



CENTRE FOR
JOINT WARFARE
STUDIES
(CENJOWS)

GEO-STRATEGIC SCAN

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**China, Bhutan
Hold Border
Talks, Ink Pact
on Functions
of JTT For
Delimitation,
Demarcation
of Boundary**

*Japan Becomes
1st Country Ever
To Fire
Electromagnetic
Railgun From An
Offshore Vessel*

**Pakistan
Successfully
Conducts Flight
Test Of Ababeel
Weapon System:
Army**

**IDF Stepping Up Strikes
To Create 'Best
Conditions' For 'Next
Phase Of War' On Hamas**



**China Agrees To
Nuclear Arms-
Control Talks With
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IDF Stepping Up Strikes To Create 'Best Conditions' For 'Next Phase Of War' On Hamas

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-stepping-up-strikes-to-create-best-conditions-for-next-phase-of-war-on-hamas/>

The Israeli military is preparing to immediately step up its strikes in the Gaza Strip to increase pressure on the Hamas terror group, which rules the coastal enclave, following its brutal October 7 assault on Israel. Military spokesperson says Israel 'strong on defense, offense' in north amid Hezbollah attacks, but 'main mission' is Gaza; IDF chief says Hamas readying surprises and so is Israel.

COMMENTS

Israel has currently entered the second stage of the offensive to bring down Hamas in the Gaza Strip; IDF troops are infiltrating Gaza to investigate, tearing down the intricate system of tunnels, and launching targeted missions against the rebels who were part of Oct 7 deadly attacks.

On 22nd October 2023, IDF released videos confirming, units were tasked with "training and preparing themselves in line to the agreed operational objectives" while relocating a huge force to the Gaza border to carry out large scale ground offensives. [1] The IDF is also countering Hezbollah and Palestinian Islamic Jihad forces for carrying out multiple missile assaults on IDF outposts and Israeli neighbourhoods. This has raised concerns in Jerusalem over the emergence of a multiple front war while eliminating Hamas in the southern region.[2]

Calculated Operational Approach by IDF

Following an aerial assault which killed hundreds of Palestinians, Israel launched an on-ground offensive approach, but it required hours to find out exactly what was transpiring [3]. The uncertainty was deliberate. The Israeli military's preliminary offensives, including its immediate objectives, is clouded with secrecy. Publishing brief black-and-white video recordings of containers, armoured bulldozers, and personnel in Gaza - the exact whereabouts of the troops, their divisions, what sort of ammunition, the extent to which they have infiltrated Gaza, remains undisclosed [4].

Facing a strong American persuasion to soften its retaliation for Hamas's slaughter of over 1,400 Israelis, Israel has taken a very calculated approach [5]. These are not necessarily the "targeted" operations like that of in the initial phase, consisting of a modest number of special forces troops that slipped back into Israel after the completion of their operation. This marks the commencement of what Israeli commanders fear is going to be a lengthy battle whereby Hamas [6], the terrorist group that rules Gaza, will be annihilated.

ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT

Netanyahu gave a televised statement on 27th Oct,2023, when the "second stage" of the war unfolded by widening the ground invasion. IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant also gave similar statements. [7] Unlike a lead to a hostage deal D-Day-kind of offensive, the IDF is approaching prudently and methodically throughout Gaza,[8] somewhat likely one hundred yards at each step, seeking to identify and eliminate Hamas ambushes and passageways within the outer edges and creating routes for armoured vehicles and backup reserves to enter Gaza's borders.



The IDF has hit more than 600 terror objectives in recent days, comprising arsenal depots, numerous anti-tank missile launch points, and Hamas terrorist organisation shelters and training sites. The Israeli Air Force on the other hand successfully intercepted and foiled aircraft threats near the Red Sea using the "Arrow" aircraft Defence System.[9] As of 31st October, Israel's gains into Gaza are across the three offensive lines.

[1] Staff, B. J. P. (2023, October 22). IDF, Shin Bet kill Hamas deputy in charge of artillery. The Jerusalem Post | JPost.com. <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/defense-news/article-769612>

[2] Oct. 29: US says Israel limiting Gaza ground offensive to keep from endangering hostages | The Times of Israel. (2023, October 30). The Times of Israel. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog-october-29-2023/>

[3] Rubin, S., Booth, W., & Zion, I. B. (2023, October 30). Early stages of Israeli ground assault in Gaza shrouded in secrecy. Washington Post. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/10/29/israel-ground-war-gaza/>

[4] Saab, B. (2023, October 31). Israel's 'second stage' ground operation is proof its priorities have changed. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/oct/30/israel-idf-strategy-gaza-benjamin-netanyahu-us>

[5] Al-Mughrabi, N., & Rose, E. (2023, October 24). "Humanitarian pause" in Hamas-Israel war is urged to aid Gaza civilians. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-promises-unrelenting-attacks-hamas-us-obama-urge-caution-2023-10-24/>

[6] Boot, M. (2023, October 24). Israel's ground war against Hamas: What to know. Council on Foreign Relations. <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/israels-ground-war-against-hamas-what-know>

[7] Oct. 28: Israel expands ground offensive inside Gaza; families urge "all for all" hostage deal | The Times of Israel. (2023, October 29). The Times of Israel. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog-october-28-2023/>

[8] Sabbagh, D. (2023b, November 1). What are Israel's aims in launching Gaza ground invasion? The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/oct/31/israel-is-conducting-dangerous-urban-warfare-but-its-ultimate-goals-remain-uncertain>

[9] Cnn. (2023, October 31). Israel says it thwarted drone and missile attack by Iran-backed Houthi group. Breaking Australian and World News Headlines - 9News. <https://www.9news.com.au/world/israel-gaza-conflict-israel-says-it-thwarted-drone-and-missile-attack-by-iran-backed-houthis/4e5e4f4b-3b8e-4089-bbc2-40604c8677fb>

ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT

At present the army is seizing control of residential neighbourhoods across the coastal flank, north of the Gaza City. After fierce clashes, they have also invaded Beit Hanoun through the northeast [10]. The most apparent activity is south of Gaza City, since the IDF have traversed the Salah Al Deen Road and continue to make their way towards the coastal area. Several terrorist groups that tried to attack the soldiers inside the Gaza Strip were foiled by infantry assisted by Israeli air force and drones.



Source: Institute of the Study of War

The Israeli military reportedly also came across militants descending into the mouth of tunnels towards the Erez border in the north. [11] According to Yair Golan, the IDF's former deputy chief of staff, the system of subterranean tunnels are critical for Hamas to seek safety in the tunnels and passageways stockpile munitions there, and are most likely utilising facilities to keep Israeli captives. [12] Satellite imagery below shows structures and buildings, razed down by Israeli bombings.

Additionally, IDF forces claim to have eliminated important Hamas top officials in the recent week, according to IDF and ISA joint declaration which includes Muwaman Hijazi, an influential member in Hamas' anti-tank missile group, Muhammad Awdallah, senior commander in Hamas' manufacturing facility, Jamil Baba, leader of Hamas' maritime forces in its Central Brigade, Muhammad Safadi, commander of the Tuffah Battalion's anti-tank missile group. [13]

[10] Holder, J., Cai, W., & Lutz, E. (2023, October 31). Satellite images show Israel's invasion in North Gaza. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/10/30/world/middleeast/israel-invasion-gaza-satellite-image-map.html>

[11] Hutchinson, B. (2023b, October 30). Israel-Hamas conflict: Timeline and key developments. ABC News. <https://abcnews.go.com/International/timeline-surprise-rocket-attack-hamas-israel/story?id=103816006>

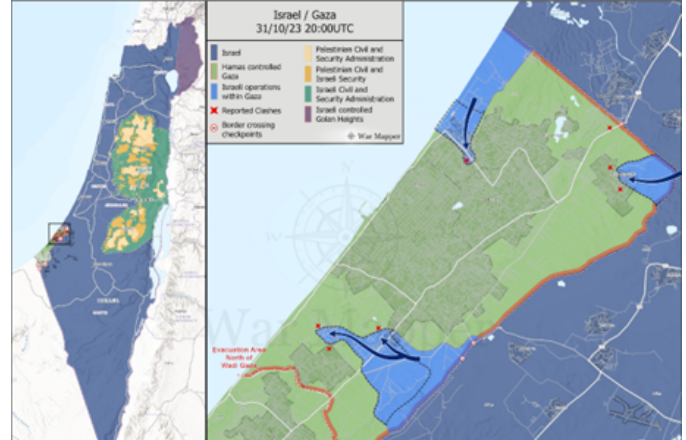
[12] D'Agata, C. (2023, October 17). Israeli military faces challenging urban warfare in Gaza. CBS News. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/israeli-military-urban-warfare-gaza-strip-hamas-underground-tunnels/>

[13] IDF kills 5 Hamas commanders; Gallant: Israel will win, next 75 years depend on it | The Times of Israel. (2023, October 27). The Times of Israel. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-kills-5-hamas-commanders-gallant-israel-will-win-next-75-years-depend-on-it/>

ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT



Source: The New York Times



Source: War Mapper

(Disclaimer: This map depicts IDF activity and not areas under its jurisdiction)

INFORMATION WARFARE

Iran's affiliates in Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq, as well as extremist groups like Al Qaeda and the Islamic State that were earlier at conflict with Hamas, are participating in the conflict digitally. The upsurge in online propaganda and misinformation is unprecedented — a mirror of the world's geopolitical split. Iran, Russia, and, to a lesser extent, China have utilised official media and several major social media platforms to assist Hamas while criticising Israel's main backer, America.

