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**LOOKING AHEAD IN WEST ASIA  
BY  
MAJ GEN JAGATBIR SINGH, VSM (RETD)**

**ORGANISED BY CENJOWS  
6TH MAR 2025**



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The geopolitical landscape of West Asia has long been a focal point of global attention, characterised by a myriad of conflicts, cultural intersections, and external influences. The insights provided by the speaker, Maj Gen Singh, shed light on the intricate web of historical, political, and social factors that shape this volatile region. The boundaries of many West Asian countries were drawn post-World War I, leading to artificial divisions that have fueled ongoing conflicts. The region is home to a complex tapestry of ethnicities and religions, including Arabs, Persians, Turks, and Jews, each with their own historical narratives and grievances.

Maj Gen Singh emphasised upon the influence of External Powers. Historically, powers like the UK and France dominated the region, but today, the U.S., Russia, and China play significant roles in shaping its future. The ongoing struggle between Israelis and Palestinians remains a central issue, exacerbated by recent escalations in violence. The conflict in Syria has led to a humanitarian crisis, with various factions striving for control and external powers intervening. Lebanon's unique confessional system complicates governance and stability, with Hezbollah's influence remaining a contentious issue.

The October 7 attack on Israel marked a significant escalation in the conflict, leading to widespread military responses and humanitarian crises in Gaza. Iran's support for groups like Hamas and Hezbollah illustrates the use of proxy warfare in the region, complicating direct confrontations. The ongoing violence has resulted in significant civilian casualties and displacement, raising urgent calls for humanitarian assistance. The U.S. continues to play a pivotal role in mediating conflicts, often aligning with Israel while attempting to address Palestinian concerns. Both nations are increasingly involved in West Asia, with Russia maintaining military bases and China investing in infrastructure projects.

Further, Maj Gen Singh highlighted Turkey's ambitions to reassert itself as a regional power, complicating the dynamics, particularly in relation to its historical ties to the

Ottoman Empire. Millions remain displaced due to ongoing conflicts, with urgent needs for shelter, food, and medical care. Plans for rebuilding Gaza and other war-torn areas face significant challenges, including funding and political will.

Maj Gen Singh reiterated that sustainable peace requires open dialogue among conflicting parties, addressing root causes rather than merely treating symptoms. Countries in West Asia must work collaboratively to establish a new security architecture that promotes stability and mutual respect.

The international community, particularly through organisations like the UN, must facilitate negotiations and provide humanitarian aid. External powers must navigate their interests carefully to avoid exacerbating tensions and instead promote a peaceful resolution. As per Maj Gen Singh, the complexities of West Asia demand a nuanced understanding of its historical context, current conflicts, and the interplay of regional and global powers. As the situation evolves, the need for effective dialogue, humanitarian support, and political solutions becomes increasingly urgent.

The insights shared by Maj Gen Singh highlight the importance of addressing the underlying issues that perpetuate conflict, fostering a path toward lasting peace and stability in this pivotal region of the world. The future of West Asia depends on the ability of its leaders and the international community to collaborate in addressing the multifaceted challenges that lie ahead.