Shyam Saran has opined, "The room for coming to an understanding and resolving the border issue will become somewhat more complicated than it already is".

The last round of military talks on October 10 ended in a stalemate following which both sides blamed each other for the impasse. We have to wait and watch the new developments taking place in border areas, particularly with moving in or settling of newer people and thereby changing the ethnic character of border population.

<https://www.indiatoday.in/world/story/new-land-border-law-not-affect-existing-border-treaties-china-india-1870777-2021-10-29>

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/new-china-law-has-made-lac-negotiations-tougher-shyam-saran/articleshow/87545417.cms>

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Gp Capt GD Sharma, VSM (Retd)

Would the U.S. Defend Taiwan if China Invades? Just last week, during a CNN "town hall," President Biden touched upon the most sensitive of all related issues, saying unequivocally that America would leap into action if China attacked Taiwan.¹

Comments. Of late, Taiwan is under tremendous stress from China which has upped the ante in a bid to force Taiwan integration with the mainland China. It has abandoned its earlier proclaimed stand of peaceful integration and with the accession of Xi Jinping as the President, has adopted the offensive stance since 2011-12. Almost every other day a contingent of Chinese military aircraft and battle ships violate Taiwanese air space/ territorial waters/Taiwan strait with an aim to harass them and break nation's resolve.

Taiwan while it has declared that it will fight any Chinese aggression but, it probably will not be able to withstand the Chinese might and needs external support. In this, West and in particular United States will surely pitch in. This assurance might have deterred China to take any offensive action so far. The region however, is flashpoint for the next war. It is speculated by some strategists that China is showing signs of losing patience and could attempt forcible occupation of Taiwan by year 2025. This however, cannot happen as Taiwan has sizeable modern defence forces (2020 Defence Budget \$13.1 billion) and will hold tooth and nail against the Chinese onslaught and could also get sizeable external military support. Such a situation has risk of wider spreading. In any case, China would prefer to avoid actual conflict and all this show of Chinese military might and violation of territorial waters / air space is part of its psychological warfare.

United States has a unique agreement with Republic of China (Taiwan) while it does not recognize it and has no diplomatic relations and even considers it part of People Republic of China, it will oppose its forcible occupation by China. Just last week, President Biden unequivocally stated that America would intervene in support of Taiwan if China attacked Taiwan. A whitehouse spokesman clarified that president was not announcing any change in policy. US Taiwan defence relationship will continue to be guided by the Taiwan relations act.²

It is now in public knowledge and too much discomfort of China that US has reportedly positioned defence personnel training team at Taiwan. It has also concluded several defence agreements with Taiwan for sale defence weapons and regularly conducts joint defence exercises. China however, is not cowed down and at the eve of its G20 conference, its foreign Minister has warned G20 nation that if proclamation of one China could not be stopped 50 years ago, now any attempt would have serious consequences.³ The credence to the Chinese action is strengthened with passing of new law "protection and exploitation of the country's land border areas" which will come into effect from 01 Jan 2022.

¹<https://www.npr.org/2021/10/28/1048513474/biden-us-taiwan-china>

² www.cnn.com/2021/10/21/politics/taiwan-china-biden

³ http://www.politico.eu/article/china-foreign-minister-wang-yi-g20-summit-taiwan/?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1635584665

Indian Policy on Taiwan

Like United States, we too recognize only one China but, unlike US we shun public pronouncements. Indian population of late through social media has many a time expressed liking for Taiwan. We are mindful of Chinese core concerns. Therefore, while we have trade relations with Taiwan, we maintain utmost discretion in relations with Taiwan to avoid displeasure from China. On the other hand, **China does not show such concerns towards India's core issues. Our former foreign minister, late Ms. Sushma Swaraj commenting on the Chinese conduct had cautioned China that India would honour Chinese core concerns only if China reciprocates in same manner.** Such plain speaking alone can have impact on China. But it has not been followed in practice. Hence, a pragmatic review of our relations with communist China and Taiwan are needed much in manner of US and West. **Close relations with Taiwan will mutually benefit strategically since Taiwan is democracy like India, a semiconductor power house and any investment in semiconductor area will help and also send a signal to communist China.**

The only jarring point is that Taiwan has stance similar to communist China on Eastern Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh. This stance however, is hypothetical as we are not neighbours and can have healthy transactional relationship.