On 17th Oct 2023, Hamas reported that the Israeli planes struck the al-Ahli Arab hospital, killing 471 people; however, the explosion was most likely triggered by a missile shot by Islamic Jihad of Palestine (PJI) from within the area [14]. According to Israel, Hamas' primary C2 headquarters is located beneath the congested Dar al-Shifa hospital [15], where physicians believe 19,000 injured patients remain and additional 14,000 have sought refuge, despite IDF pleas for immediate abandonment. The information, which is intense, emotionally charged, ideologically bent, and frequently misleading, has fanned rage and even violence well beyond Gaza, fueling worries of a larger confrontation.



Source: IDF

UN VOTE & REGIONAL RESPONSE

The abrupt and brutal reintroduction of the Palestinian issue has disrupted the normalisation with Israelis that was easing Arab-Israeli ties for the past three years. Palestinian hopes, which were previously incorrectly ignored due to fatigue, in the absence of a diplomatic resolution to the Israeli-Arab issue, are popping up in the public eye. In addition to the outrage breaking out in Arab streets in response to visuals of civilian deaths in Gaza, the whole region's security architecture, which was designed to counter Tehran, is currently under challenge from the possibility of a regional war across new areas, from Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Iran, Yemen, towards the Jewish state .

The top leaders of the Middle East have unified in their opposition to Israel and refused to call out Hamas's October 7 atrocities. They have also criticised the West for their unconditional backing of Israel, given the horrific civilian death counts and the magnitude of humanitarian needs. [16] Yemen has declared war on Israel on 31st October, with several countries across the globe gradually pulling out their ambassadors from Israel. Israel on the other hand, has pulled out its ambassador on 17th October, while issuing travel advisory for its citizens to travel across specific countries in the region.

After the UNSC was not successful in taking action for two weeks, the UNGA voted, with Americans and Russians utilising their veto rights to oppose measures backed by each other. In the UNGA vote that followed, 120 nations approved the Jordan led UNGA resolution on 27th October calling for immediate ceasefire in Gaza, notably which also included France. Meanwhile 14 countries, including the US and Israel, voted against. Forty-five nations abstained from voting notably India and other states like Albania, Tunisia, UK, Germany, and Canada. A suggested adjustment from Canada urged the resolution to openly denounce Hamas and their "hostage-taking." Representatives first voted on the proposed change, but it was defeated with 88 votes in support, 55 against, and 23 abstentions. The declaration is not legally enforceable, but it represents an indicator of international sentiment as war between Israel and Hamas. Hamas has stated that it is not responsible for defending citizens in the Gaza Strip and the enormous tunnelling infrastructure beneath the strip is exclusively for the safety of Hamas militants. According to Moussa Abu Marzouk, a top Hamas official, "75% of the population is a refugee, and it is the UN's accountability for safeguarding these people through the UN relief agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA), that delivers fundamental amenities for Palestinian refugees. Israelis are bound by the Geneva Convention to meet the requirements of Gazans." [17] Over the last two decades, Hamas has launched thousands of missiles against Israeli cities, in violation of the exact same convention.

[14] Hamas Fails to Make Case That Israel Struck Hospital. (2023, October 22). The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/22/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-hospital-evidence.html>

[15] A Close Look at Some Key Evidence in the Gaza Hospital Blast. (2023, October 24). The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/24/world/middleeast/gaza-hospital-israel-hamas-video.html>

[16] How the Israel-Hamas War Impacts Regional Relations. (n.d.). United States Institute of Peace. <https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/10/how-israel-hamas-war-impacts-regional-relations>

[17] Top Hamas official declares group is not responsible for defending Gazan civilians | The Times of Israel. (2023, October 31). The Times of Israel. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/top-hamas-official-claims-group-is-not-responsible-for-defending-gazan-civilians>

ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT

India's position globally stands true to its global commitments. At the onset of the war, Indian PM Modi was amongst the initial global leaders to criticise the atrocities of Hamas assaults on Israel. The Ministry of External Affairs reaffirmed its traditional position favouring a two state solution. In the midst of the war unfolding in Gaza, India remained committed to its humanitarian efforts by sending over 38 tonnes of aid, comprising medications and healthcare supplies, to the Palestinian through to Egypt's border. India justified its abstention our choice to abstain from the latest UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolution for a ceasefire in the conflict between Israel and Hamas as an outrage over the lack of an "explicit condemnation" [18] of the barbaric October 7 terror attack on Israel. India's resolute stance on terror, was outlined by the Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, shouldn't be doubted.

Voting Ended		10/27/2023	3:49:04 PM
Item 5 - A/ES-10/L.25			
Protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations			
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AUSTRALIA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONGO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GRENADA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LIECHTENSTEIN
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BULGARIA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ERITREA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> JAPAN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOROCCO
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			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ZIMBABWE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN FAVOUR: 120	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGAINST: 14	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ABSTENTION: 45	

Source: UN

THE UNKNOWNNS IN THE WAR

Israel has tremendous conventional strategic advantages, including air dominance and a competent, sophisticated combat army with 400 tanks on standby and more in reserve. The country's current military strength is believed to be around 126,000, with 360,000 reserve troops signed up, yet its armed forces need to safeguard its northern region from Hezbollah and deal with the worsening security scenario in the West Bank. In contrast, Hamas enjoys proxy support from states.

Hamas has additionally attempted to exploit ambiguity. The captives' plight highlights Israel's dilemma as it strives to fulfil its strategic aim of eliminating Hamas while also working to rescue the men, women, and children kept in sites presumably distributed throughout Gaza. Hamas seems to recognise Israel's concerns, by putting pressure on the Israeli leadership to agree to compromises, especially a conditional cease-fire. There are also questions about the transportation of relief supplies and if certain captives are dealt with as PoWs instead of civilians. Apprehensions persist about hostages being held in several locations, not solely by Hamas but also by other aggressors such as PJI and might be transferred to other places dynamically.

[18] Sharma, K. (2023, October 28). Explained: Why India Did Not Vote On UN Resolution Seeking Gaza Ceasefire. NDTV. <https://www.ndtv.com/video/news/reporter-vlogs/explained-why-india-did-not-vote-on-un-resolution-seeking-gaza-ceasefire-734999>

ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT

The unknown is this war is the energy or fuel shortages for Hamas to power the missiles, it intends to fire into Israel and the power stations that supply clean air and electricity to its extensive network of underground tunnels. Another dimension is the extent of the humanitarian crisis. Israel, although has let only a handful of vehicles delivering provisions, water, and medication into the enclave, it maintained a strong stance to prohibit fuel delivery, claiming that Hamas would utilise them for military reasons.

A regional conflict cannot be completely ruled out: the danger of Hamas' eradication and the killings of the Palestinian people may drive Hezbollah and other states and non-state actors to join the conflict. Since Hezbollah's military assets, include almost close to 150,000 precision-guided weapons and hundreds of long-range rockets, considerably outnumber the assets of Hamas, and could prove disastrous for Israelis. Hezbollah and others may worry an Israeli victory in Gaza might bolden it to broaden its offensive to remove its adversaries. An Israeli setback in this war might motivate the antagonistic pair to strike the ultimate blow to their enemy.

Much will depend on how well Israel can achieve its difficult war goals against Hamas without causing unacceptable killing of cititations. Beyond Gaza, Israel will need to address the broader network of threats and armed groups backed by Iran now menacing the country on multiple fronts. These include threats from Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen, as well as from within the Palestinian population in the West Bank.



Source: AP News

Russia-Ukraine Conflict: A Glance

1. *Reuters* <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russia-pummels-east-ukrainian-town-avdiivka-heavy-fightinghttps://www.reuters.com/world/europe/despite-losing-limbs-ukrainian-sappers-return-work-clearing-land-mines-2023->
2. *The Economist*: <https://www.economist.com>
3. *The NEWSWEEK*: <https://www.newsweek.com/avdiivka-russia-ukraine-front-kyiv-1837288>
5. *TIME Magazine*: <https://time.com/6315601/west-mammoth-ukrainians-soldiers/russia-putin-nuclear-test-threat/> & <https://www.newsweek.com/russia-military-dolphins-sevastopol-novoozerne-crimea-ukraine-> & <https://www.newsweek.com/zelensky-hit-double-blow-european-ally-slovakia-fico-hungary-orban-sanctions-nato-eu-1838512>
6. *The Politico*: <https://www.politico.com/news/2023/10/13/ukrainian-pilots-expected-to-start-f-16-training-in-arizona-next-week-00121460>
7. *The Eurasian Times*: <https://www.eurasiantimes.com/russia-overwhelms-ukrainian-defenses-with-most-complex/>
8. *The Financial Express*; <https://www.financialexpress.com/world-news/ukraines-leader-says-russian-naval-assets-are-no-longer-safe-in-the-black-sea-near-crimea/3285392/>
9. *The Times of India*: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/europe/ukrainian-drone-struck-russian-nuclear-waste-facility-ministry-says/articleshow>

UKRAINIAN OFFENSIVE

- **Ground Offensive.** Russia has significantly bulked up its forces around the devastated city of Bakhmut in the east and has switched its troops from a defensive posture to taking "active actions", a Ukrainian military commander said on Monday. Russia captured Bakhmut, the scene of some of the bloodiest fighting of the 20-month war, in May. Ukraine has been on the counteroffensive since June to try to retake occupied land in the south and east, including the town.
- **Air Vector.** Ukraine made successful strikes on Russian airfields near the occupied cities of Berdyansk and Luhansk located in southern and eastern Ukraine, respectively, on Oct 17, 2023—the U.S.-provided Army Tactical Missile System, or ATACMS, which were used for the first time. As a ground-launched ballistic missile system, ATACMS is highly survivable and responsive and will allow Ukrainian forces to reach deeper into Russian-controlled territory. Ukraine can use it to attack fleeting targets, provided its targeting cycle can move quickly enough.
- **Naval Vector.** A missile reportedly struck an ammunition depot belonging to Russia's Black Sea Fleet near the port of Sevastopol. These recent Ukrainian attacks have denied the Russian fleet safe bases and secure maritime corridors in the western part of the Black Sea as Kyiv's troops look to squeeze the Kremlin's occupying forces out of the Crimean Peninsula. Russia has now deployed combat dolphins closer to the area in Southern Ukraine and the Russian naval base in Novoozerne to secure their bases.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of October 24, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Dauphinais
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* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Source: <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-24-2023>

- On Oct. 20-21, Russian forces launched missiles and drones at Kryvyi Rih in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast, causing damage to the region's industrial infrastructure overnight. Russian forces have incorporated guided aerial bombs into their operations in the ongoing conflict near the frontline town of Avdiivka in Donetsk Oblast. Russia has also been pushing in recent weeks to encircle and capture the eastern town of Avdiivka.
- Russian offensive operations are taking place near the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line as of Oct 23, 2023, in the Donetsk-Zaporizhzhia Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast where they have "made confirmed gains in some areas. These pushes come as Russia continues to conduct air strikes at military and civilian targets in Kharkiv, Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson Oblasts.