SOUTH ASIA

Col DM Govil

AFGHANISTAN

News/ Developments

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/south-asia/taliban-say-it-will-form-committees-with-china-for-strengthening-bilateral-relations/articleshow/87303104.cms>

Taliban said that it will form committees with China for 'strengthening' bilateral relations. The first committee will be dealing with political and diplomatic relations and issues, the second committee will be assigned to follow up with bilateral cooperation and making agreements and third committee will be addressing economics among them the excavation of mines in Afghanistan.

<https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/world/us-announces-144-million-in-humanitarian-aid-for-people-of-afghanistan-7647521.html>

US announced the \$144 million in humanitarian assistance to affected people of Afghanistan due to the ongoing humanitarian crisis.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/south-asia/taliban-sends-envoy-to-take-charge-of-embassy-in-pakistan/articleshow/87372453.cms>

Taliban sends an envoy to Pakistan to take over the charge of embassy. Sardar Ahmad Khan Shokaib was appointed as first secretary in Islamabad.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/europe/nato-holding-taliban-accountable-on-counterterrorism-says-chief-gens-stoltenberg/articleshow/87223082.cms>

Islamic State group has claimed responsibility for the suicide bomber attack at a Shia mosque in the Southern Afghan city of Kandahar in which dozens were killed and many

were injured. NATO chief Stoltenberg said the bloc's allies and partners are trying to hold the Taliban accountable for all the pledges they made on terrorism, not allowing their soil to be used against others, human rights, and providing safe passage for those who are willing to leave Afghanistan.

<https://www.orissapost.com/afghan-women-hit-the-streets-against-taliban-restrictions/>

Women came out on the streets of Kabul to protest against the closure of schools for girls and slammed the International Community for their inaction about what is going on in Afghanistan. Women gathered at the gates of United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in Kabul.

<https://www.wionews.com/south-asia/work-hard-taliban-to-offer-wheat-in-exchange-of-work-to-reduce-poverty-and-starvation-423598>

Taliban government has decided to roll out a new scheme in major towns and cities to fight the rising poverty, unemployment and starvation. The scheme will exchange wheat for labour.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/south-asia/dont-spread-fake-news-about-us-afghan-hindus-and-sikhs/articleshow/87242929.cms>

The miniscule Afghan Sikhs and Hindus, as well as Muslims, divided between India and Afghanistan have appealed to not spread canards (Convert to Sunni Islam or leave the country) with regards to their relations with the new Taliban government. They have instead urged the fellow community leaders spread across the world to arrange for their evacuation and rehabilitation.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/south-asia/taliban-welcome-putins-plan-to-remove-them-from-terrorists-list/articleshow/87247514.cms>

Putin's plan to remove Taliban from terrorist list. Taliban have welcomed the remarks. Putin said the removal of Taliban movement from the list of terrorist organisations is possible. However, he also emphasized that this must happen at the level of the United Nations. All of us expect that these people, the Taliban, who are undoubtedly in control of the situation in Afghanistan will ensure that the situation develops in a positive fashion.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/south-asia/un-body-expresses-concerns-over-possible-narcotics-production-smuggling-in-afghanistan-under-taliban/articleshow/87229079.cms>

UN body expresses concerns over possible narcotics production, smuggling by insurgent groups in Afghanistan taking advantage of the situation.

Comments. Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said that India has been forthcoming on the issue of humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan. India is concerned about the current situation in Afghanistan. India's is concerned about the intersection between instability there and their counterterrorism concerns.

The new Taliban rulers have yet to be formally recognised by any Government including Pakistan, meaning Shokaib cannot assume the charge of the ambassador.

Taliban has allowed girls to return to the high schools in the north, but with big caveats. Some middle and high schools have already been allowed to reopen for girls in the north,

where women have long played a more prominent role in society than in the southern heartland.

Afghanistan already accounted for 85 per cent of the world's opium production in 2020. There is an urgent need to prevent illicit flows and exploitation crimes, to stop the country from becoming a haven for terrorist and their resources, and to address spillover in neighbouring countries.

PAKISTAN

News/ Development

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/pakistan/lit-gen-nadeem-ahmad-anjum-appointed-new-chief-of-pakistans-spy-agency-isi/articleshow/87282984.cms>

PM Imran Khan notifies the appointment of Lt Gen Nadeem Ahmed Anjum as the new ISI chief, paving the way for the implementation of the early decision taken by the country's army chief regarding the nomination of the new spymaster. He will replace the Lt Gen Faiz Hameed from next month.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/pakistan-peoples-party-calls-for-early-election-wants-imran-khan-to-step-down/articleshow/87401010.cms>

Pakistan People's Party calls for early election says Imran Khan wants to step down. Considering the prevailing situation, the resignation of the Prime Minister Imran Khan is justified demand of the people. PPP took out rallies and staged demonstrations in different parts of the city against rising inflation.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/pakistan/pakistan-prime-minister-imran-khan-dials-chinese-president-xi-vows-to-boost-bilateral-economic-ties/articleshow/87276328.cms>

Chinese President Xi Jinping and Pakistan PM Imran Khan had a telephonic conversation during which they discussed the situation in Afghanistan and the Belt and Road Initiative.

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/pakistan-navy-blocked-indian-submarine-from-entering-countrys-waters-7580222/>

Pakistan Navy claims it "Blocked" Indian Submarine entering waters. The Pakistan Navy on Tuesday claimed that it had allegedly "detected and blocked" an Indian submarine from entering Pakistani territorial waters last week. According to reports in the Pakistani media, that country's military said in a statement that the incident had occurred on October 16 when an Indian submarine was detected by a Pakistan Navy patrol aircraft. The Pakistan Army also released a short footage of the purported incident to the media.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/pakistan/pakistan-11-killed-15-injured-in-kohat-shia-sunni-clash/articleshow/87277360.cms>

At least 11 people were killed and 15 injured in a Shia-Sunni clash in Kohat Division's Kurram District.

Comments. Imran Khan's reluctance to notify Lt Gen Anjum appointment has strained the relationship of between Pakistan's civilian and military leadership and prompted the ministry of defence to send a fresh summary to the PM regarding the appointment of the spymaster. The position of the ISI chief is considered to be the most powerful after the

army chief. Imran Khan wanted Lt Gen Hameed to continue. Civil military relationship has gone down after the incident.

Pakistan is facing rising sectarian violence, with armed Sunni groups linked to Al-Qaeda and the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan often attacking gathering of Shias, who make up the some 20 percent of the country's overwhelmingly Muslim population.

BANGLADESH

News/ Developments

<https://www.asianage.com/world/south-asia/191021/bangladesh-communal-violence-71-cases-filed-450-arrested.html>

Communal tensions have gripped Bangladesh over the past few days following allegations of the Quran being dishonoured at a puja pavilion in Cumilla on October 13. Goons attacked puja venues, temples, Hindu homes and businesses in during Durga Puja. At least 71 cases have been filed in different parts of the country in connection with the attacks on Hindus and around 450 were arrested for spreading rumours on social media. Bangladesh has to take ownership and responsibility for the failure of law and order.

<https://news.webindia123.com/news/Articles/India/20211025/3844001.html>

Indian Army on 25 Oct conducted free-fall parachute training for the elite commandos of the Bangladesh Navy. Experts from the Army Adventure Wing of the Indian Army conducted this training.