RUSSIAN OFFENSIVE

Diplomats from around 60 countries will be in Malta on Oct 29-30, 2023, for talks intended to bring Russia's war in Ukraine, now entering its 21st month, to an end. The meetings aim to marshal international support for a peace formula created by Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelensky. He wants the complete withdrawal of Russian troops, the prosecution of officials responsible for war crimes, and reparations for Ukraine. Russia will be notably absent. It has dismissed the Malta summit as a non-starter and refuses to participate.

RUSSIAN OFFENSIVE

- A Russian anti-aircraft missile hit a sprawling mail facility near the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv late on Oct 21 2023, killing six postal workers and injuring 17 others.
- Russia fired 14 attack drones and a cruise missile at Ukraine's south and east overnight, but debris from a downed drone damaged a warehouse at the Black Sea port of Odesa, officials said on Oct 23, 2023.

COMMENTS

Ukrainian forces have perhaps just a couple more weeks before their counter-offensive gets stuck in the autumnal mud. They may make one final push before time runs out: There are reported build-up of troops on the Ukrainian-held bank of the Dnieper in the southern Kherson province and the intermittent raids that Ukraine has carried out on the Russian-occupied side. Ukraine is possibly seeking to draw Russian forces away from the neighbouring Zaporizhia region, which could allow Ukraine to push towards the city of Tokmak, the recapture of which has become the minimum objective for the counter-offensive. Ukraine will probably not achieve the goal, underlining that its offensive has failed to produce large territorial gains. However, it has achieved significant wins in Crimea and the Black Sea. Also, the Ukrainians have inflicted heavy losses of Russian equipment and men.

The primary focus of Russian forces has transitioned to aerial operations. Russian military units are utilizing an array of weaponry, including surface-to-surface missiles, anti-aircraft missiles, and precision-guided aerial munitions to target areas both along the front lines and in more distant locations. Almost simultaneously, tactical aviation launched both guided aerial bombs at the frontline territories and X-59 cruise missiles at deeper regions. Russians claim to have shot L-39, three Su-25, 19 AFU MiG-29s and three Mi-8s from Oct 14 to Oct 25. The reasons can be a change of tactics, RVV-BD Long-range air-to-air missile deployment in Crimea and the use of A-50U AWACS along with S-400 IAADS. The role of modified Lancet loitering munitions called as Izdeliye-53 used by Russians, which has a range of 40 km and fly for 40 minutes to hit Ukrainian artillery, has been devastating. The modified Lancet the automatic guidance that can distinguish targets and increase its success rate. Russia has also used their mass produced kamikaze drones like Ghoul and Privet-82 during the conflict.

Whether Ukraine prevails over its Russian aggressor will depend on many factors. Few matters as much as the ability of the West's defence companies to produce enough munitions. Ukraine needs artillery shells and air-defence missiles to stay in the fight. Its allies also need to replenish their depleted arsenals of weapons. Ukraine has built concrete defences around essential parts of its electricity grid and has acquired emergency generators to prevent total blackouts. Some Russian missiles were shot down before reaching their targets due to the deployment of Western ground-based air-defence systems, such as Patriot and IRIS-T missile batteries. Ukraine already uses many US-made AD systems like the NASAMS, Patriot, Hawk (another Cold War-era platform the US no longer uses), and the French-Italian SAMP/T. It is awaiting the induction of F-16 aircraft in combat. Ukraine is facing a growing challenge in Central Europe as newly elected Prime Minister of Slovakia Robert Fico has asked for a pushback and said that Slovakia would no longer provide military aid to Ukraine. The meeting in Malta indicates the willingness of the nations to bring an end to this conflict. Across Ukraine, a swath of secret factory entrepreneurs and government officials are trying to create a military tech sector to face the Russian onslaught. So far, these resources have helped develop improvised drones and integration of Western sensors with existing systems and have saved Ukraine from the cyber and electronic warfare operational challenges by identifying the attacks and assisting with remediation. Ukraine has pioneered using simple, cheap, and commercially available drones for military purposes by strapping them with explosives in the front and flying them into Russian targets.

Israel-Hamas Conflict Teetering on the Edge: US' Diplomacy Impacts West Asia

<https://www.thequint.com/opinion/israel-hamas-conflict-benjamin-netanyahu-palestine-united-states-joe-biden-middle-east#read-more>

The US wants to ensure that the conflict remains localised and to deter any intervention by external powers. The massive rocket attacks from Hamas-controlled Gaza on Israel and the simultaneous infiltration by over a thousand Hamas fighters and their terrorist assault on civilians on 7 October, shocked and stunned Israel and the world. Over 5000 rockets and ground attacks hit Israeli towns and settlements near the Gaza border, triggering another round of hostilities, and exposing the fragile peace in the West Asian region.

COMMENTS



Source: The Quint

The Israel-Hamas conflict enters the fourth week. So far Israel has been pounding the narrow strip of Gaza with numerous aerial attacks, addressing more than 5-600 targets in a day. Now, as on 31 October, Israel seems to have entered a new phase in the war against Hamas in Gaza, Israeli ground troops and tanks are edging closer to Gaza City. Israeli forces seem to be embarking soon on a nightmarish battle of the tunnels, as stated by various intelligence agencies to be a network of 650 kms plus. Several regional players are also making well calculated moves, each one trying to assert itself. Circumstances are forcing Israel to commit its forces at more than six to seven sectors. Hezbollah is threatening to escalate attacks from the north. Israel has to confront Iran or armed groups affiliated with it- Hezbollah in Lebanon and Houthis in Yemen. These groups are equipped with sophisticated weaponry containing a whole range of missiles capable of reaching Israel. Iran has hinted at getting more directly involved. Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey could yet play crucial roles in the coming weeks. Saudi Arabia so far has been staying out of the fray. Qatar may be trying to negotiate with Hamas.

Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu has called for a 'long and difficult' war against Hamas. Israeli military action has caused more than 8500 deaths (according to the Gaza health ministry) of the Gazans and numerous people rendered homeless, without electricity, water and acute shortages of medical supplies. This has sparked widespread anger in the region and around the world.

The conflict has the potential to escalate into a global conflict. Global powers are getting involved in a big way. The US has been vigorously undertaking shuttle diplomacy. At the same time it is preparing its military options as a step towards bolstering deterrence. It has positioned two carrier groups in the region to deter any external intervention. Containing the conflict is a top US priority and the US has ramped up its outreach in the region. The US Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited Israel (twice within a week on 12 and 16 October 2023) to demonstrate support and express strong solidarity with Israel during times of need, at the same time urging restraint to protect Palestinian civilians. "You may be strong enough on your own to defend yourself. But as long as America exists, you will never ever have to. We will always be there by your side [1] ," Blinken told Netanyahu. Blinken later met the Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas. Blinken also visited Jordan to meet King Abdullah II and Qatar to explore avenues for mediation. This was followed by the US getting the Congressional approval for additional USD 2 billion fund for Ukraine and Israel.

The US President Joe Biden, accompanied by Blinken visited Israel on October 18, 2023. The President offered unambiguous support and expressed complete agreement with the right of Israel to defend itself against terrorist attacks by Hamas. This is the first time that a US President has visited Israel during the wartime, he has been stressing upon Israel to operate by rule of law. Aboard the flight back to Washington, Biden claimed to have made progress when he spoke by phone with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el Sisi who agreed to reopen his country's sealed border crossing with Gaza and allow up to 20 trucks carrying humanitarian aid supplies to cross- a small step albeit a correct one. In a post on social media platform X, Biden tweeted, "As hard as it is, we cannot give up on peace. We cannot give up on a two-state solution." Post the visit, Biden on October 20, 2023 suggested that Hamas assault (October 07, 2023) may have been motivated due to Hamas's concerns about Israel's normalisation of relations with Saudi Arabia. The US has for long been propagating 'two state theory' as a robust solution. The US has been taking steps towards coordinating international response to curtail the worsening humanitarian crisis. Qatar, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Turkey and Kuwait are some of the influential regional players with which the US has been coordinating for a solution. Coaxing Israeli and Palestinian leaders into talks to settle the 75 year old dispute of the Middle East is not going to be an easy task, especially with so many players in the fray. Efforts to resolve the crisis are intensifying with top US officials meeting leaders across the region. Notwithstanding the hectic diplomatic activities, in order to bolster deterrence posture in the region, the US has further strengthened its military presence in the region.

please cite the source.



Source: Tehran Times

US troops and military contractors in Iraq and Syria have faced by at least three drones and rocket attacks, by Iranian backed militia groups since the crisis unfolded on October 07, 2023. Iran is a long-time backer of Hamas and also Hezbollah in Lebanon. The US with an aim to warn Iran and its proxies, has deployed substantial military forces in the region including aircraft carriers and Marines. Israel has many lots of fronts open, and one of the most serious would be a massive rocket attack by Iran backed Hezbollah, which is estimated to possess about 1,30,000 rockets.

The US aircraft carrier Gerald R. Ford was already in the Mediterranean, it carries four F/A-18 Super Hornet fighter squadrons, electronic warfare and command and control aircraft, accompanied by warships armed with Tomahawk cruise missiles.

The US on October 14, 2023 ordered a second aircraft carrier and its affiliated warships to the eastern Mediterranean to signal its US's strong commitment to Israel's security and resolve to deter any state or non-state actor seeking to escalate the conflict and is expected to arrive in the next few days.

Besides this the additional land-based fighter aircraft are also being rushed to various air bases of the Persian Gulf region, thereby doubling the number of F-16, A-10 and F-15E squadrons. Combined with the four squadrons of F/A-18 jets aboard each carrier, the US will have formidable fighter aircraft strength of close to 100 aircraft.

The Pentagon has also sent a small team of Special Operations forces to Israel to assist with intelligence and planning for any operations to locate and rescue over the 200 hostages that Hamas is believed to be holding hostages. Besides this, the US is known to contribute to Israel more than USD 3 billion in military assistance every year. The US Central Command's HQ is located in Qatar (Al Udeid air base) with close to 8000 troops. US also has various bases and troops available in Syria, Turkey, Iraq, Kuwait, Jordan, UAE, Bahrain and Oman, virtually all counties in the region have has US troops presence. The US has also sent some bombs, artillery shells and other ammunition to Israel. Since the outbreak of the conflict, there has been hectic shuttle diplomacy by the US in order to explore all avenues to control the spread of conflict and deter Iran and its proxies to escalate the conflict to other regions.

The Mysteries And Dangers That Trail Li Keqiang's Death

https://asia.nikkei.com/Editor-s-Picks/China-up-close/Analysis-The-mysteries-and-dangers-that-trail-Li-Keqiang-s-death?utm_campaign=IC_china_up_close_free&utm_medium=email&utm_source=NA_newsletter&utm_content=article_link

The death of former Chinese Premier Li Keqiang at the age of 68 last week has raised the curtain on a new act of China's complex political drama. Li was seen as President Xi Jinping's "eternal rival,". Li and Xi were both in line to succeed former President Hu Jintao. And Li was not part of Xi's Chinese Communist Party faction. This rivalry, combined with a series of mysteries, has led to the spread of conspiracy theories regarding Li's death.

China's flag was lowered to half-mast in Tiananmen Square on Thursday as former Chinese premier Li Keqiang was laid to rest in Beijing, a week after he died unexpectedly of a heart attack at age 68. Li was cremated at the Babaoshan Revolutionary Cemetery, the resting place of prominent government officials and "revolutionary heroes" from China's recent past.

COMMENTS

Until his very last day, China's late former Premier Li Keqiang was an "eternal rival" to President Xi Jinping. Back in 2007, Xi turned the tables and emerged as the top candidate to succeed Hu Jintao as president, having been promoted one rank higher than Li, until then the odds-on favorite. But Xi never let his guard down around Li. This rivalry, combined with a series of mysteries, has led to the spread of conspiracy theories regarding the popular former premier's sudden death during his visit to Shanghai on 27 Oct. Li was not sent to the best hospital in town after his heart attack. It is anticipated that Li could have been behind the harsh advice Chinese Communist Party elders conveyed carried to Xi and other current leaders at this summer's Beidaihe conclave.



Source: Nikkei Asia

Authorities are now on alert for possible movements by young Chinese who are already frustrated by the country's jobless situation. An official notice has been sent to Universities across the country to restrict unauthorized memorial events for Li. With these mysteries left to simmer, Li Keqiang died, leaving the Chinese to wonder all over again—after retiring, don't former members of the Politburo Standing Committee, the party's top decision-making body, receive careful medical attention for the rest of their lives? But there is no sign he was taken to the hospital in Shanghai that boasts China's most advanced technology and its best cardiologists.

Waves of people mourning Li Keqiang also turned up in Zhengzhou, the capital city of Henan, where Li once served as the top provincial official. Someone left a message reading, "Heaven is watching what humans are doing. The firmament has eyes." Li uttered the very same words this past spring, immediately before retiring as premier and while bidding farewell to senior government officials. The remark, which can be interpreted as implicit criticism of Xi, was not officially reported at the time. China's zeitgeist in the wake of Li's death is such that the Xi administration needs to think hard about the timing of a memorial event for Li and what security measures it will take. How might these young adults interpret Li's parting words to senior government officials, echoed after his death? The answer holds the key to China's political and social future.

China Agrees To Nuclear Arms-Control Talks With US

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/asia/china-united-states-nuclear-arms-discussion-foreign-ministry-3890201?s=08>



Source: Reuters

China and the United States will discuss nuclear arms control next week, the first such talks since the Obama administration, the Wall Street Journal reported on 01 Nov 23. China's Foreign Ministry said after a visit by Foreign Minister Wang Yi to Washington that the two countries would hold "consultations on arms control and non-proliferation" in the coming days, as well as separate talks on maritime affairs and other issues. US National Security Advisor said in 2021 that the Chinese and US presidents had agreed to "look to begin to carry forward discussion on strategic stability", a reference to Washington's concerns about Beijing's nuclear weapons build-up. But the White House was quick to say at the time that the discussions would not resemble formal arms reduction talks, like those the US has had with Russia.

COMMENTS

The overdue arms talks would likely focus on promoting greater transparency of each countries' nuclear doctrines and more effective crisis-communication channels. On the rare nuclear arms control talks between both sides, as per Dr Benjamin Zala, a fellow of international relations with the Australian National University's Coral Bell School of Asia Pacific Affairs, the US and China “are on completely different pages when it comes to the need to reduce nuclear risks”, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. There's really been no common ground, and really very little incentive for either side, therefore, to engage in direct talks.

The talks are aimed at avoiding a three-way arms race between the US, China and Russia. But if the US is planning on being able to target the forces of both China and Russia at the same time, that will be very difficult, if not impossible to do, if both Russia and China have arsenals the same size as the US. Observers said the talks will have significant implications for global security and stability.



Source: The Hill

China, Bhutan Hold Border Talks, Ink Pact on Functions of JTT For Delimitation, Demarcation of Boundary

<https://www.outlookindia.com/international/china-bhutan-hold-border-talks-ink-pact-on-functions-of-jtt-for-delimitation-demarcation-of-boundary-news-326472>

- China and Bhutan on Tuesday signed a "Cooperation Agreement" outlining the responsibilities and functions of the Joint Technical Team (JTT) on the delimitation and demarcation of the boundary between the two countries. Bhutan's Foreign Minister Dr Tandi Dorji, who is currently visiting Beijing and China's Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong held the 25th Round of Boundary Talks on Monday and Tuesday. Dorji met Chinese Vice President Han Zheng and held talks with Foreign Minister Wang Yi during which they urged Bhutan to establish diplomatic ties with China and resolve the boundary issue as soon as possible to transform the relations between the two neighbours into legal form. The two sides held in-depth discussions on the boundary negotiations and noted the progress made through a series of Expert Group Meetings since the 24th Round of Boundary Talks in 2016, a joint press release issued by the Bhutanese Foreign Ministry said.
- During the talks, the two leaders of the delegations signed the Cooperation Agreement between Bhutan and China on the Responsibilities and Functions of the JTT on the Delimitation and Demarcation of the Bhutan-China Boundary. The JTT was established during the 13th Expert Group Meeting to assist the Expert Group in the implementation of the MoU on the Three-Step Roadmap. Two sides agreed to continue working together to simultaneously push forward the implementation of all steps of the Three-Step Roadmap, adding that both sides agreed to build on the positive momentum. The two sides also exchanged views on enhancing bilateral relations and matters of mutual interest, the press release said.
- The Chinese Foreign Ministry press release quoted Dorji as saying that Bhutan firmly abides by the one-China principle meaning Taiwan and Tibet are part of China and stands ready to work with China for an early settlement of the boundary issue and advance the political process of establishing diplomatic relations. In his talks with Dorji, Wang also said China always prioritises neighbourhood diplomacy in its overall diplomacy and adheres to the principle that all countries, big or small, are equals. The Chinese press release also said Dorji expressed Thimphu's backing for President Xi Jinping's Global Security Initiative (GSI), the Global Development Initiative (GDI) and the Global Cultural Initiative (GCI) to further Beijing's strategic initiatives.

COMMENTS



Source: NDTV

China and Bhutan do not have formal diplomatic relations. They maintain contact through periodic visits by officials. In the recent past, China has made attempts to establish diplomatic ties with Bhutan and advance negotiations to settle border dispute. Bhutanese Prime Minister Lotay Tshering had remarked in March 2023 that Bhutan hopes to complete the demarcation of territories with China within one or two meetings. This visit of Bhutanese Foreign Minister to Beijing appears to be one such meeting. China claims to have resolved the boundary disputes with its 12 neighbours, but is yet to settle its border disputes with India and Bhutan. The recent Chinese efforts to settle boundary dispute with Bhutan and establish diplomatic relations appears to be aimed at isolating India, having serious security implications, especially when Chinese attempts to build a road in Doklam in 2017 was thwarted by India, leading to a stand-off triggering tensions, which ended after China dropped its plan to build the road. Since then, China appears to have used its old salami-slicing tactics to pressure Bhutan.

Consequent to statement of Bhutanese Prime Minister on this matter in March 2023, Bhutan King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck visited Delhi in April 2023 and met Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during which the two leaders resolved to expand the close ties between the countries and subsequently Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra had said the two countries share ties characterised by trust, goodwill and mutual understanding and India and Bhutan remain in close touch relating to our shared interest, including security interest. As China Bhutan boundary issues also include two tri-junctions, including with India, bilateral resolution of such disputes between China and Bhutan is likely to be inappropriate. Therefore, considering the importance of this matter and its latest developments, India needs to approach this issue sensitively and cautiously.