Comments. Islamist Organisation are determined to embarrass Hasina. They are jubilant at the Taliban takeover, and may well have encouraged by Pakistan's ISI which has a close links with Jel and the Islamists. Pak and the Islamist are extremely un happy with Hasina's close ties with India. Hasina implying that anti-Muslim incidents in India encourage the Islamists to exact revenge on Hindus in Bangladesh. India has reacted cautiously, because bilateral ties have prospered under Hasina. Security and Intelligence cooperation has delivered dividends that have built mutual trust and confidence.

It is important for India and Bangladesh to leverage the current upswing in ties to make them irreversible. Democratic and Pluralistic Society in Bangladesh is in India's interest.

SRI LANKA

News/ Developments

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/south-asia/sri-lanka-bans-contaminated-chinese-fertiliser/articleshow/87236171.cms>

Sri Lanka has barred a Chinese ship carrying desperately needed organic fertilizer. National Plant Quarantine Services have found organic fertilizer to be tainted with organisms, including certain types of harmful bacteria. The action comes as Sri Lanka battles food shortages caused by a currency crisis while farmers have said a government ban on chemical fertilizer could run their crops this year.

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/strategic-ties-six-naval-ships-arrive-in-lanka-329611#:~:text=For%20the%20first%20time%2C%20six,the%20two%20forces%2C%20officials%20s aid>

Six Indian naval ships arrive in Sri Lanka to boost bilateral defence cooperation.

Comments. A row over bacteria tainted organic fertilizer shipped by a Chinese company to Sri Lanka intensified with China's embassy in Sri Lanka 'blacklisting' a state bank, and reiterating its position. Sri Lanka then got a court order to block payment on a letter of credit. China is the biggest lender of Sri Lanka and has lent and invested billions of dollars in the South Indian nation's infrastructure ranging from ports to airports and roads to coal-power plants.

The four day visits marks a milestone in bilateral relations history wherein for the first time such a large number of Indian Navy ships visited Sri Lanka. The crew of the Indian ships participated in a series of special training programmes organized to enhance the relationship.

BHUTAN

News/ Developments

<https://zeenews.india.com/india/cautious-india-takes-note-of-bhutan-china-boundary-negotiations-pact-four-years-after-doklam-standoff-2402715.html>

Bhutan-China Boundary Negotiations. Bhutan said its Foreign Minister Lyonpo TandiDorji and China's Assistant Foreign Minister Wu Jianghai signed a MoU on the "three-step roadmap" for expediting the Bhutan-China Boundary negotiations." The MoU on the three-step roadmap will provide a fresh impetus to the boundary talks". It is expected that the implementation of this roadmap in a spirit of goodwill, understanding and accommodation will bring the boundary negotiations to a successful conclusion that is acceptable to both sides, it said.

Comments. India reacted cautiously to Bhutan and China signing an agreement on a "three-step roadmap" to expedite negotiations to resolve their festering boundary dispute.

MYANMAR

News/ Developments

<https://www.aljazeera.com/where/myanmar>

The military is setting the stage for a final showdown in Chin State and Sagaing and Magway regions. The Myanmar military has deployed thousands of troops to upper Myanmar in recent weeks in what appears to be preparation for a concerted push to crush an anti-coup uprising that has inflicted heavy casualties on the junta army. This comes after months of fierce clashes between junta troops and local resistance groups operating as part of the People's Defence Force (PDF) formed by the shadow National Unity Government (NUG).

<https://www.wionews.com/south-asia>

ASEAN Summit. Myanmar's military ruler, have pledged to cooperate "as much as possible" with a peace plan agreed with ASEAN. This comes after ASEAN excluded Myanmar junta leader Min Aung Hlaing from attending the summit. The Myanmar junta

slammed the decision accusing ASEAN of breaching the bloc's policy of non-interference in the domestic affairs of its member states. Myanmar refused to send any representatives to the summit after ASEAN decided to invite a "non-political" representative from Myanmar.