Dhaka: One Dead, Several Injured after Bangladesh Opposition Rally against PM Hasina Turns Violent

<https://theprint.in/world/dhaka-one-dead-several-injured-after-bangladesh-opposition-rally-against-pm-hasina-turns-violent/1823654/>

One police personnel was killed and 40 other men in uniform, along with more than a hundred civilians were injured after Bangladesh's principal opposition party, BNP, after a protest demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and free and fair elections turned violent on Saturday. BNP had pledged a peaceful rally on 28 October and received permission to hold it in front of the party's central office at Nayapaltan. Despite cooperation from the government and law enforcement agencies, the BNP failed to keep their promise, resulting in significant disorder and public disturbances. The situation escalated as BNP supporters also targeted the residence of the Chief Justice of Bangladesh during the rally. After noon on Friday, they attacked the Chief Justice's house, the Judges Quarters, the Police Box, public transportation and various government properties, including hospitals, according to sources. Bangladesh's Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal said "video footage clearly shows the involvement of a Chhatra Dal (BNP's students' wing) leader in the policeman's death". The Home Minister expressed that "the assault on the Chief Justice's residence was an unprecedented incident", vowing "strict action against those responsible." The Home Ministry stood its ground even in the face of protests, stating that "the country's constitution does not provide for a caretaker government."

COMMENTS

Bangladesh's general elections are expected to be held in January 2024. The BNP and its partners have been demanding Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to step aside to allow an impartial caretaker administration to oversee the voting this time, which the Awami League has rejected. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina returned from Brussels on 27 October 2023 after attending the 'Global Gateway Forum' and on her return, BNP supporters erupted in protests across Dhaka, leading to the above mentioned violent incident on 28 October 2023. During the next few months, the tensions between the BNP and the ruling Awami League are likely to intensify and may lead to few violent incidents as well. In addition to the domestic political turmoil, the US, the European Union and their allies insist that the voting in upcoming Bangladesh elections should be free, fair and inclusive. US has cautioned the Awami League government against a repeat of the alleged manipulation, intimidation and boycotts by major parties that marred previous elections. In September this year, the US imposed visa restrictions on individuals responsible for, or complicit in, undermining the democratic election process in Bangladesh, certain members of law enforcement bodies, the ruling party and the political opposition and their immediate families, making them ineligible to enter the US. This appears to have irked Bangladesh's political elite, especially the ruling party and government officials, many of whom have interests and family ties in US and many of them have responded through verbal and social media attacks on the US, focusing their anger on US Ambassador to Dhaka, Peter Haas, making him feel vulnerable for his own safety, which is a significant development and may invite some serious reactions from the US in next few months.

PM's BRF Participation Reaffirms Commitment to CPEC

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2442256/pms-brf-participation-reaffirms-commitment-to-cpec>

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar recently concluded his significant visit to China, which reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to timely completion of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects, a flagship of the Belt and Road Initiative, besides profusely advocating the need for collective efforts for regional connectivity and shared prosperity.

COMMENTS

China held the 3rd Belt and Road Forum (BRF) in the third week of October 2023 which was attended by 23 heads of state, a figure less than that present during the earlier BRFs held in 2017 and 2019. The BRF also coincided with the 10th anniversary of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and was attended by the interim PM of Pakistan, Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar. On the sidelines of the forum, the Pak PM met the Chinese President Xi Jinping. He was reported to be quoting the relationship between Pakistan and China as "made in heaven" and that Pakistan will always stand with China and "trust it blindly". The two countries agreed to progress the development of the Gwadar Port and the ML-1 upgradation projects. During the visit, Pakistan and China signed 20 agreements and MoUs covering cooperation on the BRI, infrastructure, mining, industry, green and low-carbon development, health, space cooperation, digital economy, development cooperation and export of agricultural products to China. The two sides also agreed to strengthen cooperation in the mining industry, including in the fields of geological survey, joint research on geology and minerals, training of talent, and planning of mining industrial parks, IT, industrialization and agriculture sectors as well [1].

The Pak PM also held meetings with CEOs and executives of leading Chinese companies like Minmetals, China Communication Construction Company (CCCC), Metallurgical Corporation of China (MCC), China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC), Amer International Group, COFCO, China Energy, Power China and China Gezhouba Group to invest in Pakistan hailing investor-friendly policies of Pakistan. An MoU was also signed between the Pakistan Refinery Limited and the United Energy Group of China for investment of USD 1.5 billion to help increase the petrol production capacity of the refinery from 250,000 metric tons to 1.6 million metric tons and high-speed diesel from 0.6 million metric tons to 2 million metric tons. The provincial minister of the Punjab province also sought investments from Chinese companies to invest in the region in areas of modern agricultural techniques, food processing, technical demand-driven technical education and vocational training [2].

[1]"Joint Press Statement between the People's Republic of China and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan". Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Govt of Pakistan, October 20, 2023. URL: <https://mofa.gov.pk/joint-press-statement-between-the-peoples-republic-of-china-and-the-islamic-republic-of-pakistan/>

[2] "3rd Belt and Road Forum strengthens China-Pakistan ties for shared growth". National Herald Tribune, October 30, 2023

Overall, Pakistan's attendance in the BRF saw it seeking more investments and cooperation from the Chinese Government and businesses for Pakistan's economic development and fast tracking of CPEC projects. Pakistan was also seen reinforcing its support to China in latter's issues like the one-China Principle, issues concerning the South China Sea, Hong Kong, Xinjiang and Xizang and to China's Global Development Initiative (GDI), Global Security Initiative (GSI) and Global Civilization Initiative (GCI). At the same time, China has its apprehensions regarding the threat to Chinese workers, projects and investments in the politically and security sensitive environment of Pakistan.

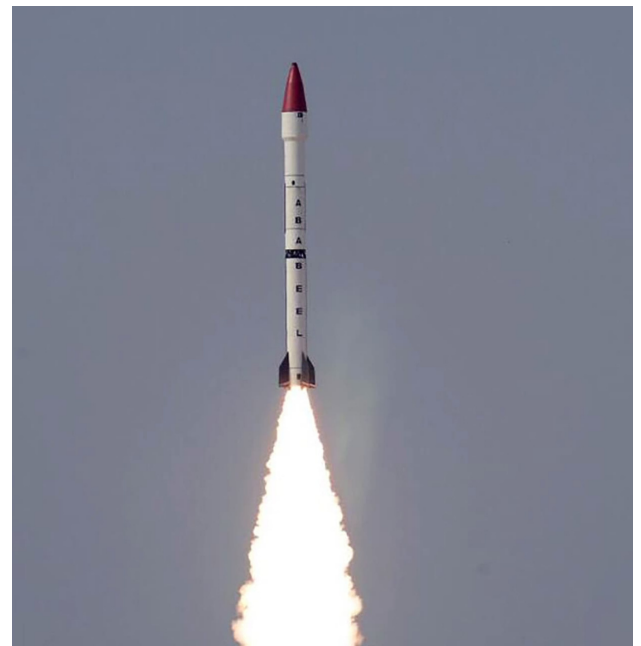
Pakistan Successfully Conducts Flight Test Of Ababeel Weapon System: Army

<https://indianexpress.com/article/pakistan/pakistan-successfully-conducts-flight-test-of-ababeel-weapon-system-army-8989381/>

The latest test of the ballistic missile system was aimed at "re-validating various design, technical parameters, and performance evaluation of different sub-systems," said a statement by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) - the media wing of the army.

COMMENTS

Pakistan had developed the Ababeel surface-to-surface missile which it tested for the first time on 24th July 2017. The missile was reported to have a maximum range of 2200 kilometres and more importantly, was claimed to have been integrated with the Multiple Independent Re-entry Vehicle (MIRV) technology that granted it the capability of delivering multiple warheads in a single launch and targeting different locations simultaneously. After the test in 2017, the ISPR said in its press release that the Ababeel was a high precision nuclear missile that was capable of defeating the enemy's hostile radars and its development was aimed at ensuring survivability of Pakistan's ballistic missiles in the growing regional Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) environment.[3]



Source: DAWN

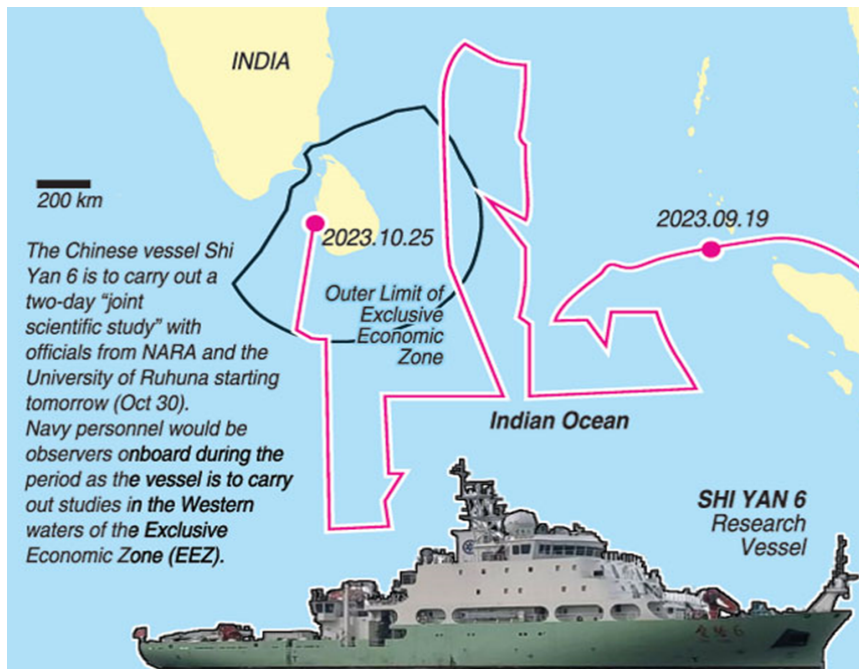
The test launch on 18th October 2023 was supposed to be a revalidation test flight as per the ISPR statement. The MIRV capability of the Ababeel missile drew a lot of international attention when it was first test fired in 2017 as it likely upset the strategic balance in the region. However, international defence analysts have always remained in doubt about the real MIRV capability of the Ababeel missile in absence of any official announcement regarding any successful testing of the same. Days after the test, the US has imposed sanctions on three companies based in China (General Technology Limited, Beijing Luo Luo Technology Development and Changzhou Utek Composite Company) for supplying missile-applicable items to Pakistan's ballistic missile programme.