Comments. Military regime's focus on upper Myanmar as key to its efforts to consolidate control over the country. Previous commander, Brig-Gen Phyo Thant, has been detained for allegedly planning to defect to resistance forces and take refuge in an area controlled by an ethnic armed group.

Several leaders of the ASEAN regional grouping pulled up the Myanmar for abstaining from participation in the summit meeting. ASEAN pulls up Myanmar for non-participation in the summit meeting.

EURASIA

Air Cmde T Chand (Retd)

Turkmenistan-Kazakhstan Normalisation of Relations. On 25 October 2021, President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov and President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev had the summit talks in Ashgabat and signed twenty documents towards normalization of their relations². Turkmenistan has adopted a neutral stance and Kazakhstan has great respect for the neutral status of Turkmenistan, which was approved by the UN General Assembly. The President of Kazakhstan stressed that he attaches exceptional importance to his first state visit to fraternal Turkmenistan. The Kazakh leader mentioned vast opportunities for bilateral cooperation in the fields of energy, transport logistics, agriculture and industry.

Outcomes of these agreements are likely to open up opportunities in these respective areas for Indian enterprises to avail as India is already involved in host of these activities in Kazakhstan. India and Kazakhstan have developed close collaboration in fighting religious terrorism and extremism, as well as in promoting regional security. A joint memorandum signed in December 2002 enabled joint projects such as training military officers, developing joint military-industrial projects and establishing a partnership between the defence industries of India and Kazakhstan. India has also provided support and emerged as a partner in Kazakhstan's bid to develop a naval fleet in the Caspian Sea. India and Kazakhstan are keen to develop joint projects in repair, maintenance and up gradation of military equipment³. During October 2020, a webinar between India and Kazakhstan was held which focused on defence cooperation between the two countries and was organized under the aegis of Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence and industry body FICCI. BEL had announced its plans to open a representative office in Kazakhstan.

Many Indian companies including Ashok Leyland Limited, Zen Technologies, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, Alpha Design Technologies and Bharat Electronics Limited had

²*Admin, First-ever state visit of President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to Turkmenistan – 20 documents signed – legal formalization of Turkmen-Kazakhstani border completed. News Central Asia, 26 October 2021. <http://www.newscentralasia.net/2021/10/26/first-ever-state-visit-of-president-kassym-jomart-tokayev-to-turkmenistan-20-documents-signed-legal-formalization-of-turkmen-kazakhstani-border-completed>. 28 October 2021*

³*Huma Siddiqui, India-Kazakhstan explore joint production of military platforms for the three services, Financial Express, 13 April 2021. India-Kazakhstan explore joint production of military platforms for the three services, 29 October 2021.*

made product presentations on major platforms/equipment like Artillery Systems, Radars, Protected Vehicles, Missiles and Air Defence Equipment, and Training Solutions etc.

Despite the challengeable situation in the world, the strategic partnership between Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan seems to be constantly developing in the spirit of friendship, good neighborliness and mutual support within thirty years of their independent existence and was appreciated by both countries.

The President of the Republic of Kazakhstan welcomed the accession of Turkmenistan to the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) as an observer state during the last meeting. The President of Turkmenistan highly appreciated the Chairmanship of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the CICA. The heads of state, noting the great potential of the Conference as a multilateral platform for strengthening dialogue in Asia, expressed their intention to continue active interaction within the CICA in order to strengthen confidence, peace and cooperation in the region, thereby enhancing the participation of the Turkmenistan in the affairs of the entire region for the first time effectively.

G20 SUMMIT

Gp Capt GD Sharma, VSM (Retd)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi represented India at the G20 conference held at Rome on 30th and 31st Oct 21. G20 is an international forum that brings together 20 international economies. Apart from the member countries comprising the developed and emerging economies, a few guest countries, and representatives from some of the major International and Regional Organizations also attended. **The G 20 members account for more than 80% of global GDP, 75% of global trade and 60% of global population hence, is one of the most important groupings.**

The main aim of the G 20 conference is to discuss key issues affecting the global economy and collective steps needed for its stability. This year the focus predictably remained on the economic recovery after Covid Pandemic and distribution of the vaccine to the world. Besides, the member nations also carried out in-depth discussion on challenge presented by the ongoing climate change, on which a dedicated conference COP 26 is in progress on 01 and 02 Nov 21 at Glasgow. **Instead of the Zero emission target, the G 20 nations has agreed to limit global temperature increase to lower than 1.5 degrees Celsius (34.7 degrees Fahrenheit). Zero emission is not practical as that would mean shunning fossils fuel altogether.** Such an action would hurt the developing economies very hard. But needless to say, that ultimate goal of zero emission must remain. However, as it is always pointed out that the developed economies need to transfer the low emission technologies to the developing nations where these nation dithers but, keep pontifying the developing world on ills of the fossil fuels. On this issue, **PM Modi also pointed out on our specific need of joining NSG which will facilitate transfer of relevant technologies to India and also promised greater participation by India in vaccine distribution to the needy nations.** Apart from own requirement, he pointed out the delay caused by the WHO in approving the emergency use of the vaccines. For example, Indian developed Covaxin has faced inexplicable delays in getting WHO approval in comparison to other foreign vaccines. **International institutions must maintain impeccable &transparent transactions with the member nations.**

India because of its intrinsic all-round strength has been part of the G 20 since its inception in 1999. **India is the only country in south Asia to participate in this summit.** This speaks of our stature and influence in the world affairs. Moreover, we are conscious of our responsibility in global affairs as the largest developing country in the world and try to keep the perspective of the developing world in deliberations of the G20. **It matches with our policy of following multilateralism and maintaining strategic autonomy.** The summit also provided opportunity to our leadership to deliberate bilateral and trilateral issues with common interest groups. From Dec 2021, India will take over the Presidency and chair the 2023 Summit.

NUCLEAR

Gp Capt GD Sharma, VSM (Retd)

Successful test of Agni 5 and its strategic importance.⁴

Comments. The nuclear capable missile has the stated range of over 5000km thus falls in the ICBM category. With this range it would cover whole of China. The missile has already been inducted in the inventory of the Strategic Force Command (SFC) and probably be armed with a large-yield fusion or boosted-fission warhead with a yield of in excess of 200 kilotons, perhaps reaching 500 kilotons.⁵ **It can be modified to carry multiple war heads if needed. It is known to be highly accurate with CEP of a single digit. The test was carried out at night and was rated highly successful.**

The missile is road mobile and containerized. This makes it highly survivable and adds credibility to our second-strike capability. **Being containerized also means that unlike other Agni versions, it is mated.** For the same reason, the naval versions of nuclear missiles too would be in the mated state. India is working towards completing the nuclear triad. **This signifies departure from the existing practice of having de-mated missile.**

As per the open-source data, India has also developed Agni-Prime (Agni-P) which is highly accurate, maneuverable missile and would be able to target the mobile targets at 1000-2000 km. These anti area access and area denial characteristics will nullify adversary's capacity to operate their Naval ships near our coastline.

Of late, there has been speculation on the Chinese demonstration of the hypersonic weapon which in some recent test is known to have carried out orbits of the earth before hitting its target. (It had struck two dozen km away from the chosen target). **In the nuclear environment, it may give flexibility and deny interception but, it does not alter our nuclear response in accordance to our proclaimed second-strike policy. We would respond with massive nuclear strike regardless whether nuclear strike vehicle was ballistic, cruise missile or Hypersonic vehicle.** We however need to develop similar capability to increase our response flexibility and ability to intercept these threats before these strike our VA's and VP's.

⁴<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/agni-5-test-strategic-importance-7596504/>

⁵<https://www.financialexpress.com/defence/the-agni-v-implications-for-indias-nuclear-deterrent/2358385/>