Lanka Reaches Compromise With China On Controversial Visit Of Research Vessel

[https://www.sundaytimes.lk/231029/news/lanka-reaches-compromise-with-china-on-controversial-visit-of-research-vessel-537223.html#:~:text=Lanka%20reaches%20compromise%20with%20China%20on%20controversial%20visit%20of%20research%20vessel,-View\(s\)%3A&text=Sri%20Lanka%20permitted%20the%20Chinese,with%20the%20Navy%20as%20observers](https://www.sundaytimes.lk/231029/news/lanka-reaches-compromise-with-china-on-controversial-visit-of-research-vessel-537223.html#:~:text=Lanka%20reaches%20compromise%20with%20China%20on%20controversial%20visit%20of%20research%20vessel,-View(s)%3A&text=Sri%20Lanka%20permitted%20the%20Chinese,with%20the%20Navy%20as%20observers)

Sri Lanka permitted the Chinese vessel Shi Yan 6, now docked at the Colombo port, to engage in a two-day “joint research” with local partners limited to two specific days starting from October 30 onwards with the Navy as observers.

COMMENTS



Source: The Sunday Times (Sri Lanka)

Amidst the vehement objections raised by India and the US regarding the visit of the Chinese vessel Shi Yan 6 to Sri Lanka, the ship finally arrived at Colombo port on 25th October 2023 having been granted permission by the Sri Lankan authorities for conducting scientific research in Sri Lanka’s Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) along with its National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency (NARA) for two days. As per the South China Institute of Oceanology (SCSIO), the task of the vessel is to conduct 28 scientific research projects that would entail it sailing more than 12000 nautical miles.

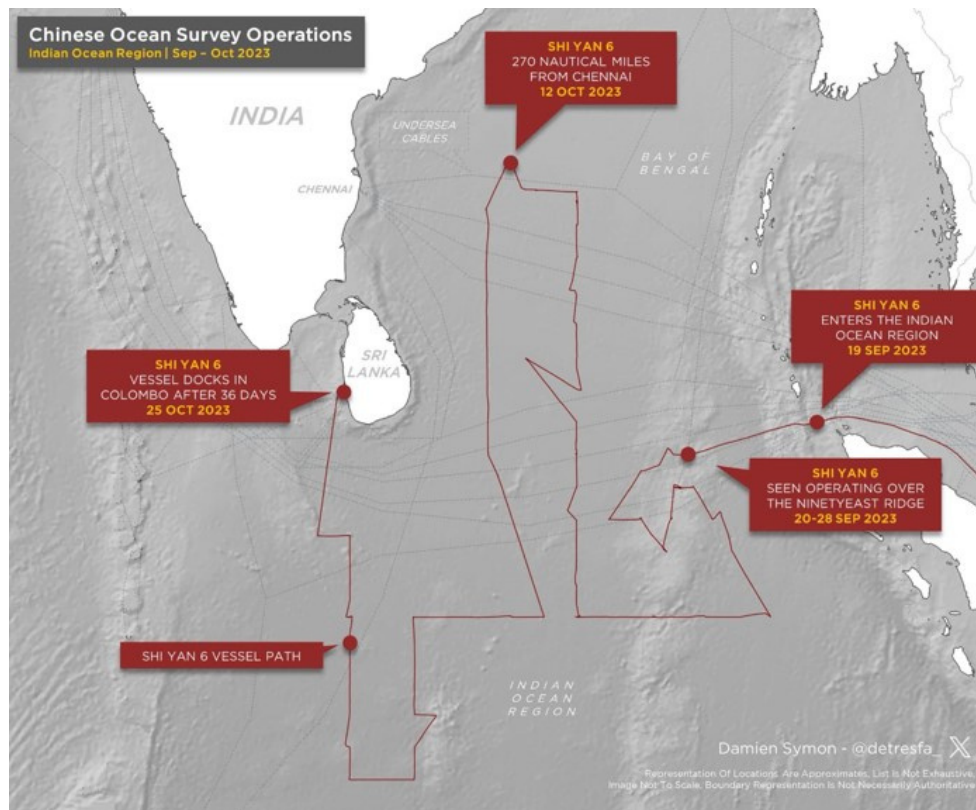
The Chinese have been venturing into the Indian Ocean with their so-called research vessels for some time now. It has been estimated that China has seven such ships with ship-based tracking and monitoring capabilities that can operate in the Atlantic, Pacific and the Indian Oceans. Media reports arrive at a figure of 48 such dockings of Chinese research vessels in the Indian Ocean Region between 2019 and 2023 with most of their time being spent in the Arabian Sea towards Persian Gulf and the area around the Bay of Bengal [4]. Military analysts believe these ships to be dual purpose that can conduct scientific research as well as gather intelligence of military value.

[3] “No PR-34/2017-ISPR”. Inter Services Public Relations, January 24, 2017. URL: https://ispr.gov.pk/press-release-detail?id=3705#image_wrapper

[4] Rajagopalan, Rajeswari Pillai, “India-China Tango Continues in Sri Lanka”, The Diplomat, 06 October, 2023. <https://thediplomat.com/2023/10/india-china-tango-continues-in-sri-lanka/>

PAKISTAN AND SRI LANKA

In August 2022 also, Sri Lanka allowed the Chinese vessel, Yuan Wang 5, equipped with advanced electronic gear, sensors and antennae and capable of tracking satellites, rockets and ICBMs, to dock at Hambantota port despite the concerns raised by India. The US State Department claimed Yuan Wang 5 to be a part of the PLA Strategic Support Force [5]. The Shi Yan 6 is also a dual-purpose vessel that carries out seabed surveys, an information that would be critical to PLAN's submarine operations in the region, and the reason for India's concerns and objections. Though, Sri Lanka claims that it has conveyed a 'firm no' to any sea bottom research activity [6], it is still not enough to allay India's apprehensions. The PLAN has been frequenting a number of ports in the IOR including in Cambodia, Myanmar, Coco Island, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Iran, UAE and Djibouti which China can utilise for sea and access denial and therefore, the Chinese naval activities conflict the security interests of India. Sri Lanka does not seem to be in a position to refuse any Chinese request in the foreseeable future because of its economic situation. Any action on part of the Indian authorities against these vessels is also not possible as they claim to be involved only in scientific research and have not committed any overt hostile activity. China appears to have a long-term plan of sending their ships for spying in the IOR towards a probable expansion of its future naval capability in the region to be able to interfere with Indian naval activities.



[5] Ibid.

[6] Bandara, Kelum, "Sea bottom research off limits for Shi Yang 6", Daily Mirror Online, 26 October 2023. <https://www.dailymirror.lk/top-story/Sea-bottom-research-off-limits-for-Shi-Yang-6/155-269963#:~:text=The%20National%20Aquatic%20Resources%20Research,not%20on%20the%20sea%20bottom>

Rajnath Singh's Call For Multinational Cooperation In Indian Ocean Maritime Challenges

<https://www.financialexpress.com/business/defence-rajnath-singhs-call-for-multinational-cooperation-in-indian-ocean-maritime-challenges-3291431/>

At the fourth edition of the Goa Maritime Conclave (GMC) on October 30, 2023, India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has emphasized the pragmatic need for multinational collaborative mitigation frameworks in the Indian Ocean Region. This call to action is prompted by the growing urgency to collectively address a range of pressing maritime challenges, including climate change, piracy, terrorism, drug-trafficking, overfishing, and ensuring freedom of commerce on the high seas. His address at the GMC sets a measured and practical tone for the conclave, highlighting the necessity for cooperative efforts to secure the region's shared interests and promote maritime security.

COMMENTS

The fourth edition of Goa Maritime Conclave, a three-day event that commenced on 30 October, 2023, drew participation from high-ranking delegates, including the Delegate in Charge of Defence from Comoros and Chiefs of Navies, Heads of Maritime Forces, and senior representatives from eleven other Indian Ocean nations. The theme of this edition was 'Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean Region: Converting Common Maritime Priorities into Collaborative Mitigating Frameworks.'

India's Stand

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh stressed the significance of adhering to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982, to establish a free, open, and rule-based maritime order which is crucial for fostering collaboration and preventing any single country from dominating others in a hegemonic manner. "‘Might is right’ has no place in such a maritime order," he said. He emphasized the pragmatic need for multinational collaborative mitigation frameworks in the Indian Ocean Region to address maritime challenges, including climate change, piracy, terrorism, drug-trafficking and ensuring freedom of commerce on the high seas. The Defence Minister highlighted Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, which poses a threat to resource over-exploitation, ocean ecosystems and economic and food security. He stressed the necessity for multinational collaboration in compiling and sharing surveillance data to identify actors engaged in irregular or threatening behaviour, which should be met with resolute action. [1]

Conclusion

The steady increase of Chinese Navy Vessels in garb of research, oceanography and Anti Piracy Missions is a cause of serious concern for India. Forums like the GMC are instrumental towards developing a shared and collaborative concerted roadmap for security and growth for all the IOR littorals coordinated by the Net Security Provider nation, India.

PM Inaugurates Global Maritime India Summit 2023

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1968331>

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the third edition of Global Maritime India Summit 2023 in Mumbai via video conferencing today. He also unveiled 'Amrit Kaal Vision 2047', a blueprint for the Indian maritime blue economy. He inaugurated, dedicated to the nation and laid the foundation stone for projects worth more than Rs 23,000 crores that are aligned with the 'Amrit Kaal Vision 2047' for the Indian maritime blue economy. The summit provides an excellent platform for attracting investment in the country's maritime sector.

COMMENTS

Global Maritime India Summit (GMIS) 2023 is a flagship event aimed at propelling the Indian maritime economy by promoting global and regional partnerships and facilitating investments. [Underscoring the role of sea routes in global trade, the Prime Minister emphasized the need for a reliable global supply chain in the post-COVID world. He said that Next Generation Mega Port, International Container Trans-shipment port, island development, inland waterways, and multi-modal hub will be undertaken under this leading to a reduction in business cost and environmental degradation will improve logistical efficiency and create jobs.

The Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of Tuna Tekra all-weather deep draft terminal at Deendayal Port Authority in Gujarat. The terminal, which is likely to emerge as an international trade hub, will handle next-gen vessels exceeding 18,000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) and will act as a gateway for Indian trade via the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC). The Prime Minister also dedicated more than 300 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) worth more than Seven Lakh Crores for global and national partnerships in the maritime sector.

Conclusion

India, the fifth largest economy, is on the path of becoming a five trillion economy in the next few years and the third largest economy by 2030. GMIS 2023 brings together global maritime players, policy makers and regulators, key opinion leaders and industry leaders through a series of engaging dialogues, forums and knowledge exchange platforms [2] towards stimulating greater investment in the maritime sector which is key to India's dream of being a global maritime power.

[1] <https://www.msn.com/en-in/news/India/rajnath-says-might-is-right-has-no-place-in-indian-ocean-amid-china-rise/ar-AA1j5ACP>

[2] <https://maritimeindiasummit.com/gims-events/>

UNESCO, Egypt And Huawei Lead Knowledge Sharing On Digital Platforms And Competencies For Teachers

<https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-egypt-and-huawei-lead-knowledge-sharing-digital-platforms-and-competencies-teachers>

27 October 2023. More than 150 in-person and 180 online participants from over 50 countries participated in the International Forum on Digital Platforms and Competencies for Teachers, which was co-organized by UNESCO and Huawei, and hosted by Egypt in Cairo on 24 October 2023. The event also celebrated the inauguration of Egypt's National Distance Learning Centre for Teachers. This event was part of the UNESCO-Huawei project on Technology-enabled Open Schools for all, with the aim of leveraging technology to provide equitable access to quality education. The Forum convened representatives from UNESCO, UNICEF, the Minister of Education and Technical Education of Egypt and leading experts of Egyptian institutions, as well as speakers from Bahrain, Côte d'Ivoire, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, Ghana, Ireland, Jordan, Lebanon, the Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom. It facilitated knowledge sharing on global perspectives and national examples of digital learning platforms, digital open school models, and the development of digital competencies for teachers and digital contents.

COMMENTS

This presents opportunities for the Indian IT and services sector to engage proactively to have a significant foot print in the Digital technology sector of Egypt.

French Troops To Leave Niger By Year's End- French General

<https://www.africanews.com/2023/10/21/french-troops-to-leave-niger-by-years-end-french-general/>

The commander of France's forces in the Sahel said Friday that 1,500 French soldiers would leave Niger by December 31, a timeframe announced by French President Emmanuel Macron late last month.



Source: We News

COMMENTS

Plausible Engagement strategy for India. Following the withdrawal of French troops, India has the opportunity to engage with Niger through a diverse range of strategies:

1. **Diplomatic Engagement:** This involves enhancing diplomatic ties through consistent and open communication. Diplomatic engagement lays the foundation for fostering cooperation and understanding.
2. **Economic Partnerships:** India can support Niger's economic development by promoting trade, encouraging investment, and participating in developmental projects.
3. **Security Support:** This can include providing security aid, such as training and equipment, to the Nigerien military and law enforcement (Training Team). This support enables Niger to address security issues more effectively and reinforces trust and cooperation between the two nations.
4. **Cultural and Educational Exchanges:** Aimed to foster people-to-people relations and mutual understanding.
5. **Regional Cooperation:** The Sahel region faces numerous security and stability challenges. India can collaborate with regional organizations such as the African Union and ECOWAS to address these issues collectively. This regional cooperation demonstrates India's commitment to peace and security in the broader Sahel region.

Sudan's Army And Rival Paramilitary Force In Fresh Peace Talks In Jeddah

<https://www.africanews.com/2023/10/29/sudans-army-and-rival-paramilitary-force-in-fresh-peace-talks-in-jeddah/>



Source: 21st Century Chronicle

The Sudanese army and its rival paramilitary force resumed peace talks last week in a new push to end the nearly seven-month conflict between Sudan's warring factions. The revived talks between representatives from the Sudanese army, led by Abdel-Fattah Burhan, and the Rapid Support Force paramilitary, commanded by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, are underway in the Saudi coastal city of Jeddah, the kingdom's foreign ministry said in a statement Thursday (Oct. 26). The talks are being brokered by both Riyadh and Washington.

COMMENTS

Need for Fresh Indian Initiative. India should actively extend diplomatic support, affirming its commitment to a peaceful conflict resolution process. This may involve endorsing and facilitating the mediation process between the Sudanese factions. This approach demonstrates India's commitment to peace and stability in Sudan.

Reconstruction and Development Initiatives: India can actively engage in post-conflict reconstruction and development projects in Sudan. This may involve substantial investments in infrastructure development, education, healthcare, and capacity-building programs.

Reconciliation and Mediation: If requested by both parties, India can actively participate in reconciliation and mediation efforts to ensure the successful implementation of the peace agreement. India's impartial role can be pivotal in facilitating dialogue and consensus-building.

Respect for Sudan's Sovereignty: It is paramount for India to uphold Sudan's sovereignty and avoid interfering in its internal affairs. Any engagement must strictly adhere to international norms and Sudanese law, respecting the nation's autonomy.

Long-term Commitment: India's engagement with Sudan should be underpinned by a steadfast and enduring commitment. Post-conflict situations often require sustained efforts. India should be prepared for a long-term partnership aimed at fostering Sudan's stability and development.



Source: Africa News

Hungary In The Spotlight After Turkey Presses On With Sweden's Bid To Join NATO

<https://apnews.com/article/hungary-sweden-nato-accession-trukey-orban-erdogan-245d9d480bbae93606a38e5ce2c833ed>

BUDAPEST, Hungary (AP) — The Hungarian parliament on Tuesday refused a proposal to hold a vote on Sweden's bid to join NATO, further delaying the Nordic country's inclusion in the military alliance.

COMMENTS

Background

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) which came into existence in 1949 aims to guarantee freedom and security to its members. Its membership is limited to the European states that can help further the principles of the Treaty and contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area. Before the invasion of Ukraine by Russia in February 2022, NATO had 30 members. In May 2022, feeling vulnerable and haunted from past experiences,[i] Sweden and Finland abandoned their non-aligned status and initiated their efforts to join the alliance.

Since NATO decisions are based on consensus, the fresh membership applications required the endorsement of all 30 members. While the request of Finland was ratified by all members, that of Sweden was ratified by all members other than Hungary and Turkey.

Thorn Points

Turkey and Hungary have had their concerns with regard to according concurrence for Sweden joining NATO. While some concerns were raised by these two nations for Finland's membership too, they were resolved quickly to allow Finland to join NATO on 04 Apr 2023.

With regard to Sweden the main issues for Turkey, were a series of Quran-burning protests in Sweden and the soft approach of Sweden towards the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and other groups that are otherwise considered a security threat in Turkey. In addition, Turkey wanted to use this as a means of acquiring 40 new F-16 fighter jets from the US and further its membership chances in the EU. [ii]

Even though Hungary has maintained that Sweden's presence in NATO will be a valuable addition,[iii] it has opposed the membership due to the hostile attitude that Sweden maintains towards it, and wanted it addressed before ratifying Sweden's accession to NATO.[iv] Since these reasons do not sound convincing, some analysts feel differently. nThey believe that the present Hungarian government is possibly blackmailing the European Commission for release of funds suspended over corruption and rule-of-law concerns, and want to stop an increase in the EU's budget for more assistance to Ukraine.[v]



Source: EuroNews

Softening Stand of Turkey

With the US signalling likely sale of F-16 fighter jets to Turkey, Sweden assuring support for their EU membership and NATO as an organisation agreeing to address Turkey's concern about terrorism, a verbal acceptance was accorded by Turkey to admit Sweden into NATO on 10 Jul 23. [vi] This was followed by signing a formal protocol on 23 Oct 23 to be ratified by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. Once ratified, Sweden would only need the concurrence of Hungary to join NATO.

Future of Sweden's Membership of NATO

Though the delay has frustrated other NATO allies, Hungary has maintained that they would not be the last member to endorse Sweden's bid. [vii] With Turkey giving their consent, Hungary is left standing alone objecting to Sweden's membership of NATO. Notwithstanding, Hungary maintains that Turkey's decision does not change anything and a sovereign decision would be made on the issue.[viii] The next possible voting for ratification of Sweden joining NATO by Hungary is possible during the parliamentary session beginning 06 Nov 2023. However, senior lawmakers feel that there is little chance that the parliament would vote on the matter this year.[ix] When would that vote be conducted is something to be seen. For the present, the focus is on Hungary to substantiate their stand towards objecting to Sweden's membership of NATO. In the interim, deepening relationship between Hungary and Russia has become an area of concern for NATO. Fear looms large over sharing sensitive military secrets with Hungary as no one knows how deep Russian spies have penetrated into the Hungarian administration.[x]

[i] BBC, (2023, July 11), How Sweden and Finland went from neutral to NATO, BBC News, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-61397478>

[ii] Press statement, (2023, Jul 10), Following the meeting between Türkiye, Sweden, and the NATO Secretary General, NATO, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_217147.htm

[iii] Rolander, Niclas, (2023, October 31), Sweden Still Sees Hungary Ratifying Its NATO Bid Before Turkey, Bloomberg, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-10-31/sweden-still-sees-hungary-ratifying-its-nato-bid-before-turkey#xj4y7vzkg>

[iv] Reuters, (2023, April 05), Why are Turkey and Hungary against Sweden joining NATO?, Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/after-finland-joins-nato-why-is-turkey-making-sweden-wait-2023-04-04/>

[v] Csonka, Tamas, (2023, Oct 25), Hungary ignores Turkey's ratification of Sweden's Nato accession, Intellinews, <https://www.intellinews.com/hungary-ignores-turkey-s-ratification-of-sweden-s-nato-accession-298233/>

[vi] Press statement, (2023, Jul 10), Following the meeting between Türkiye, Sweden, and the NATO Secretary General, NATO, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_217147.htm

[vii] Aljazeera, (2023, Oct 23), Turkey's Erdogan submits Sweden's bid for NATO membership to parliament, Aljazeera, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/23/turkeys-erdogan-submits-swedens-bid-for-nato-membership-to-parliament>

[viii] Spike, Justin, (2023, Oct 24), Hungary in the spotlight after Turkey presses on with Sweden's bid to join NATO, PBS NewsHour, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/hungary-in-the-spotlight-after-turkey-approves-swedens-bid-to-join-nato>

[ix] Spike, Justin, (2023, Oct 24), Hungary in the spotlight after Turkey presses on with Sweden's bid to join NATO, PBS NewsHour, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/hungary-in-the-spotlight-after-turkey-approves-swedens-bid-to-join-nato>

[x] Csonka, Tamas, (2023, Oct 25), Hungary ignores Turkey's ratification of Sweden's Nato accession, Intellinews, <https://www.intellinews.com/hungary-ignores-turkey-s-ratification-of-sweden-s-nato-accession-298233/>

Japan Becomes 1st Country Ever To Fire Electromagnetic Railgun From An Offshore Vessel

<https://www.eurasiantimes.com/historic-japan-becomes-1st-country-ever-to-fire-electromagnetic/>

Japan has successfully test-fired a medium-caliber maritime electromagnetic railgun from an offshore platform as it continues to advance its defenses in the face of burgeoning regional security threats.

COMMENTS

Japan becomes the first country to fire “Electromagnetic Railgun” from an offshore vessel. A railgun is a type of electromagnetic armament that can accelerate projectiles to velocities around Mach 7 which enables in targeting ships, missiles and aircraft. This exhibits Japan’s recent historic defence advancements, shedding light on its shift from a purely defensive strategy to a more proactive one in the face of regional security threats. The Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force (JMSDF) tested it in a joint collaboration with the “Acquisition Technology & Logistics Agency (ATLA)”. ATLA is an organization which came into being in 2015 within the Ministry of Defense in Japan under the leadership of Shinzo Abe.

The main objective of ATLA is to integrate the latest technologies and equipment into Japan's Self-Defense Forces. It ensures updates of equipment of Japan’s military that is both effective and cost-efficient. On 17 October 2023, ATLA announced the successful test fire emphasising that this was a first for any nation. The significance of this test underscores Japan's intention to use the railgun in both land and sea. It has also been reported that ATLA intends to equip a number of trucks that are stationary with railguns in order to counter hypersonic missiles in a similar manner. An ATLA spokesperson stated:

“Since the financial year 2016, we have studied the underlying technologies of railguns. In the studies, we have worked on increasing launch velocity and establishing material technologies for the rails, which have high current endurance characteristics.”[1]

Prior to this, Japan showed enthusiasm to add the “Aegis Ashore land-based system” which would mostly comprise of the “Aegis destroyers and the Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3) ground-based system”. The main objective of this addition was to improve Japan's capacity to intercept ballistic missiles. In 2020, however, the Japanese government finally made the decision to scrap this plan.

JAPAN

The recent interest of Japan's officials have been to include its railgun system with long-range missiles, with the intention of increasing its ability to intercept targets in the air. This strategic shift of Japan also includes procuring Tomahawk missiles, aimed at acquiring capabilities to target adversary military bases while keeping regional adversaries in mind.

In the above backdrop, a critical point to note is Japan's choice to forgo the Aegis Ashore system in lieu of improving its marine defence architecture, an initiative that may include equipping JMSDF destroyers with advanced systems. Japan's efforts to fortify its marine sovereignty and create a strong defence system to meet new threats are highlighted by this strategic turn.



Source: The Drive

[1] Sakshi Tiwari, (2023), "Japan Becomes 1st Country Ever To Fire Electromagnetic Railgun From An Offshore Vessel, Eurasian Times, [Online: Web], Accessed 30 August 2023, URL: <https://www.eurasiantimes.com/historic-japan-becomes-1st-country-ever-to-fire-electromagnetic/>

ASEX-01N Strengthens The Intra-ASEAN Military Landscape

<https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2023/10/27/asex-01n-strengthens-the-intra-asean-military-landscape/>

In September 2023, Southeast Asia witnessed a series of high-intensity joint military training exercises concentrated around the South China Sea. This included the Indonesian and US-led Super Garuda Shield exercise and the Amphibious and Land Operation exercise held by the Philippines, Australia and the United States. These drills focused on enhancing warfighting capabilities and involved extra-regional partners. The ASEAN Solidarity Exercise in Natuna 2023 (ASEX-01N), hosted by Indonesia in September 2023, was the first joint military exercise exclusive to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The exercise was called a major accomplishment as ASEAN member states considered to be 'pro-Beijing' such as Cambodia attended.

COMMENTS

Southeast Asian high-intensity joint military training exercises, particularly those in the South China Sea, reflect continued concerns and complicated geopolitical factors. This development affects ASEAN security, geopolitics, and India Geopolitics and ASEAN Security. Geopolitical tensions have arisen in Southeast Asia, particularly in the South China Sea, due to rival territorial claims, particularly by China. ASEAN member states disagree on how to handle these tensions, causing divides.

In the face of geopolitical challenges, ASEAN member states must strengthen their collective security and regional stability through joint military exercises like Super Garuda Shield, the Philippines-Australia-US exercise, and ASEAN Solidarity Exercise in Natuna (ASEX-01N). Indonesia sponsored ASEX-01N in September 2023, a major ASEAN security development. The exercise's inclusion of armies, air forces, and ships shows ASEAN's commitment to regional security. Participation of Cambodia, a "pro-Beijing," ASEAN member, shows that collective defence and regional stability are valued by ASEAN.

Implication for India:

- a) India cares about Indo-Pacific security, including the South China Sea. The joint military drills in Southeast Asia may allow India to strengthen its defence and security cooperation with ASEAN, notably with Indonesia, which shares maritime security concerns.
- b) India's participation in such drills or bilateral defence agreements with ASEAN countries will boost regional collaboration and promote its vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific.
- c) These advances allow India to strengthen its partnerships and promote Indo-Pacific stability. India's strategy must be balanced due to its interactions with all regional stakeholders, including China.

IPEF Supply Chain Agreement Released

<https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2023/10/16/ipef-supply-chain-agreement-released/#more-2211244>

After a year of negotiations and an additional four months of legal scrubbing the first agreement negotiated as part of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) has been released. The IPEF Agreement relating to Supply Chain Resilience gives us the first concrete insights into what IPEF could add to the region's economic architecture. The agreement brings welcome attention to the issues facing supply chains, but effective implementation will be key to realising the agreement's potential. The [Supply Chain Agreement](#) contains a laundry list of the parties' plans to make supply chains stronger and more resilient. This includes everything from increasing transparency, to facilitating investment and to encouraging the use of digital standards.

COMMENTS

ASEAN and India's geostrategic interests are affected by the IPEF Agreement on Supply Chain Resilience:

Implications for ASEAN :-

- a) Economic Integration: The IPEF Agreement could boost ASEAN and foreign economic integration. Supply chain resilience and transparency can help ASEAN's economic growth by diversifying and strengthening regional supply chains.
- b) Trade and Investment: The agreement's focus on investment facilitation can help ASEAN countries attract FDI. Which will boost boost economic growth, job creation, and infrastructure development .
- c) Resilience: ASEAN states depend on international trade and must improve supply chain resilience. Natural disasters, geopolitical tensions, and economic upheavals threaten the region. A more resilient supply chain can reduce these risks and improve products flow.
- d) Economic cooperation and integration promoted by the IPEF Agreement may have geopolitical repercussions in the context of Indo-Pacific competition between China, the US, and India. ASEAN countries can have more alternatives and leverage with these major powers.



Source: East Asia Forum

Implication for India :-

- a) **Economic Engagement:** India's "Act East" and Indo-Pacific policies support IPEF's goals. India's economic involvement with ASEAN and other Indo-Pacific allies like Japan, Australia, and the US can benefit from regional supply chain resilience and integration.
- b) India's participation in the IPEF might be considered as a strategic effort to counteract China's influence in the area with its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) .
- c) **Digital Standards:** The agreement's emphasis on digital standards supports India's digital economy and digital trade. It can help India and ASEAN develop technology and innovation cooperation.
- d) **Trade and Investment Opportunities:** Facilitating investment and supply chain strengthening can help Indian enterprises invest in ASEAN nations, diversify supply chains, and access ASEAN consumers.
- e) **Geostrategic consideration:** India's participation in the IPEF shows its influence in the Indo-Pacific economic architecture. It promotes India's regional interests and partnerships. It supports Indo-Pacific economic integration, resilience, and collaboration, which aligns with ASEAN and India's objectives and strategies in the context of changing regional dynamics and geopolitical conflict.